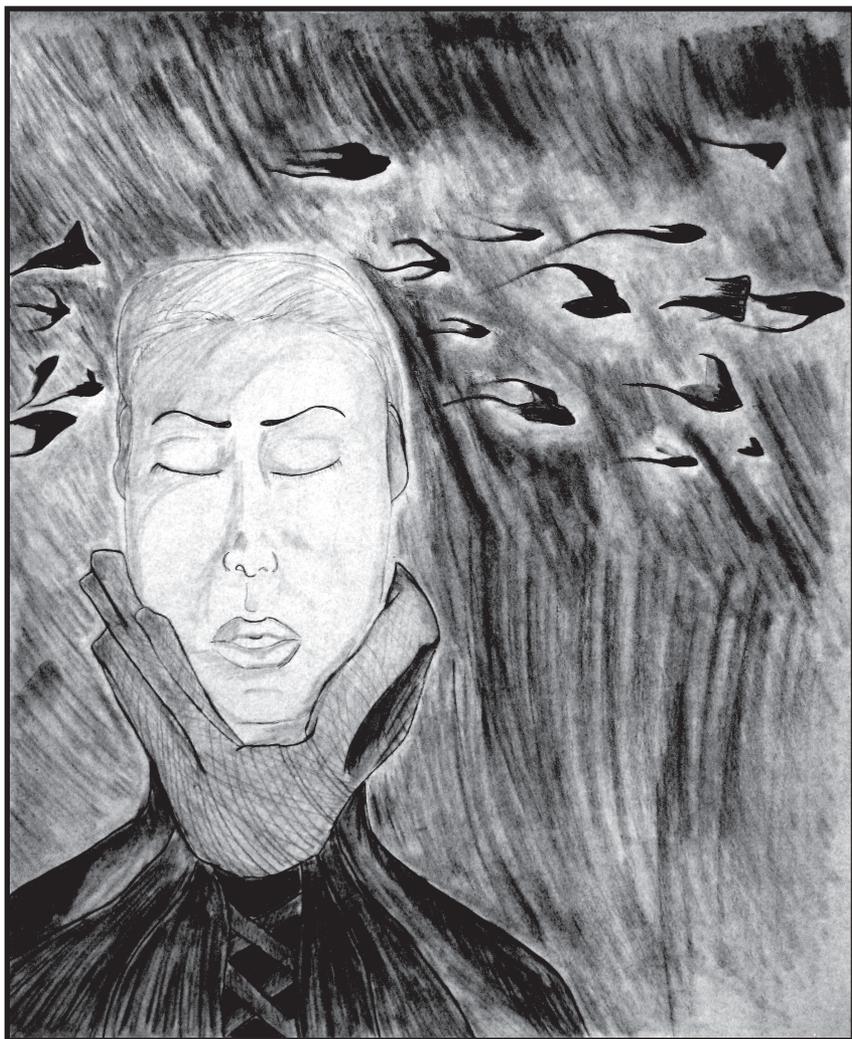


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Lion & Serpent

The Official Journal of Sekhet-Maat Lodge, O.T.O.

Volume 14, Issue 2

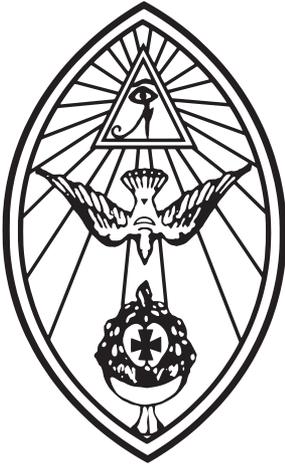
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An Account of the Season

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

Sol in Aries

Many of us started off the new year and the beginning of Spring bright and early with a 4:35 AM celebration for the Equinox of the Gods. Fr. NΘAMKMNPT, Sr. Secret Smile, and Fr. T executed Aleister Crowley's adaptation of Liber XLIV, entitled “Ritual Ordained for Public Service,” complete with sermonizing and 8' tall wooden cross. We then refreshed ourselves with a sumptuous breakfast before napping in preparation for the evening's activities, a feast for the Supreme Ritual. For that, Fr. Khabs Kaos, Fr. IOI, and Sr. Διοτιμα worked T Polyphilus' rendering of the Supreme Ritual composed for a group.

Twenty days later we celebrated more feasts for the times on the three days of the writing of the Book of the Law. Each of these featured a recitation of that chapter, followed by feasting. Sr. Beth recited the first chapter, Sr. Theodora the second, and Sr. Kati the third.

With its five holy days, Aries is a busy time for many Thelemites. Ours was made busier still with the eighth annual Thelemic Symposium (<http://thelemic-symposium.com/>). Brothers Dathan Biberstein and Michael Kolson and Sister Eliza McBryde served as panelists, giving their answers to questions prepared in advance by Fr. NΘAMKMNPT and responding to those asked impromptu by people in

attendance. Among the attendees again this year were a group of students from the University of Montana here to study Sekhet-Maat Lodge as a new religious movement. To give them plenty of time to discuss ourselves and our Order with initiates, Sr. Διοτιμα organized an “Ask the Initiates” panel with a Lodge member representative for each of degree from Minerval through V°, each to speak as he will with the students.

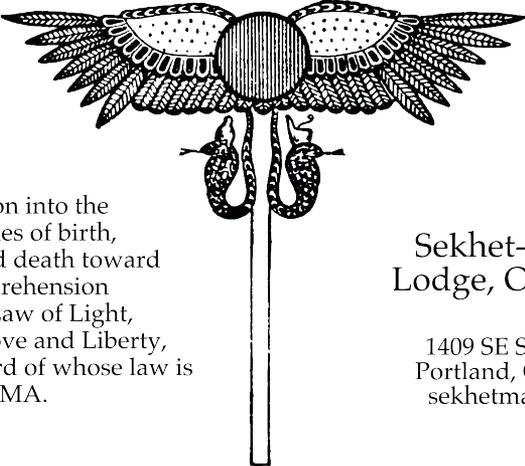
Also in this time Fr. Τακχος υ handed off his responsibilities as Facilities Chair to Sr. Fawn. As if that weren't enough to pack into a single sign in addition to our usual schedule of Gnostic Mass, library open hours and class each week, we rounded it all out with our annual meeting. It's at this members-only meeting that we present and discuss the business of the Lodge. Officers and members give presentations covering the achievements and failures of the previous year, enumerating goals and sharing vision for the next.

Sol in Taurus

This month brought us a very esteemed guest, A.:A.: student and teacher, J. Daniel Gunther. We welcomed visitors from far off places who came to see Mr. Gunther speak on the importance of discernment, service, and action in the prosecution of the Great Work. Many of us had been reading

MYSTERIA MYSTICA MAXIMA

Initiation into the
mysteries of birth,
life, and death toward
the apprehension
of the Law of Light,
Life, Love and Liberty,
the word of whose law is
THELEMA.



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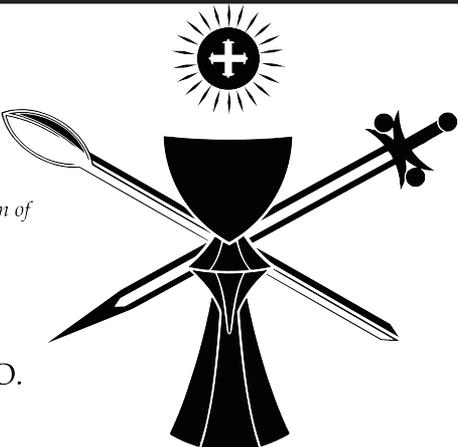
ECCLESIA
GNOSTICA
CATHOLICA

Invites you to join in our celebration of

LIBER XV:
THE GNOSTIC MASS

Every Sunday afternoon, 3pm at
Sekhet-Maat Lodge, O.T.O.

1409 SE Stark St.
Portland, Oregon



his new book, *Initiation in the Aeon of the Child*, and were pleased to be able to have him answer our questions and show him our hospitality.

Later in the month we welcomed new guests into the M.:M.:M.: and consecrated a new Magician in our initiatic rites. The Sisters of Babalon met for ritual and wine in their women-only space. Also, Sr. Lola Daydream stepped up to serve as Lodge Secretary in preparation Fr. IOI to become Lodge Acting Master.

Sol in Gemini

Sekhet-Maat members express their thanks to Fr. NΘΔMKMNPT for his years of dedicated service as he steps down from his post as Lodge Master. Our Lodge would not rest on the solid foundation we see today without the clarity of vision, critical thinking, and absolute devotion to our work that he has brought us. We look forward to the leadership of his chosen successor, Fr. IOI, who also brings to bear years of experience supporting our Lodge.

Another month, another guest lecture, this time from magician, artist, musician, and author, T. Thorn Coyle. Thorn treated us with a lecture and instruction in several practices from her recent book, *Kissing the Limitless*.

And with that we prepare ourselves in anticipation of another glorious Portland Summer.

Love is the law, love under will.

De Formula Tota

On the Complete Formula

Here then is the Schedule for all the Operations of Magick. First: thou shalt discover thy True Will, as I have already taught thee, and that Bud thereof which is the Purpose of this Operation.

Next, formulate this Bud-Will as a Person, seeking or constructing it, and naming it, according to thine Holy Qabalah, and its infallible Rule of Truth.

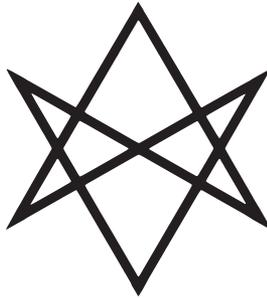
Third: purify and consecrate this Person, concentrating upon him and against all else. This Preparation shall continue in all thy daily Life. Mark well: make ready a New Child immediately after every Birth.

Fourth: make an especial and direct Invocation at thy Mass, before the Introit, formulating a visible Image of this Child, and offering the Right of Incarnation.

Fifth: perform the Mass, not omitting the Epiklesis, and let there be a Golden Wedding Ring at the Marriage of thy Lion with thine Eagle.

Sixth: at the Consumption of the Eucharist accept this Child, losing thy Consciousness in him, until he be well assimilated with thee.

Now then do this continuously, for by Repetition cometh forth both Strength and Skill, and the Effect is cumulative, if thou allow no Time to dissipate itself.



Alister Crowley, *Liber Aleph vel CXI: The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, (Level Press, 1974), 86.

Revealing Five and a Fraction Quatorzain in Free Pentameter

Br. John Griogair Bell

O

In the infinite twilight curve above
a descending point of sunlight is love
both are witness to this declaration.

I

In the finer infinite horizon
cycle from rise to set and set to rise
tracing time traveling eternally
here then stands a man, dead but immortal,
in the holiest of holy places
confidently aloud with pure voice raised
he has taken the communion of blood
and by the moon has already been judged
within view of the royal golden throne
this priest of the scorching ruby sun
with funereal offerings of bread, beer
and many prepared meats from land and air
to the lord of power and dominion
he says as the sky's veils are opening,

II

“O, be praised on high, ineffable one
ruler of gods through power and dominion,
who shines forth from horizons as his throne
make clear pathways beyond death and through
for my soul, my shadow, and my spirit
in true mysteries I am an initiate
so that I myself might shine forth at death
as one illuminated by the presence of truth
past dangerous tricky traps through the west
make clear a way for me to the place
of creator and complete creation,
the height of noon and setting of the sun,
of becoming motion and milky rest,
the rising and enwombed midnight distant.”

III

“Although I am dead, immortal I am
for having partaken of communion.
I see yet another approaching dawn.
Prepared as priest of the scorching sun,
I passed sentinels and was judged worthy
proving I am from the fraternity
of those much like myself sworn to protect
and initiated into secrets
I am also the son of a woman
who knows the celestial music sung
by artful and devoted advocates
heard in their spheres by the planets
but know that melody in truth is hers
mistress of mistresses of the universe.”

IV

Witness now this man saying to his self,
“Oh, heart, to me from my mother a gift
you faithfully kept me alive on the earth
do not then testify in the trial of my worth
do not stand as a witness against me
do not fail that faith now you are free
under the the eminent, immanent sun
to speak in the presence of my judge,
the lord of afterlife resurrected.
My body may have died and descended
dissolving again in mother’s embrace,
by death my immortal self thus released
has in the sky the other stars rejoined
Though dead, I am remembered and reborn.”

*

Those left behind will remember and say,
“Giver of life sustaining ecstasy
give in reward the gift of renewed life
when this beloved traveller arrives
in the holiest of holy places
confidently aloud with pure voice raised
he has taken the communion of blood
and by the moon has already been judged
within view of the royal golden throne
this priest of the scorching ruby sun

has with diligence and devotion learned to fulfill his true will while on the earth. He shall live under the warmth of the sun with love and fear among the living again.”

Notes

Notes about this project can be found at via <http://blog.arlecchino.org/2009/02/11/stele-of-revealing-notes/>.
An intermediate version of this project can be found at via <http://blog.arlecchino.org/2009/02/11/stele-of-revealing-1/>.



The Vow of Holy Obedience

Aleister Crowley

I had a letter the other day telling me that a Vow of Holy Obedience had been imposed in Pasadena. From this I realised instantly that nobody in that enlightened district had the smallest idea what the Vow of Holy Obedience really is.

It is nothing whatever to do with obedience; it is a practice like [...]¹ or any of the other branches of Yoga. If you will read *Little Essays Toward Truth* you will find on page 39 an Essay on the [...]² The perusal of this Essay should help you to acquire some idea of the philosophical basis which underlies this practice, but you must not suppose that the two stages can be run into each other. The trance described in the book is fundamental and of the order of Samadhi. Nevertheless, the training of the Vow should be of invaluable preliminary help to the attainment of the trance.

It seems best to begin by sketching out roughly the rules of the game. I say "game" because the best way to regard it is as a game. The pupil must appoint a teacher. It does not matter in the least who the teacher is; he does not have to be a member of the Order or a distinguished spiritual authority of any kind. It is sufficient if he is intelligent, a good observer and psychologist and his attainments in the latter qualities will improve rapidly as his experience in playing the game increases. It may be better on the whole if he is not an initiate unless he is a very high initiate indeed. These half-baked adepts invariably muddle things and get them wrong. Human perversity or cussedness has its clear way with them.

It is much to be desired that the teacher and pupil should be living together or at least spending the great bulk of the hours of leisure in each other's company. The teacher must, of course, have a certain amount of common-sense. He must not, for instance, tell the pupil to jump out of a 56th floor room unless he is quite certain of being able to countermand the order before the pupil hits the sidewalk. The fundamental rule of the game is unique and simple. The pupil must do instantly what the teacher happens to order without reference whatever to the character of the order. It is really somewhat the spirit of

Aleister Crowley, "The Vow of Holy Obedience," NS 91, Gerald Yorke Collection, Warburg Institute Library, University of London.

the Light Brigade or of the rules of the Society of Jesus, but the difference is absolute because in this case the teacher has an object other than the training of the pupil and his emancipation from the thralldom of circumstances. In our practice the teacher gets nothing out of it but an increased knowledge of human nature and a certain technical skill both in observation and in the technique of making use of the results of that observation. So far as he can be considered in any respect a spiritual director, it is only in just this one way, that he should adjust the nature of his orders to the rate of progress made by the pupil. One point is fairly important. He should not space his orders too closely. The game loses its point if the pupil abandons his work or other occupation in order to attend exclusively to the acts of obedience. The teacher, on the other hand, ought to watch the pupil pretty closely all the time or nearly all the time. He has got to give him a chance to get interested what he is doing before he tells him to get up and stand in the corner and say "boo" six times or whatever it is. Nor should the orders be wholly arbitrary and absurd. The teacher should study his pupil's character very closely so as to be able to recognise instantly the sort of things that most annoy him and he must try to steer a careful course. One doesn't want the pupil to be altogether outraged to the point of losing his temper unless there is some special reason for emphasizing that part of the training which deals with this kind of self-control.

He must, in particular, be careful not to abuse his function. He must not in any way seek to influence the pupil; as I said at first he doesn't have to be the pupil's spiritual superior and he must be very careful not to get into his head that he knows better than the pupil what is good for him. In fact, the pupil himself should be able to assist very notably in the progress of the practice, especially when it comes to advanced stages where special points are involved.

In order to do this properly, it is of the first necessity, as in the case of every other practice, to make a minutely careful and meticulously accurate record. The teacher should moreover try to establish some sort of scale of marking so as to put on record the degree of hesitation shewn by the pupil at first in obeying the order.

Another point is that the element of surprise is extremely valuable. One doesn't want a routine of any kind unless it be decided to make a special feature of the practice the routine

caused by the monotony of repeating the same aimless and useless act.

I really write this in considerable hope that a good deal of these remarks will be in the most cases unnecessary. I should like to think that teacher and pupil are united by sincere love and devotion, by care for the well-being and advancement of both parties and it is also hoped that both will rapidly enter into the spirit of the game, regarded as a contest of wits, and make it not a boring magical practice but the most amusing part of the day's doings.

A pupil may consider that he has attained something near perfection in this practice when his teacher finds it impossible to perturb him in any way by the giving of any order whatsoever. He has got to perform the required act with complete serenity, and indeed let me say, in the spirit in which the order happens to be given. It is not sufficient for him to carry out the order and get it over. Although he well knows it to be part of the game, he must treat it as if serious considerations were involved.

It will probably be best for a week or two to keep this game quite separate from life outside what I must call the classroom, but when a certain degree of automatic inattention to the order has been acquired it might be convenient to extend the operation of the game to the petty irritations of daily life. He must acquire the faculty of treating every such occurrence with what I feel inclined to call sympathetic contempt.

This practice will be found to lead to complete self-mastery in the routine of ordinary life. It will provide complete anesthesia and after a certain stage of perfection has been attained it will even remove from the mind the liability to worry. I am so convinced of this that I feel inclined to seek a new goal and start it myself all over again.

Notes

1. Text missing from original typescript.

2. Text missing from original typescript. A recent printing of *Little Essays Toward Truth* (New Falcon Publications, 1996) has the middle of the Essay entitled "Laughter" on page 39. Possibly noteworthy is that the following Essay beginning on page 41 is entitled "Indifference."

The Starry Sky

Sr. Theodora

In the coming months the Sun will move through Cancer, Leo and Virgo. These signs are the flavor of summer. Much of the energy we associate with summer can be described in their natures.

First, however, I would like to offer a general view of the activities of the major players in the sky right now and through the summer. Close to the Earth, Mercury is predictably close to the Sun. At present it is retrograde, a condition that many superstitious people blame all sorts of things on. The notion of retrograde is spurious, based on a perspective we have long since improved upon. Planets don't travel in straight lines; their orbits from a two dimensional view appears to go backward and forward. It would be like saying you are going backwards because you go back and forth between work and home. Planets move next in their trajectory where they are intended to move, and it is only forward despite our perspective.

The notion of retrograde is spurious, based on a perspective we have long since improved upon.

Next, Venus and Mars will be traveling near one another through Cancer and into Leo. In the sign of Gemini this will put a focus on communication in relationships of all kinds and a tendency for things to move quickly. Watch out for abruptly beginning and ending relationships. Into Leo, their paths will separate with Venus moving ahead as her orbit is smaller than Mars'. Mars will stay in Gemini while she moves into Cancer around the time of NOTOCON.

The other notable event, that we have been living with for a while now and will experience an intensification of is the opposition between Saturn and Uranus. Saturn, our teacher of limits and boundaries, is moving in reflection to Uranus, the heavenly goddess of Chaos. Uranus changes things abruptly and without it being in any way personal. For folks born around 1965-67, this has been crossing a part of the structure of their charts for some years now. During the next three

months this opposition will become exact mathematically. This time is characterized by changes in structures we have become accustomed to, in sudden ways. The opposition is in Virgo (Saturn) and Pisces (Uranus), so people with sun signs in either of these will be feeling this tension more acutely. For more specific information about how these events may affect your astrological chart consult an astrologer or read up.

Cancer is a water sign and cardinal by nature. As the first sign of the summer months it leads off with an emotional quality. In Cancer we have the Fourth of July and fireworks. Cancer is of a feminine nature and tends toward strong expressions. It rules the stomach. Think of the ability to stomach something. The symbol for Cancer is the crab and the planetary ruler is the moon. It is strongly connected to our experience of mothering and home. I think of the beginning of summer vacation as a child.

Leo is a fire sign and a of fixed nature. I think of the strong continued heat of the August. Leo is of a masculine and demanding nature. It rules the heart and chest in general. "Take heart." The word "courage" has the Latin word for heart at its root. The words associated with Leo are loyal, generous and, as I said, demanding. The symbol for Leo is the lion and it is ruled by the Sun. A noble and social creature, the male lion is the head of his pride and the females do all the hunting.

Virgo is an earth sign and of mutable nature. Virgo rules the small intestine and is intimately connected to the activity of sorting. The action of the small intestine is discriminating between the pure and the impure. Contrary to popular belief, not all Virgos are neat. They however will have some place in their worlds where they are meticulous in their organization. This may even be mental. Virgo is also of the feminine polarity and the symbol is the virgin. Being a mutable sign, Virgo is the least grounded of the earth signs. The word associated with Virgo is serve. Virgo is grounded, not in climbing as Capricorn or possession as is Taurus, but in the care given to something. The time of year is characterized by the shift to preparation for winter and the return to school.

The Weiser Concise Guide to Aleister Crowley

Review by Br. Pangloss

With our mandate to promulgate the Law of Thelema as delivered by Aleister Crowley, O.T.O. is in something of a bind. There's no controversy that the size of Crowley's corpus and the erudition demanded of its reader places it out of reach of the direct comprehension and interest of many. Even setting aside the Class A texts for the complexities imparted by their praeterhuman origin, his efforts to elucidate the core Thelemic principles, attendant concepts, and practices leave many frustrated in their attempts to figure out why these works are important and how to make the teachings pertinent to their own lives.

There are those who say this prejudicial element of Crowley's writing is our salvation, that as long as we stick to his writings we act to preserve the aristocratic nature of O.T.O. Those who cannot absorb the material can only get so far before (ideally, anyway) being selected against, either by their own volition or that of those ranking above them. The Order is not designed for or intended to appeal to and accept the everyman. That every free man and woman of full age and of good report has an "indefeasible right" to the initiate up to the degree of the Master Magician does not mean that every man and woman ought to do so. The stipulation that all have this right is to ensure opportunity for those of unrecognized talents to fight their way into greater levels of service and responsibility.¹ The vast majority do not make the cut.

What's more, the body of Crowley's work cannot be simplified without grossly diminishing its essence and elegance. Even constructing such with the intent of providing an entry point into further, more detailed future studies risks detrimental effects. It introduces many opportunities for the author to silently impart his own prejudices, and the lossy nature of paraphrasing will lead the reader to adopt a stilted understanding of Thelema. These failings will take more effort (potentially in vain) to correct in the future than would

Richard Kaczynski, *Weiser Concise Guide to Aleister Crowley, The* (Weiser Books, 2009).

have been required to learn from the primary sources in the first place. The problem is compounded when these readers then serve as a vector to spread idiosyncratic depictions still further.

Crowley summarized one of his solutions to this dilemma in his agreement with the sentiment that general education be reserved for those of sufficient aptitude while the “great mass of the lowest order” be allowed the “blessing of illiteracy.”² However, the very essence of our Order’s duty is to set “the great logs, the masses of humanity” ablaze by announcing the Law of Liberty to every person with whom we may come into contact, educating at every opportunity, to bring each person to the best of their ability to comprehend that Law.³ Crowley in many places also acknowledged the need to speak to varied tiers of potential comprehension and to adapt the method of instruction to the natural disposition of each individual, even to those who cannot make heads or tails of his writings.

In this conflict we find the origins of the curse of the “beginner book.” Derided by many with much knowledge; lauded by many more without. Do we need them? Do they inflict more harm than good? Despite their drawbacks, are they a necessary component to promulgating the Law?

We see in many such books a tendency to simplify, paraphrase or altogether rewrite Thelemic principles into more easily digested chunks. All too often these boiled down recapitulations, in addition to producing inaccuracies, are also easily passed. They obtain readability by speaking to people wholly from within a value system that they already understand. Lacking the differential quality that distinguishes Thelema and the new aeon from the old, these approaches miss an opportunity to invoke change in their readers, and the applications of the Law do not stick.

Nevertheless, since the preponderance of our society is unlikely to be gifted with the blessing of illiteracy any time in the near future, there seems an advantage to exploiting what does exist of that skill. Crowley himself saw the need for some sort of beginner book. One of the arcs we see in his writings over time—culminating in books like *Magick Without Tears*, *Little Essays Toward Truth* and many Class E texts—is the move toward conciseness, increased practical application and less reliance on the technical language of western and eastern esotericism. In other words, something that would appeal to those who weren’t already occultists, mystics, and magicians.

If we agree with Crowley that these types of introductory texts have import and shouldn't be altogether tossed out, we then come to questions about what ought to constitute a proper beginner book. Two sorts of works come to mind that could help bring awareness to the reader and stimulate their curiosity without handing it to them in a way that would enable them to fool themselves that they really know much about the subject. The first of these is original works written as innovative and timely expressions of fundamental principles. Crowley's attempts at writing introductory texts took this approach. We see him again and again use Thelema as the girding for its own elucidation in new ways, sanctified into its own eucharist to be consumed by the ineffable apprehension of the reader. These types of creative works, in order to be good, necessitate that the author write from a deep alignment and coherence with those principles, to be a true agent of the gnosis. With this stringent requirement it's not surprising that we see few successes in this area.

A second type of potentially helpful introductory work is the much less ambitious yet invaluable survey piece. In any large field of study, works of this nature expose neophytes to a broad view of the larger themes, areas of contention, history, etc., providing a basic framework from within which the reader can have a sense of how to begin plumbing the depths of primary sources. The schematic nature of surveys makes them somewhat more forgiving of the author's authority to speak deeply about the ultimate problems and consequences of the field, so long as they refrain from overstepping the bounds of the purpose a primer.

With these ideas in mind, it's time to ask if the *Concise Guide* is a good beginner book. Its author chose to employ both of these strategies to introduce Thelema. The book starts as an elegant piece of new art in the form of a biographical sketch of the life of Aleister Crowley. Given the level of detailed scholarship that went into his full length biography of Crowley, *Perdurabo*, Richard Kaczynski's ability to then clearly express this extensive knowledge in a couple dozen pages stands out as a remarkable accomplishment. The section ends nicely with a succinct bibliography of important primary sources for the interested student.

From there the book's quality and relevance quickly degrades into an uninventive rehashing of widely published materials, interspersed with commentary that serves as an index of the author's biases and personal interpretations.

Despite his warnings in the preface that this is inevitable with any beginner book, this fact is only problematic if the author is flat out factually wrong or, as is predominantly the case in this instance, if he only succeeds in simplifying the wrong things. We don't need a simplified *Book 4*, which is exactly what the remainder of this book attempts to be.

One real danger in this book is that it has many components which are likely to impart upon its reader the understanding that Thelema is more or less a branch of psychology or type of “self help” protocol. We find assertions that integral practices such as Resh and saying “Will” before meals are fundamentally just “awareness rituals”⁴ and pedestrian explications of True Will and magick⁵ that leave plenty of wiggle room enabling the reader to avoid the totalizing nature, scope, and demands of the Law of Light. We've suffered enough the fallout of this secular de-fanging from Regardie and too many others, making its persistence in new works all the more galling. Thelema is not a therapeutic model, nor a hobby. It is not with milquetoast depictions of our prophet, our Law, and our religion that we will “expel utterly Water from Wood.”⁶

Ultimately, I fear that the *Concise Guide* damages our cause. Its normalizing, secular framing will turn off those who are seeking the revolutionary. Its lack of application of principle will prompt the skeptical to disregard Crowley and Thelema as yet more superstition or, worse, a quaint (or poor man's) form of counseling. That this is the best-in-class of beginner books in terms of scholarship and rigor makes it all the more problematic because the uninitiated are more likely to think that this is the best we have to offer.

Notes

1. Aleister Crowley, “*Liber CLXI*,” in *The Blue Equinox: The Equinox, Volume III No. 1* (Weiser Books, 2007).

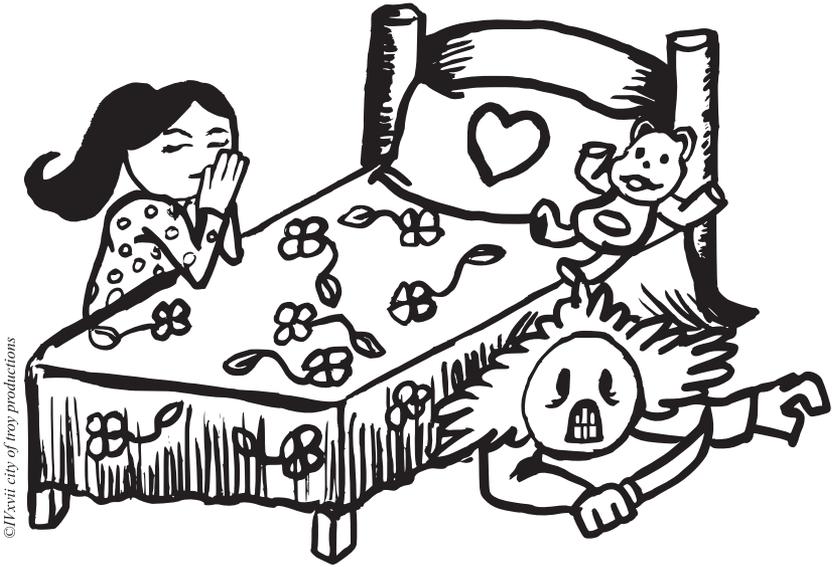
2. Hermann Rauschnig, *Hitler Speaks* (Thornton Butterworth Ltd, 1939), 51. The marginalia in Crowley's copy of this book brackets this section and notates it with the word “yes.”

3. Crowley, “*Liber CCC*,” in *The Blue Equinox*.

4. Kaczynski, *Concise Guide*, 69.

5. *Ibid.*, 53-54.

6. Crowley, “*Liber CCC*,” in *The Blue Equinox*.



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Don't Forget to Say Your Prayers

Missy wants to be a good little girl very much. Missy's Mommy says that all good little girls pray before bed so that God can help absolve them of the sins they pile up through the day. But some nights Missy forgets about being a good little girl, and sins, and praying, and just wants to climb right into bed and hug Teddy and drift into Dreamland. Luckily for Missy, Mr. Clown is nearby to make sure that she doesn't forget. And if Missy were to forget, Mr. Clown would be extra sure to make sure that she never forgets again.

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