

L I O N



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# A Homily on Karma Yoga

*Fr. Οβελος*

Originally delivered at Sekhet-Maat Lodge annual meeting

conducted on ☉ in 18° ☿ : ♃ in 5° ☿ : IVxviii

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

I often hear people reference “Karma Yoga” as shorthand for doing necessary yet menial or bureaucratic tasks around the Lodge, tasks that are somewhat boring and seemingly “un-magical,” like book keeping, tending bar, cleaning, and so on. And while that’s not an inappropriate use of the term, it doesn’t really dig in to the “Why?” of Karma Yoga. It doesn’t explain why Karma Yoga is a yoga at all.

Yoga, as I’m sure most of us know, comes from a Sanskrit root which translates into English as “union” or “yoke.” One thinks of yoking a pack animal like an ox, associated with Aleph and The Fool. Generally speaking it is an active, intentional practice of guiding one’s self toward union with... something. Or nothing. Or everything, or one’s own self, depending on who is doing the defining.

Karma is “act” or “action.” This is no small thing, though it permeates the smallest of movements. We know it as “causality,” the source of friction and its resolution. It implies space and time, life and death, and all the great rivers which empty into the sea only to be dropped back upon the mountain top.

Vivekananda, who wrote a lovely treatise on Karma Yoga, writes “What is Karma-Yoga? The knowledge of the secret of work. We see that the whole universe is working. For what? For salvation, for liberty; from the atom to the highest being, working for the one end, liberty for the mind, for the body, for the spirit. All things are always trying to get freedom, flying away from bondage.”

This bondage that he’s talking about is—paradoxically enough—the fruit of action. It’s from the chain of cause and effect that *maya* arises, creating the illusion of distance between of one’s self from the immortal, imperturbable godhead, Brahma.

How can action escape the seeds it plants by being enacted? How is a Karma Yoga even possible given this cycle? Because it is one's duty to perform a given action. Disciplined action performed in order to fulfill one's sacred duty, though it does sow some seeds that perpetuate karma, begins to quell the cycle; the seeds are reduced to fewer and fewer. In fact, without these disciplined actions, nothing will ever stem the karmic flow.

Now, of course, in the Aeon of Horus we recognize that this apparent separation is not a dread illusion which ties us as prisoners into our crippled bodies for lifetime after lifetime. Rather, we invert the formula. This division exists in order that we may experience the joy of love, that we may strike at the worship of Nu. And the rapturous struggle toward this embrace is itself the fulfillment of our deepest aims, a fulfillment which we each are charged to amplify even as we succeed.

One sees obvious, if skin-deep, parallels between the sacred duty, the *dharma* we find in Vedanta, and the True Will espoused in Thelema. And despite the inversion of metaphysic, Thelema and Vedanta utilize homologous practices to apply karma as a method of yoga. This practice is best described as "equanimity."

Returning to Vivekananda: "Such is the central idea of Karma-Yoga. The Karma-Yogi is the man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and who also knows that this nonresistance is the highest manifestation of power in actual possession, also what is called the resisting of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this highest power, namely, non-resistance. Before reaching this highest ideal, man's duty is to resist evil; let him work, let him fight, let him strike straight from the shoulder. Then only, when he has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue."

I am reminded of the admonition given in Liber LXV by Adonai to the Adept: "Thou strivest ever; even in thy yielding thou strivest to yield—and lo! thou yieldest not. Go thou unto the outermost places and subdue all things. Subdue thy fear and thy disgust. Then—yield!"

The charge here is to seek out the horrifying, the sickening, whatever is most repellent and offensive to every sense... and love it. Also to build one's self up, because it is only the wealthy

that have the power to choose charity or not, only the king who may choose his garment as he will. Only then can one affect equanimity.

Vedanta considers this quality necessary because it makes possible the disciplined action that reduces one's karmic footprint, thereby bringing about the heat death of the universe with greater rapidity. The very height of Hindu morality.

Thelemically, we have a similar valuation of this quality, though a differing analysis of its effects. Equanimity empowers the individual with perspective. It clears the air so that one can act without obstruction or distraction, and without undue influence from the elements so that one may control them rather than be controlled by them. Yet this equanimity shouldn't be confused with callousness or simple aloofness: true equanimity is a sacred practice, necessary to the perpetuation of the multiplicity of possibility.

We see this principle embodied in a raw, archetypal form in the 8<sup>th</sup> tarot trump, Adjustment, attributed to Libra, which is ruled by Venus, the planet of Love (which drives us toward union), and exalts Saturn, the lord of Time (which separates one thing from another). The figure in this trump is one of our Lodge's namesakes, Ma'at. Of her, Crowley writes, "She is therefore to be understood as assessing the virtue of every act and demanding exact and precise satisfaction... She represents Manifestation, which may always be canceled out by equilibration of opposites."

It is from her that we become armed with the goad, Lamed, to prod our yoked ox ever onward, drawing our star along its course. Yet she, the archetype, is not the actor. She is The Woman Satisfied, not The Satisfying Woman. The sword she wields is the magician's rather than her own. Her dance is one of reaction and pure calculation; she is the arrow, not the archer. She will meet and cancel every action, but it is Man who must initiate it. She is the arbiter of Truth, but it is Man who must speak it.

This woman also appears in *The Vision and the Voice* as the Angel of the 19<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, bearing a message to our prophet:

*"And on her mouth, like a chrysanthemum of radiant light, is a kiss, and on it is the monogram I.H.S. The letters I.H.S. mean*

**Continued on page 18**

# The Cult of the Aten

*Fr. Peredur 1=0*

“Splendid you arise in the horizon of heaven,  
O living Aten, creator of life!”

—The Great Hymn of the Aten

In the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt ruled a Pharaoh who after his death was very nearly wiped completely from the pages of history. A pharaoh of whom until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century of the vulgar era almost nothing was known, but whose story is now re-emerging to reveal not only one of the more prominent rulers of the Land of the Nile, but also the “first scientist”, the “first individual”, and most importantly the “first monotheist.” He is Amenophis IV, who would later change his name to Akhenaten and begin a cultural and religious revolution that would come close to toppling the entire civilization of ancient Egypt.

It was Akhenaten who introduced the Cult of the Aten, the world’s first monotheistic religion. The Aten was the only god in ancient Egypt not symbolized by a human or animal form, but rather by a solar disc with rays extended, each tipped by a hand. In carvings from the period the Aten is seen extending its arms above the royal family and holding an ankh, the symbol of life, up to the faces of the Pharaoh and his Queen.

At birth he was given the name Neferkheperure and was the son of the great Pharaoh Amenophis III (also called Amenhotep III). Due to the poor health of the Pharaoh, when Neferkheperure was still very young he was named co-regent with his father and adopted the nomen Amenophis IV. He took for his Queen the beautiful Nefertiti and together they had six daughters. Akhenaten and Nefertiti shared an unusually open love for one another. Akhenaten is the only Pharaoh to be pictured with his Queen and daughters playfully sitting on his lap. This was not something a Pharaoh was ever seen doing, as the private life of the royal family was kept secret from the common people. In his Great Hymn of the Aten (“Lion & Serpent,” Vol. 15, No. 2), Akhenaten’s love for his Queen is obvious; “You rouse them for

your son...the Lord of Crowns, Akhenaten, great in his lifetime; and the great Queen whom he loves, the Lady of Two Lands, Nefer-Neferu-Aten Nefertiti, who lives and is rejuvenated for ever and ever.”

For five years he served alongside his father until the elder’s death. Immediately upon the death of his father, Amenophis IV officially changed his name from “Amen is pleased” to “Servant of the Aten,” or Akhenaten. This by itself was an action serious enough to be called heresy by the Priests of Amen-Ra. Akhenaten’s next action, however, was to cause a cultural earthquake in the land of Khem. He closed the Temple of Amen-Ra and redirected all of their funds to the Temple of the Aten. He then closed all other temples in Egypt declaring the Aten to be the One God and forbade graven images to be made of other gods. He built a large temple in Karnak dedicated to the solar disc. His temples were completely unlike other temples in Egypt in that they were built without roofs, leaving the worshippers open to the light (and heat) of the Sun.

As political and social pressure continued to rise in Karnak, Akhenaten began searching for a location to build a new capital city and found it about halfway between Memphis and Thebes at a place known today as Tel el Amarna. The hills in the east came together in such a way as to resemble the hieroglyph for “horizon.” Akhenaten took this as a sign from his god and named his location Akhetaten, or “Horizon of the Aten.” He then set out to build what would be the world’s first planned urban center, including a massive building called the Great Temple of the Aten which was approximately 800 meters by 300 meters and had walls of colored glass that would reflect the light of the sun for miles around! Akhenaten moved his court to the new city and from there he ruled until his death in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of his reign.

He was succeeded by the Pharaoh Smenkhkare, who many historians now believe was actually his Queen Nefertiti. His only son was the still very young Tutankhaten, whose mother was a minor wife named Kiya. As Pharaoh, Smenkhkare ruled for only a couple of years before meeting with an untimely death. When Tutankhaten became Pharaoh, he renounced his father as a heretic and changed his name from “Living Image of the Aten”

to Tutankhamen, or “Living Image of Amen.” The Priests of Amen-Ra, now back in power, set about to destroy all traces of the heretic pharaoh and his queen, demolishing the city of Akhetaten completely and leveling the great temples of the Aten all around Egypt, using their stones to build other monuments and temples. The names of Akhenaten and Nefertiti were systematically chiseled off of walls and shrines around Egypt so effectively that within a century of his death, most Egyptians had forgotten him completely.

Much can be learned about Akhenaten’s theology by reading the “Great Hymn of the Aten,” found carved on the wall of the tomb of the Pharaoh Aye, the successor of Tutankhamen and advisor in the court of Akhenaten. It is believed that the Great Hymn was written by Akhenaten himself. In it, Akhenaten speaks of the Aten as ruling all lands, “...you are the Lord of all lands who shines for them, Aten of daytime, great in glory.” Clearly Akhenaten saw his god as not just Egyptian, but as universal over all lands and thus over all other gods.

The Great Hymn opens with four parts which are adorations to the Aten of daytime, night, and dawn. The next section of the hymn discusses how the Aten gives life to the earth; first with humanity, “Oh you who makes seed to grow in women, who creates people from fluid”, and then with animals, using the chick in the egg as an example. Following this, Akhenaten discusses the omnipotent and ineffable nature of the Aten and the Aten’s rulership over all peoples and all races in all lands. Next, Akhenaten establishes some of his theological ideas, that the Aten gives life through his rays and thus created the sky and everything beneath it. “You created millions of forms from yourself alone.” Compare this to the opening statement of the Gnostic Creed, “One Star in the Company of Stars, of whose fire we are created, and to which we shall return...” Finally, Akhenaten concludes the Great Hymn by establishing himself and his Queen Nefertiti as the exclusive mediators of the Aten. Akhenaten states that he is “son of Ra” and is the “son who came from your body.” Akhenaten says “There is no other who knows you, only your son, Neferkheperure Waenre, whom you have taught your ways and your might.” It is clear from this that

Akhenaten saw himself as a prophet and messiah of sorts.

Many historians have put forth the theory that the Great Hymn may be the inspiration for the 104<sup>th</sup> Psalm. Some have further stated that Akhenaten's theology may have been carried abroad to Judea by freed slaves in the Nineteenth Dynasty, later to become Judaism. While there is no direct connection between Atenism and Judaism, there is evidence of slaves from the area of Palestine in the city of Akhetaten and thus a distinct possibility that the ideas put forth by the Cult of the Aten could have had an indirect influence on the teachings of Mosheh and the creation of the Jewish religion.

What is particularly striking however is the similarity between the Great Hymn of the Aten and the Gnostic Creed and the Collects from Liber XV, the Gnostic Mass. As opposed to Psalm 104, which deals mainly with an adoration to YHVH, the Gnostic Creed and Collects deal specifically with the life-giving nature of the Sun, which is identified not only as a star, but also as the life force of "CHAOS, the sole viceregent of the Sun upon the Earth." Compare this with the Great Hymn which states "You made the sky distant to shine therein, to behold all that you have created. You alone, shining in your form of the living Aten, risen, radiant, distant, near." Here Akhenaten says that the Universal Lord created the earth and heavens, and then ascended to take the form of the Aten, or living sun. Akhenaten worshipped the Light of the Aten, as opposed to the Sun itself. It is the Aten's rays that are so important, hence the many depictions of the Aten extending life with its rays, and the lack of any representation of the Aten except as a disc. In the earliest days, the Aten would sometimes be depicted as the god Ra Hoor-akhti, or Horus, but by the ninth year of his reign Akhenaten abolished this practice as well, feeling that one could not represent the whole of creation with only one small part.

In 1899 EV Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie wrote, "If this were a new religion, invented to satisfy our modern scientific conceptions, we could not find a flaw in the correctness of this view of the energy of the solar system. How much Akhenaten understood, we cannot say, but he certainly bounded forward in his views and symbolism to a position which we cannot logically

**Continued on page 12**

# Amphora 2:XI

*Aleister Crowley*

SEVEN are the Spirits and the lamps are seven;  
I saw a wonder in the house of heaven.  
Behold a woman girded with the sun  
Beneath whose feet the liquid moon did run!

Twelve were the stars that crowned that shining  
head  
Whereon the HOLY GHOST His silence shed,  
That so Her womb a SAVIOUR should environ  
To rule the nations with a rod of iron.

I saw moreover how She bore the Child,  
And how the Dragon drave Her to the wild,  
Loosing a flood of venom; but the earth  
Gaped and devoured it in her warrior girth.

I saw red war in heaven; Saint Michael fell  
With all his angels on the host of hell.  
Saint Michael! praise to thee who didst prevail  
And pen the demons in the hollow vale!

Now is the royal mystery outrun;  
Mary is gathered to the Holy One.  
The vision fails; and we abase our eyes  
In silent praise and solemn ecstasies.

Hail, Mary, hail! Our song goes up to Thee;  
From Thee descends the quickening decree.  
Like trembling flowers our souls accept the stress  
Of Thine exalted dew of holiness.

*Amen.*

improve upon at this present day. Not a rag of superstition or of falsity can be found clinging to this new worship evolved out of the old Aton of Heliopolis, the sole Lord of the universe.” Historian and one-time President of the American Historical Association James Henry Breasted called Akhenaten “the world’s first idealist and the world’s first individual,” and goes on to call him the first monotheist, the first scientist, as well as the first romantic. In the book “Ancient History of the Near East,” H.R. Hall calls Akhenaten the “first example of the scientific mind.” All of this brings to mind the motto given to the A.:A.: by the Master Therion, “The Method of Science — The Aim of Religion.”

Much of what Akhenaten proposed over 3,300 years ago is now the doctrine of Thelema. It was truth then and it is truth now. Akhenaten was far ahead of his time, and because of that he was very nearly wiped from history. Fortunately, his thoughts and ideas have survived the millennia, the distant light of a star long gone.

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# The Sphinx Banishing

*Fr. Peredur 1=0*

The Sphinx Banishing, or Liber DCCCXX, is a two-fold ritual. The first half is a banishing, and the second half is an invocation. It is structured around the four powers of the Sphinx: to Know, to Will, to Dare, and to Keep Silence.

Unlike other banishing pentagram rituals like the LBRP and the Star Ruby which tend to be more general and elemental in their scopes, the Sphinx Banishing is very specific. The magician analyses herself and, using her magical sword with great discrimination, picks out the aspects of her psyche, emotions, physical well-being, etc. that must be eliminated. These things are carefully and fully visualized and seen for what they are. They are verbalized and ceremoniously ejected with the cry of **BAHLASTI! OMPEHDA!**

Once the magician has eliminated these aspects, she meditates on that empty space. It is important to recognize and appreciate the space created and to contemplate what positive influences will replace the old and unwanted.

Finally, the magician invokes. Using her wand this time, a symbol of the Will, the magician invokes the Holy Hexagram, along with Ra Hoor Khuit, Nuit, Hadit, and Babalon. She cries out **ARARITA! ARARITA! ARARITA!** and finishes the ritual.

The Sphinx Banishing was designed to address specific issues that arise in a person's life. It is for that reason a very therapeutic ceremony, a sort of "therapy in motion." It is of utmost importance that the magician be extremely honest with herself, both in the truthfulness of her self-criticism, as well as her own willingness and ability to change these things. For this reason the Sphinx Banishing is not a quick and simple rite, but rather a longer process of reflection and meditation. The ritual itself is the climax of all the preparation. Therefore, the better one prepares, the greater the climax.

Of equal importance to the banishing is the invocation in the second half. All too often magicians spend their ritual time doing banishing rituals and never invoking. While banishing is

certainly important, the Master Therion advised us to INVOKE OFTEN. Banishing takes minutes. Invoking can take hours, days, weeks. If all one does is banish, you will find yourself becoming increasingly empty and even repelling the things and people around you. Invoke!

The invocation in this ritual is doubly important because of the potency of the banishing. Make no mistake, this ritual packs a punch if performed correctly! It could prove foolhardy to eject that much energy from oneself and not make the effort to replace it immediately with light and love. That much free space could serve as a temptation for other dark and malevolent characteristics to try to take their place. Don't let them! Invoke!

The magician will need her sword and wand to perform this ritual. If possible, it is best to have all four weapons on hand but since the disk and cup are not used, they are not absolutely necessary.

Liber DCCCXX is written in the style of many of Crowley's libers. This is not done to be pretentious, but rather in fun and because it seemed the best way to get the point across. The author apologizes to those purists who are offended by this!

# Liber DCCCXX

## The Σφινξ Banishing

-11. Let the magician break the silence by knocking 333-55555-333.

-10. Let him banish the temple with the words: Procul! O procul este profani! Bahlasti! Ompehda!

-9. Let the magician perform a Qabalistic Cross, calling out the Name of his Holy Guardian Angel if he know it.

-8. Facing the direction of the Crowned and Conquering Child, let the magician trace with his sword a pentagram to banish the forces of Air. Here let him distinguish that which is of no further use to his mind and project it away from him. He should be able to picture exactly that which he is disposing of and speak the same; and as he expels it, he shall cry out Bahlasti! Ompehda! He shall then give the sign of Hoor Paar Kraat.

-7. Let the magician move widdershins about the circle three quarters the way around until he is facing South. Here let him trace with his sword a pentagram to banish Fire. Let him distinguish that which is impeding his will and project it away from him. He should be able to picture exactly that which he is disposing of and speak the same; and as he expels it, he shall cry out Bahlasti! Ompehda! He shall then give the sign of Hoor Paar Kraat.

-6. Let the magician move widdershins about the circle three quarters the way around until he is facing West. Here let him trace with his sword a pentagram to banish Water. Let him distinguish that which is of no further use to his heart and project it away from him. He should be able to picture exactly that which he is disposing of and speak the same; and as he expels it, he shall cry out Bahlasti! Ompehda! He shall then give the sign of Hoor Paar Kraat.

-5. Let the magician move widdershins about the circle three quarters the way around until he is facing North. Here let him trace with his sword a pentagram to banish Earth. Let him distinguish that which is of no further use to his earthly well-being and project it away from him. He should be able to picture

exactly that which he is disposing of but let him remain silent in this endeavor! He shall then give the sign of Hoor Paar Kraat and turn to face Boleskine.

- 4. Let him give the sign of Vir.
- 3. Let him give the sign of Mulier.
- 2. Let him give the sign of Puer.
- 1. Let him give the sign of Puella.

0. Let the magician assume his asana and meditate on the empty space he has created. Let him contemplate the Naught of Our Lady of the Stars. Let him continue in this fashion until he is overcome with the ecstasy of the kisses of Nu.

1. Let the magician give the sign of Osiris Slain.
2. Let him give the sign of the Mourning of Isis.
3. Let him give the sign of Apophis and Typhon.
4. Let him give the sign of the Risen Osiris.

5. Facing the direction of the Crowned and Conquering Child, let the magician trace with his wand a hexagram to invoke Fire while saying: O thou, Lord of Force and Fire! Thou, Crownéd Lord of the Aeon! Thou who art called Heru-Ra-Ha! Be thou the strength, force, vigor of my arms! Be my wand thy Double Wand of Power! ABRAHADABRA! Let him then give the sign of the Enterer.

6. Let the magician move deosil about the circle three quarters the way around, giving the sign of the Enterer toward the Kaaba as he passes, until he is facing North. Here let him trace with his wand a hexagram to invoke Water while saying: O thou, who art the Sacred Cup! Thou, Great Mother, whose depth cannot be understood by those who fear! Be thy blessings abundant, thou who art infinite and unknown! ABRAHADABRA! Let him then give the sign of the Enterer.

7. Let the magician move deosil about the circle three quarters the way around, giving the sign of the Enterer toward the Kaaba as he passes, until he is facing West. Here let him trace with his wand a hexagram to invoke Air while saying: O thou Secret Serpent! Thou who art I beyond all I am! Thou who movest unseen over the waters! Be thou swift to bring knowledge and delight and bright glory. Deliver me unto thy Light, O thou Star of the Morning! ABRAHADABRA! Let him then give the sign

of the Enterer.

8. Let the magician move deosil about the circle three quarters the way around, giving the sign of the Enterer toward the Kaaba as he passes, until he is facing South. Here let him trace with his wand a hexagram to invoke Earth but let him remain silent, giving the sign of Hoor Paar Kraat while invoking Babalon into his heart. Let him then give the sign of the Enterer.

9. Let him return to the center and, facing Boleskine, draw with his wand or in his heart a unicursal hexagram and rose while chanting ARARITA! ARARITA! ARARITA!

10. Let him proclaim the New Aeon by knocking 333-55555-333.

11. Let the magician close with the Qabalistic Cross and the sign of Hoor Paar Kraat. Let him then go forth and be silent thereof; yea, go forth and be silent thereof.

## A Homily on Karma Yoga (continued)

In Homini Salus *and* Instar Hominis Summus, *and* Imago Hominis deus. *And there are many, many other meanings, but they all imply this one thing; that nothing is of any importance but man; there is no hope or help but in man.*”

Our Order exists so that we may strike the glory of the god Man upon the Earth, to make manifest in the World the ordeals which we each undergo in our initiations that adhere us to the Law.

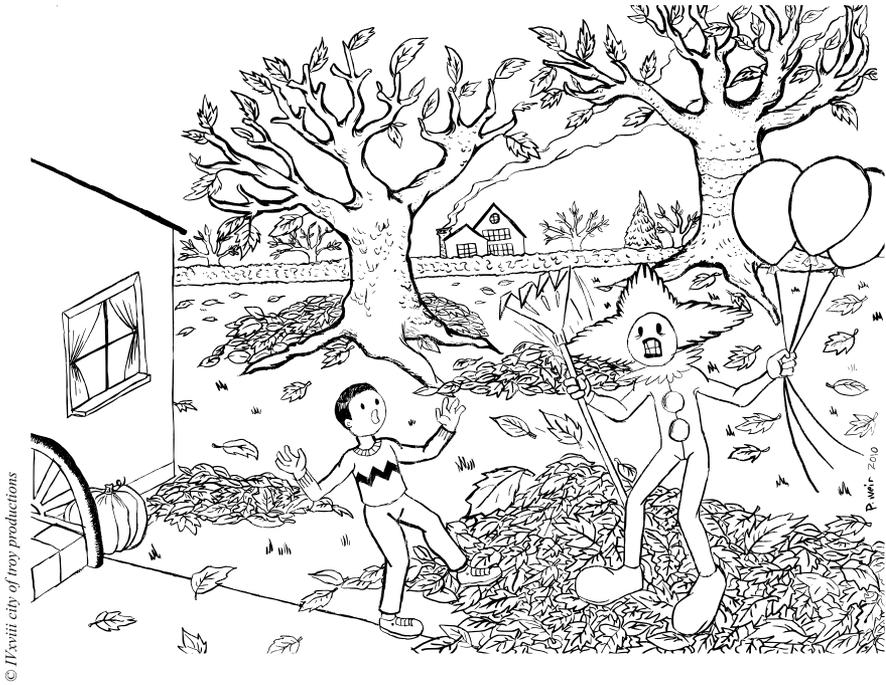
This is our sacred duty, to dance with this woman and speak the Truth. “The Rose of the World is the Lily of Heaven.” This is our Karma Yoga. This is our work. This is our joy.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

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## Don't Forget to Rake the Leaves!

Whenever Fall comes to the sleepy little town of Green River, the leaves begin to turn colors and then fall to the ground. Every day Mrs. Auburn says to her son Chuck, "Chuck! Don't forget to rake those leaves!" Each day when Chuck gets in from school his mom hands him the rake and reminds him about the yard. Taking the rake, Chuck goes outside, but he always lets himself get distracted. Luckily, Mr. Clown has come along to remind Chuck those leaves aren't going to rake themselves. Mr. Clown is even going show Chuck how to use the rake! Mr. Clown can be such a harsh teacher sometimes! Good luck Chuck! You're going to need it.



“But an Ibis that meditated upon the bank of Nile the beautiful god listened and heard. And he laid aside his Ibis ways, and became as a serpent, saying Peradventure in an hundred millions of millions of generations of my children, they shall attain to a drop of the poison of the fang of the Exalted One.”