Llewellyn's Golden Dawn Series

THE GOLDEN DAWN JOURNAL

Book III

The Art of Hermes

Edited by

Chic Cicero
Sandra Tabatha Cicero

THE GOLDEN DAWN JOURNAL

Book III

The Art of Hermes

Edited by

Chic Cicero
Sandra Tabatha Cicero

1995
Llewellyn Publications
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0383

CONTENTS

Introduction ix

Hermes: Chief Patron of Magick
by William Stoltz 1

The Emerald Tablet of Hermes
by Lon Milo DuQuette 23

The Hermetic Isis
by M. Isidora Forrest 45

Logos Revealed
by Madonna Compton 71

God-Making
by Donald Tyson 95

The Hall of Thmaa
by John Michael Greer 121

The Pillar of Osiris
by Adam P. Forrest 145

Invocation of Hermes Trismegistus
by Oz 173

Of Hermes Mercurius
by Sam Webster 197

Images of Growth in the Hermetic Arts
by Gareth Knight 217

Magical Notebooks
by Mitch and Gail Henson 239

Women, Qaballa, and Masonry
by Fran Holt-Underwood 263

The Editor's Forum:
How are the Hermetic Arts important to Today's Working Magician? 289

Introduction

Chic Cicero
Sandra Tabatha Cicero

What exactly is the *Art of Hermes*? And why is this ancient wisdom known as the Hermetic Tradition undergoing such a great resurgence today? What individuals or groups have been influenced by it? Perhaps a more important question for the reader to ask is, "How can the study of these Hermetic teachings enrich my life—how can these old texts *speak to me?*"

Chances are, that if you have picked up this book, you have already been profoundly influenced by the Hermetic Tradition—whether you are an aficionado of the Western Esoteric Tradition as espoused by the Golden Dawn, or a beginning student/seeker who knows a little about astrology and tarot, but would like to know more. The ancient Art of Hermes lies behind virtually all of the spiritual sciences that are currently enjoying a renaissance under the popular misnomer "the New Age," which proves the saying that, "everything old is new again."

This New Age renaissance is in reality very similar to all previous revival movements that look backward in time in order to see the future with more clarity. The history of humankind has not always been a straight chronological advancement from primitive beginnings to the present technological achievements as some strict linear thinkers would have us believe. There have always been periods of social and intellectual rebirth, when people looked to the past for the knowledge of some ancient era that was believed to be better than the present. The Renaissance scholars and artists looked to the classical ages of Greece and Rome for inspiration, to an era that seemed purer and nobler than that of the recent Dark Ages. Likewise, spiritual reformers sought to shake themselves loose from what they perceived as superfluous additions in an attempt to return to an earlier uncorrupted spirituality. Such was the nature of the great Renaissance treasure hunt—the search for classical gold buried under years of debris.

It is ironic, however, that the great magical revival, which looked back to ancient Egypt for inspiration, owed its existence to a major

miscalculation in dating. The books of Hermes Trismegistos, which inspired the magicians of the Renaissance, were not written in antiquity as was commonly thought, but rather in early Christian times by a pagan initiate (or initiates) whose world was filled with magical practices, Greek philosophy and Gnostic beliefs. Had the true date of these books been known, not only would they have been treated with much less reverence, but very likely the early church leaders would have destroyed them as they did several other pagan and Gnostic texts, and the noble Art of Hermes would have been forever lost. If this had been the case, the history of practical magic would have been radically different. Without Hermes, the sublime *spiritual purpose* which underscores high magic might have been forgotten or lost. The magic of today might have been a lot more secular in nature, resulting in a complete debasement of the noble ideals which are a hallmark of the Hermetic Tradition. We might all be sorcerers, fortune tellers, and carnival conjurers, rather than priests, priestesses, and ceremonial magicians.

The Hermetic Tradition owes its name to the Greek divinity, Hermes, who was the god of communication. He became identified with Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom and magic, and thus the combined form of Hermes-Thoth became known as the patron god of all intellectual activity and all sciences including: astrology, astronomy, architecture, alchemy, mathematics, medicine, writing, biology, agriculture, commerce, divination, and (especially) practical magic. Hermes was also the greatest of all philosophers. He understood the secret nature of the universe and the spiritual physics that ran it. Above all, Hermes was thought of as the great teacher of humanity; instructing men and women throughout the ages about technologies that would improve their lives.

But Hermes' greatest contribution was to teach human beings about our own spiritual nature and our place within the divine universe. Our true mission, should we choose to accept it, is to realize that we are each slivers of the divine spirit within physical bodies. We are the vehicles through which the deity *experiences* the created world of matter. We are to become *more than human*, to permit the divine spirit within us to see and experience the physical world in the best manner possible by being true to our inner divine nature—without guilt, without perversion or obsession, and without harm to others. And above all, we must actively try to return to the Godhead.

Hermes awakens us to the fact that we are divine beings who, like Narcissus, can lose our focus and become enamored with our own reflections in the physical world. We must "snap out of it,"—turn off the television, put down the newspaper, let go of the mouse and keyboard,

stop worrying about what to wear to dinner this weekend, and take the time to realize what is really, *ultimately* important in life—our spiritual growth. The magician does this by attuning his/her mental and psychic processes to be in alignment with that of the divine Will or eternal Source of the universe. This magical principle can be found in Coptic invocations for protection like the following, which dates from the beginning of the Christian era:

> *Listen to me today, for I call to you,*
> *the one who is over every aeon,*
> *the firstborn (of) the names (?) of all the angels.*
> *Let them listen to me, all the angels and the archangels,*
> *let them submit to me, all spiritual natures*
> *who are in this place, quickly!*
> ***For this is the will of Sabaoth.***[1]

The rituals performed by the magician reflect this, through invocations, prayers, symbols, and actions that are designed not only to be pleasing to the deity, but also to engrave a deep spiritual sense of respect for the divine Will. In addition to this, they help to focus the concentration of the magician like a laser beam on the goal of the Great Work, the attainment of the true Stone of the Wise.[2]

Magic is a high art that combines concentrated willpower with the ever productive human imagination. So why is magic constantly derided by society at large? Scientists call it superstition and church leaders call it the work of the devil. However, it was not all that long ago that scientists and religious leaders said that of each other. It might be due to the fact that magic straddles the tidy, well-defined borders of both science and religion, neither of which like to feel threatened within their own sphere of dominance. However, in numerous ancient cultures such differences had no real significance because religion, magic, and science were more or less the same animal—and Hermes was said to be the father of all three.

General occultism contains bits and scraps of cast-off religious practices, as well as outmoded scientific data. Other remnants are simply magical formulae that have become corrupted through time, and scribal error. Christianity, too, had a part to play in the debasement of magic, because as the Christians gained power, priests and priestesses of other religions needed to find additional ways of making a living, and thus might have sold their magical expertise to the common people, resulting in a further debasement of spiritual practices for low secular purposes. And the occasional charlatan fortune-teller who dupes

little old ladies out of their life-savings has not helped the general acceptance of magic in this day and age.

However, the long histories of science and religion are not without their embarrassments either. Not long ago, doctors of medicine would "bleed" sick people in order to release the "bad blood." Scientists once applauded the discovery of the Piltdown man. Even today, Christian televangelists beg unceasingly for money, while some of their flock insist on teaching the "science" (or rather *anti-science*) of Creationism in the public schools. And atrocious deeds such as "book burning" continue. (At least they no longer burn people.) Both religion and science should review their condescending attitudes toward magic.

And we, as magicians, can renew and reconsecrate our spiritual strength by returning time and time again to that endless and pure stream of divine truth known as the Hermetic Tradition.

The magic that we as ceremonial magicians are concerned with is *divine theurgy*, a type of spiritual quest that has been revered since antiquity. The word *theurgy* means "god-working." This "god-working" is an act of self-creation and reunification of the human soul; an awakening of the human spirit to its fullest potential. Magic is a burning desire—an aspiration to dedicate one's life to the pursuit of divine knowledge. The magician/mystic does not seek mere theoretical knowledge of the Self, like some interesting bug in a glass jar, rather s/he seeks a deeply personal familiarity with the Self.

The Art of Hermes is really the art of ritual magic itself. Eliphas Levi, the nineteenth century French occultist, in his book on *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic* listed three "laws" of magic, which defined how magic works. These laws are still held in high regard by contemporary Hermetic magicians. The first law was that of the importance of *human willpower*, which was not some hypothetical concept, but an actual galvanizing force which could cause real, tangible results in the world.

In order to truly create change, in the environment or in one's own inner Self, the individual human will has to be in perfect alignment with the divine Will.

The second law was that of the *astral light*, an invisible spiritual substance which pervades everything in the universe—a substance that can be used by magicians to cause change at any distance in space.

The third law was the *Law of Correspondences*. This law states that everything in the greater universe (the Macrocosm) has a corresponding component in the lesser universe (the Microcosm)—the individual human being. That is, the soul of the human being is held to be a "magical mirror of the universe." The Law of Correspondences also includes the idea that certain objects, symbols, or substances are connected

through vibration, color, or character to specific energies (usually planetary, zodiacal or elemental). But by utilizing these substances, such as metals, gemstones, incenses, etc., the ceremonial magician is not merely choosing items that resonate with the power or deity that s/he intends to invoke, but rather selecting aids for *focus and concentration of willpower.*

The Adepts of the Golden Dawn added what might be called a fourth law to this theory of magic. As V.H. Frater Resurgam (Dr. Edward Berridge) stated:

> *To practice Magic, both the Imagination and the Will must be called into action, they are co-equal in the work. Nay more, the Imagination must precede the Will in order to produce the greatest possible effect. The Will unaided can send forth a current, and that current cannot be wholly inoperative; yet its effect is vague and indefinite, because the Will unaided sends forth nothing but the current of force. The Imagination unaided can create an image, and this image must have an existence of varying duration; yet it can do nothing of importance, unless vitalized and directed by the Will. When however, the two are conjoined—when the Imagination creates an image—and the Will directs and uses that image, marvelous Magical effects may be obtained.*[3]

This brings us back to the Hermetic Tradition, or *Hermetica*, the root source of the magic of the Golden Dawn. To understand the Hermetic Tradition, it is important to understand the various elements that contributed to its makeup, for if anything, the Art of Hermes is eclectic and syncretic—drawing upon several traditions and reconciling between them. The constituent factors that to one extent or another influenced the Hermetic Tradition include: Egyptian magic, Greek philosophy, the mystery religions, Stoicism, Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, Qabalah, and the Hermetic literature. There were undoubtedly several other influential schools of thought that we have left out of this survey, but here we will present the major ones.

The reader might conclude from all this, that Hermes is a busy god; forever collecting, interpreting and adapting the best principles from the traditions he encounters.

Egyptian Magic

To the ancient Egyptians (3100-1000 B.C.E.), there was often little distinction between religion and magic. If there was in fact any difference at all, it was perhaps in the immediacy of magical as opposed to religious

practices. In religion, a worshiper petitioned a deity through an intermediary or priest, while a magician invoked the deity directly. But frequently, priests and magicians were one and the same.

Egyptian religion was a complex and beautiful balance of monotheism and polytheism. The Egyptians believed in one creator deity who was eternal, omnipotent, self-existent and incomprehensible to its human worshippers. This unknowable divinity was sometimes referred to by the name *neter*, the suggested meaning of which includes ideas of "god," "divine," "strength," and "renewal." The polytheism of Egypt manifested itself in the vast number of local and lesser deities. These deities were considered as the various aspects, attributes, or extensions of the neter, manifesting in forms that could be visualized and comprehended by the human mind. Thus the goddess Isis was the divine femininity and creative force of the neter, while the god Thoth was the neter's intellectual power, etc.[4] This unification of monotheism with polytheism was a perfectly natural arrangement to the Egyptians, whose rich religious beliefs were grossly misunderstood by outsiders for centuries.

Three principles can be identified in Egyptian religion: (1) the common belief in a *Solar monotheism* in the form of a creator god whose power was especially symbolized by the life-giving rays of the sun, (2) a belief in the *regenerative power of nature* which was expressed in the worship of fertile gods and goddesses as well as sacred animals, and (3) the recognition of *a deity who is human yet also divine*, whose life in both the physical world and the spiritual world beyond death mirrors that of the perfected human life.

The last tenet, the belief in Osiris as a god-man, was well established early in Egyptian history. He was a deity unlike all others, in that he was an accessible god who people could strongly empathize with—they could identify with him as *one of them*, although he was part divine. They believed that Osiris had walked the Earth, and ate and drank as they did. And like humans, Osiris suffered and died—but was brought back to life with the aid of other gods. Thus did he become the beloved god of resurrection and Eternal Life, for he set an example that the rest of humanity could follow. What the gods did for Osiris, the Egyptians reasoned, they might be persuaded to do for ordinary mortals. Many religious and magical ceremonies were designed to insure that after death the deceased would, like Osiris, rise again and inherit life everlasting.

There were two kinds of *theurgists* (magicians or "god-workers") in Egypt. These included the trained priest-magicians of the temples, and the "lay" magician, who was independent of any institution. The

majority of them, however, were of the priest class. It was also common for a priest to inherit the office from his father. There were hundreds of temples dedicated to various deities and the attendant priests had several different functions. Some were in charge of caring for the statue of the god (food, clothing, etc.). Purification was also an essential practice—the priests bathed four times daily, shaved their heads, and only wore certain types of clothing.

When all conditions of purity were met, a priest underwent an initiation ceremony into a higher office. From the Roman writer Apulius, we learn that one such initiation took several days, and included anointing of the priest's hands, purification by water, private communing with the temple statue of the deity, and ten days of fasting. Then the initiation ceremony was repeated. Combined with isolation in some secret part of the temple, clouds of incense, and incessant chanting by the other priests, such a ceremony would have undoubtedly had a powerful effect on the initiate.

The High Priest was known as the *Sem*-Priest or "first prophet of the god." Under him was an entire staff of priests (the "horologers"), whose duty was to determine precisely the hours of the day and night. This was a crucial function, because various rites had to begin at specific times. The priests took note of the positions of the Sun and the stars, in order to pinpoint when the rituals should commence. There were also astrologer-priests who were the caretakers of a horoscope calendar that explained how human beings should behave on given days.

However, the priest-magicians were not from any of the above groups. They were to be found in a part of the temple known as the *House of Life*, which contained the temple library. The average layman would go to the House of Life if he had problem and needed a magical spell or amulet. The priests would dispense magical charms for protection, interpret dreams or provide an incantation to cure illness, etc. The priest-magicians guarded their secret books carefully, and they were looked upon as very powerful and important individuals.

In addition, the sciences of medicine and magic oftentimes borrowed from one another. If the source of an illness was known, the treatment was usually mundane. If the cause was unknown, it was thought to be caused by malicious powers and a magical cure was sought. And the highest ranking and best educated doctors were the magician-priests.

One aspect of Egyptian theurgy which would remain essential to magic throughout the long history of the Hermetic Tradition, was the importance given to divine names and words of power. As shown in the story of Isis gaining mastery over Ra, the Egyptians believed that knowing the secret name of a deity conferred great power to the magician

who knew it. (This would later manifest in the Graeco-Egyptian "barbarous names" of magic.)

Classical Greek Philosophy

From 600 to 200 B.C.E., new ideas were being circulated in Greece and in the Greek cities along the coast of Asia Minor. There philosophers began a trend of questioning the reality of the traditional gods, while at the same time espousing theories of materialism and rationalism. In addition, the idea that "All is ONE," began to catch on. The philosopher Anaximander thought that there was a basic substance that permeated the universe and out of which the elements emerged. He called this substance *apeiron* or "the boundless," which immediately brings to mind the Qabalistic concept of *Ain Soph*, "the limitless."

Pythagoras, a mystic and magician as well as a philosopher, claimed that the essence of everything is *number*. This idea is also reflected in the Qabalah, which regards numbers as divine emanations in the form of the Sephiroth. Because of his fascination with numbers, Pythagoras is often thought of in the non-magical world as an ancient mathematician. However, to his followers, Pythagoras was a magus and a spiritual leader, and his students included women as well as men. Enamored with the mystical qualities of numbers, Pythagoras used numerically derived figures as holy symbols for his followers—including the pentagram and the *tetraktys*, a diagram in which the number four is exalted, but which also shows the importance of the first ten numbers, through the unfolding of the Monad, Duad, Triad, and finally the Tetrad. These ten numbers (like the ten Qabalistic Sephiroth) were given specific attributions and were regarded as the progressive evolution of *unity*, which included the concepts of duality, multiplication, and synthesis. It is difficult to tell whether this philosophy influenced early Qabalistic teachings, or if Pythagoras was himself influenced by an earlier oral Hebrew tradition.

Unlike other philosophers of his time, Pythagoras believed in the existence of the human soul. He also taught reincarnation and a form of past-life regression.

Other philosophers of the same era taught a form of monotheism that suggested that god existed everywhere at all times, in matter *and* in nature. While some held that the reality of nature was static, others adopted the view that it was constantly changing.

Empedocles was the first to espouse the idea of the four elements in nature—Fire, Water, Air and Earth. He also supported the notion that the universe was composed of two worlds, one spiritual and good, the other material and evil. Empedocles believed that

human beings had two souls—the *psyche* or Lower Soul which is finite, and the *daimon* or Higher Soul which is immortal.

The philosopher Anaxgoras held that a divine mind or *nous* was the substance and power behind the physical universe. This mind created the universe through a whirling motion at the center of the cosmos.[5]

Some of the later Greek intellectuals seemed to draw away from the materialism and ultimate rationalism that dominated the teachings of earlier philosophers. They developed their own form of rational mysticism, possibly to reverse the moral deterioration that resulted when people stopped believing in the gods. The main doctrine of Socrates, was that the individual should be guided by an inner voice. But of all the classical Greek philosophers, it was Socrates' student, Plato, who had the most significant effect on the Hermetic Tradition.

Plato taught that a world of ideas or archetypes existed before the physical world was created. In other words, all ideas of everything in the universe exist in an unseen supernatural world—and all created things in the physical world are merely flawed and inferior copies of the divine originals. Thus Plato's philosophy developed a sharp dualism between the tainted physical world and the perfect world of ideas. He believed that these two worlds were linked by an indescribable chaotic substance he called the "materia" which evolved through natural processes into the four elements. But in order for the two worlds to interact and form the manifest world, the *Demiougos* or "creator god" patterned and created the universe; an idea which was later incorporated into Gnostic teachings.

Another of Plato's theories was that soul of the individual lives on after death, and that it is judged—either to receive eternal rapture or eternal punishment in a place called *Tartarus*, where its transgressions would be forgiven over time. (Plato's beliefs on this matter were later adopted by the early Christians.) The soul, according to Plato, was divided into three parts: the immortal potion called *logos*, which was located in the head and which was identical with the intellect, the *thumos* or will, located in the heart, and the *epithymia* or desire, which was found in the abdomen.[6]

Plato believed in a World Soul and the idea that the individual human soul is capable of carrying over knowledge from the divine world of ideas, from which it came into being—if only the soul can be made to remember that knowledge which it has forgotten upon physical incarnation. He also believed that the stars and planets were simply higher beings.

Several of Plato's beliefs were borrowed or adapted by many groups, including the Neoplatonists, the Gnostics and the early Christians. The similarity of some of his teachings to Qabalah is unmistakable.

And Plato's hypotheses form the cornerstone not only of the Hermetic Tradition, but of Western philosophy as a whole.[7]

The Greek Mystery Religions

The mystery religions developed and prospered during the time of Alexander the Great when much of the known world, including Egypt and Persia, was becoming "Hellenized." One of the reason why the mystery religions became popular was because people were growing tired of the moral decay that resulted from the cold materialism and rationalism of the philosophers. People wanted and needed to believe in the gods again. Not just the passive, state-sanctioned veneration of the gods, but an active religious participation that would deeply touch the lives of worshippers. The mystery religions satisfied this need. Coinciding with the popular worship of the deities, there were secret initiatory ceremonies which were attended by a privileged few. The Greek word *mysteria*, or "mysteries" implied private or secret rites.

The deities invoked and worshiped by these religions varied. The Samothracian mysteries, possibly the oldest of these cults, centered around the Kabiri or "great gods." The Orphic mysteries, said to have been founded by the Greek hero, Orpheus, focused on the god Dionysos-Phanes, the creator of Heaven and Earth and the bringer of Light. The mysteries of Isis and Osiris were played out in Egypt, along with the cult of Serapis in Alexandria. There were also the mysteries of Cybele and Attis, deities that were imported from Asia Minor whose myths resembled those of the Babylonian divinities, Ishtar and Tammuz. However, the most famous of the mysteries was centered at Athens—the Eleusinian mysteries—which focused on the deities of Demeter, Persephone, and Hades. Later the cult of Mithras, the Persian Sun god, sprang up at outposts of the Roman empire.

What exactly was experienced by initiates of these mystery religions cannot be determined for certain. This is because initiates held them in such high regard that, for the most part, they refused to reveal the secrets to outsiders. Apparently no one has ever betrayed their oath of secrecy to these rites. Consequently, there is little record of them. Even those initiates who later converted to Christianity steadfastly refused to break their oath of secrecy—such was the power of the mystery religions. But what *is* known of the mysteries is that all of them dealt with the ideas of death and resurrection from death (the death of one Kabir at the hands of the other three Kabiri, only to be brought back to life again, the dismemberment of Osiris at the hands of the evil Set, and Osiris' resurrection at the hands of Isis, the many deaths and reincarnations of Dionysos, and Persephone's descent into the underworld of Hades).

The reenactment of these myths served to instill within the initiate a sense of spiritual rebirth into a greater life—the triumph over death through the rising of eternal life. They sought to take human beings out of their mundane conditions into a divine rebirth—a direct awareness of humanity's spiritual essence. These "secret rites" emerged from the belief that higher divine wisdom and true spiritual experiences could only be obtained by those individuals who were cleansed by certain disciplines. They attempted to reveal the secrets of the universe through generating spiritual ecstasy, or by a thoughtfully outlined series of initiations crafted to produce accelerated spiritual growth.

Purification played an important role in these rites, along with processions, reenactments of certain myths, animal sacrifices, offerings, fasting, and a real or symbolic descent into the underworld, as well as a return from the underworld. The initiate would take an active role in these dramas, experiencing in all likelihood a symbolic death and rebirth.

The basic theme of the mysteries (that on some level the initiate experiences a resurrection from death), would later play a major role in several Hermetic circles—extending its influence to the alchemists, the Masons, and the Rosicrucians. It is also evident in the 5=6 ritual of the Golden Dawn.

The Greeks held that there were three types of knowledge: *mathesis* or knowledge that could be learned, *gnosis* or knowledge that could be gained through meditation or intuitive perception, and *pathesis* or knowledge that was felt. The mystery religions tried to instill enlightenment through all three, but especially through *pathesis*, by supplying the initiate the opportunity for direct personal experience of the higher teachings. They promised a transcendent type of experience or spiritual ecstasy, that was lacking in the more popular forms of worship.

In fact, early Christianity was considered by many at the time to be just another Greek mystery cult, with similar goals and mythology. One of the reasons that Christianity became very successful was that it was open to everyone, including slaves and women, whereas some of the other mystery cults such as Mithrasim were restricted to men or individuals of status. It was not until much later that the followers of Christianity, who borrowed heavily from both the Greek mysteries and Greek philosophy, were able to become a dominant political force which crushed those it considered rivals.

Stoicism

One of the important schools of Hellenistic philosophy was Stoicism. Some of the better known Stoics included Zeno and Eratosthenes. The

Stoics believed in an extreme form of materialism and stressed scientific research. They dismissed any form of reality other than the physical. Although they felt that the universe was created by a universal *nous* or World Soul, they considered this force to be completely material and mundane. In addition they felt that all myths were allegories meant to convey philosophical truths. The stoics believed that the *logos* (under the mythological name of Zeus) transformed himself into the elements of the material world, but this was a natural process, not a spiritual one.

Stoic philosophy was often fatalistic, and skeptical. Followers of Stoicism believed in predestination and reincarnation, however, they thought that in every incarnation the individual would live his/her life over again, exactly as in all previous lifetimes.

Stoics taught that virtue brings forth happiness. But one of their greatest contributions to magic was their belief in cosmic sympathies, or the idea that all things within the cosmos are linked together in a logical and orderly fashion. (A forerunner to Levi's Law of Correspondences.) In addition, the reverence paid by the Stoics to logic and the rational mind helped to instill within the Hermetic Tradition a healthy sense of skepticism which sought to test the validity of magical experiments, and not merely accept all results at face value.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a combination of Christian belief with the Greek mystery religions. However, like Mithraism, its striking similarities with Christianity caused it to be labeled as a heresy, and rival Christian-like heresies were stamped out far more viciously than most pagan religions were. The Gnostic movement flourished in the Eastern Mediterranean area around the time of the birth of Christ and for many centuries after.

As stated earlier, *gnosis* meant knowledge, specifically knowledge gained through intuitive perception. The knowledge sought by the Gnostics was the knowledge of God through direct revelation. This knowledge was "secret" in that it could only come about as the product of specific realizations. And this knowledge was also beyond faith and beyond reason—the essence of the universe only revealed itself directly (thus secretly) to those who actively strove to transcend their mundane existences. Individual interpretation of spiritual truths was encouraged and, in fact, considered a form of enlightenment. The ability to "channel" new revelations of Christ was considered a sign of religious Adepthood. Revelation was a continuous process, not a rigidly established dogma.

Gnosticism had several factions; it was not one single belief system or united movement. There were as many different Gnostic sects as there were Christian sects. (Early Christianity was likewise comprised of several different groups with various beliefs.) But the diverse Gnostic sects can generally be grouped under two branches; the earlier more "Jewish" type is called Sethian Gnosticism (named after Seth, the son of Adam), while the more "Christianized" form is known as Valentinian Gnosticism, so-called because of its main exponent, Valentinus.

The basic doctrine of the Gnostics was that the human spirit represented the divine essence ensnared in matter—that the human spirit (*pneuma*) was a spark of God trapped within an evil world that God had nothing to do with. The world was actually created by the *Demiougos* or *Demiurge* (borrowed from Plato), a lesser creator god who was sometimes evil, sometimes just plain ignorant. Thus Gnostics believed in a fundamental dualism between man (the trapped god), and the physical world (which was his prison). The human condition was defined as being part angel and part beast.

The world view of the Gnostics was one of numerous levels of existence between the divine, Light-filled realm of God and the dark world of humanity, wrapped in dense matter. The dense physical world was ruled by various *Archons* or rebellious intermediary entities who were represented by zodiacal and planetary powers. Gnosis, then, was the knowledge of how the soul could advance through the spheres of the Archons and return to its original abode of Light.

The Gnostics were devoted to the transcendent god, rather than the creator god. The transcendent god was believed to intercede in the imperfect world by offering his followers a means by which gnosis could be attained—by providing a redeemer or savior. In some Gnostic sects this redeemer was *Sophia*, the "wisdom" of God; in other sects it was her brother (or mate) *Christ*, and in some it was merely known as the *logos* or "word." The goal of the savior was to implement the separation of this mixture of physical matter and divine Light. The savior also served as an example for the individual soul in its quest to return to the world of Light.

An important Gnostic text called the *Pistis Sophia* or "World Soul," told the story of Sophia, who was once a heavenly being, but by a combination of ambition and deception had fallen into a chasm which was midway between the world of dense matter and the divine Light (echoing the human condition). Assisted by Jesus, the Savior, she gradually ascends through the ten Aeons, by repentance and faith, to reclaim her former station in the Light. This was yet another symbolic death and rebirth such as the type espoused by the

Greek mystery religions. One major difference is that in Gnosticism, the main mystery is that of the transcendence of the *Christos* as the savior.

All in all, the Gnostic view that humanity is part of an imprisoned god, is not so different from the view of most contemporary religions, which teach that the material world is an illusion while the spiritual world is a world of truth.

The general composition of Gnosticism was syncretic. It borrowed bits and pieces from other traditions, including Zoroastrian dualism of Light vs. Dark, the eastern belief in reincarnation, Babylonian astrology, and the reverence for secret (barbarous) names and words of power as used in the pagan mysteries. But what truly set Gnosticism apart was its conviction in the belief that spiritual truth was highly *personal.* This is one of the main tenets of Gnosticism that is still held in high regard by today's Hermeticists.

Neoplatonism

The later Hellenistic followers of Plato revered the early classical philosopher as a writer who had been divinely inspired. The teachings of Plotinus (204-270 C.E.) dominated Greek philosophy until the 6th century C.E. He criticized the Gnostic movement for what he considered a debasement of Plato's teachings. Although many of ideas promulgated by the Neoplatonists bore a certain resemblance to Gnostic ideas, one major exception was that an evil Demiurge who created and ruled a prison of matter was nowhere to be found in the teachings of Plotinus and his followers.

Plotinus managed to blend the rational logical approach to the nature of the universe, as embraced by the classical philosophers, with mystical experience. He interpreted the theories of Plato in the light of Hellenistic mysticism, in an attempt to account for spiritual experience, rather than to merely satisfy intellectual curiosity. He believed that God (*Hen*) was entirely outside of human comprehension.

The teachings of Plotinus contain the theory that the one God (*protos theos*—the "first god") creates various emanations (*hypostases*) endlessly from himself without diminishment, and the divine intellect (*nous*) is the main creation of God. All of these emanations were considered as degrees of Light-energy, which were independent of time and space. Intellect as Plotinus knew it, was not a cold philosophical abstraction, but rather a vital and jubilant state of perfection that has two goals: the first is to return to the Godhead, and the other is to seek unity and goodness for its own sake. For the later goal, intellect divides itself into several individual lives or focal points of creative energy, which correspond to the archetypal forms and concepts of

Plato. Plotinus also made a distinction between the spiritual experience obtained through contemplation of God, and the experience of ultimate union (or oneness) with the divine intellect.

According to Plotinus, there is a lower divine level known as the soul (*psyche*) which attempts to manifest the ideas born in the intellect. Through this process the natural world came into being. The natural world itself is composed of a concentrated entity known as the World Soul (*pantos psyche*), to which human beings are related through intellect, but not created by nature itself (humanity is within nature but not from nature). The psychological composition of humanity corresponds to this greater universe: the physical body corresponds to the physical world of matter, the soul or ordinary consciousness relates to the World Soul, and the higher perceptive faculties conform with the divine intellect. However, Plotinus believed that in most humans the higher intellectual powers are asleep, and it is the duty of the individual to arouse them. One of the goals of the Neoplatonist, was the unification of all three segments of the individual, a process which forecasts the objective of modern psychology by several centuries.

The method of awakening the intellect, Plotinus surmised, was through constant interaction in the natural world through reincarnation—something that took several lifetimes to achieve. The individual does not remember the previous incarnations because the eternal portion of consciousness is the Higher Self which is on the level of divine intellect. The Lower Self or personality is merely a reflection of the Higher. But the soul or psyche of the individual is incorruptible. Thus at death, the terrestrial experiences of the Lower Self are absorbed by the Higher Self before it again reflects itself forth into incarnation.

Plotinus did not promote either spiritual or magical practices, because he believed that the individual attained illumination by philosophical musing. However, he established the concept of the existence of altered states of consciousness. He also thought that the ultimate aim of human existence should be a return to the Godhead.

Another Neoplatonist who believed very much in the magical practices of *theurgy* was Iamblichus, who had a great interest in the Egyptian mysteries. The works of Iamblichus were very important to the later development of ceremonial magic.

One form of theurgic practice explored by Iamblichus was the invoking of a deity or spirit into a statue. (See Donald Tyson's article on *God-Making*.) Another practice was to invoke the deity into a person, resulting in complete identification with the deity in order to awaken the Higher Self. The goal of such Neoplatonic magical techniques was spiritual growth or the attainment of answers to spiritual questions concerning the nature of the universe.

In later times, Neoplatonist and Neo-Pythagorean magicians utilized the *Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster*, which dated from the 2nd century C.E. Although the *Oracles* have only survived to the present day in fragmentary form, they are quoted extensively in the rituals of the Golden Dawn.

The Qabalah

The Qabalah is the mystical belief system of the ancient Hebrews. The word *Qabalah* means "tradition," and refers to the ancient custom of passing esoteric knowledge from one initiate to the next, from mouth to ear. Qabalah encompasses a vast body of knowledge based upon archaic Jewish mysticism.

One of the most famous of the Qabalistic texts, known as the *Sepher Yetzirah* or *Book of Formation*, was in existence in the second or third century, around the time that the Hermetic books were being written. Several versions of the *Sepher Yetzirah* were passed around in oral form from about 100 B.C.E. to 200 C.E., when it was standardized in the form that we know it today. Qabalistic teachings that were presented in the *Book of Formation*, include the following ideas:

1. Humankind is made in the "image" or "reflec tion" of God. This also implies that humans have the power of creation, but to a lesser extent.
2. The creation of the physical universe was through a progression of numbers. The divine Creator expresses itself through a balanced and orderly numerical system.
3. These various numbers of progression, known as the ten Sephiroth or ten emanations of God, are connected with the one Source—or the idea that God is ONE, although God expresses its various divine qualities or aspects though number.
4. From the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, all things were created in progression, including the elements, the planets, the zodiacal signs, and the directions of space (called the *Cube of Space*) which is a model of the universe.

These early Qabalistic concepts already show the kind of syncretic fusion of philosophies that would later meld together into the Hermetic

Tradition, for the ancient Hebrew mystics who wrote the *Sepher Yetzirah* were already showing a blending of Persian, Egyptian, and Neoplatonic ideas, due to the Hellenization of Palestine and the multi-cultural contact that such colonization brought. And the basic Qabalistic theorem that the divine Creator made the universe with a logical progression of numbers, letters, and communication of divine concepts, speaks to the very heart of the Hermetic Tradition. Hermes-Thoth, the god of wisdom and communication, could not have said it better.[8]

Another aspect of early Qabalistic thought was Merkabah mysticism, which dates back to the 1st and 2nd centuries C.E. and is described in a text known as the *Greater Hekhaloth*. These teachings were influenced by Gnostic ideas and represent the Jewish method of the soul's ascent through the seven heavenly spheres to approach the throne-chariot of God (the *Merkabah*). At each level of the journey, the mystic must recite the names of several guardian angels and display magical seals. Then glorious revelations are imparted to the mystic concerning the workings of the divine universe. The Merkabah visions were very likely brought on by certain methods of purification, invocation, rhythmic breathing, and meditative techniques used to induce altered states of consciousness. Such techniques are well known to modern magicians.

The full flowering of the Qabalistic teachings did not occur within the Hermetic Tradition until much later during the Renaissance. It was then that the Tree of Life, in the form that we know it today, came into being. At that time, such individuals as Pico della Mirandola, Johann Reuchlin, and others blended Qabalah, Neoplatonism and Christianity together to create what we now call the Hermetic Qabalah.

The Hermetic Literature

As stated earlier, this body of knowledge is named after the classical Greek god Hermes (or Mercury)—the messenger and bestower of magic and wisdom, who was also identified with Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom. Later in the second century C.E., the figure of Hermes, complete with serpent-entwined Caduceus Wand, became immersed into the personage of *Hermes Mercurius Trismegistos* or Hermes the Thrice-Great. Hermes Trismegistos was said to be an ancient Egyptian priest and magician who was credited with writing forty-two books collectively known as the Hermetic literature, dealing with esoteric wisdom. These books, which include *The Emerald Tablet* and the *Divine Pymander* (or *Poimandres*), describe the creation of the universe, the soul of humanity, and the way to achieve spiritual rebirth.

Although the Hermetic books were not markedly different from other contemporary texts on magical philosophy, these works became extremely important because of the high position given to them by Renaissance thinkers and magicians. They were also judged to be acceptable to the Christian church for nearly 1500 years—highly unusual for books written by an Egyptian initiate who was named after a pagan god. And because of this remarkable acceptance, the books have had an important role in Western culture.

There were actually two classes of Hermetic literature, obviously not written by the same person. The first more popular and practical type, which dates to the 3rd century B.C.E., deals with practices such as astrology, alchemy, the secret properties of plants and gemstones (the system of occult correspondences), sympathetic magic, and making of talismans. The second more "learned" type, which dates from the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E., is comprised of several books about religious philosophy. Most important among these books are the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*. However, both types of Hermeticism, popular and learned, shared the same philosophical root.

Originating in Egypt under the guise of a body of knowledge from a single well-respected source (Hermes Trismegistos), the two stands of Hermeticism, like the two cultures of Egypt and Greece, came together. This was a reflection of the times, in which it became ever more difficult to distinguish Gnostics, Neoplatonists, and Hermeticists from one another. In fact, the reason why the Christian church did not attempt to eradicate the Hermetic literature, as it had done with other pagan books, was because many of the spiritual ideas embraced by the books were very similar to Christian principles. Thinking that the Hermetic books were much older than they actually were, Christian officials thought that they were the work of an enlightened ancient pagan who envisioned the forthcoming Christian "truths." Had they known that the books were penned by a more contemporary Hellenistic pagan thinker who was influenced by Gnostic and Neoplatonic ideas, they would have no doubt branded it as heresy.

The astrological, magical and alchemical portions of the Hermetic works formed the basis of what would later become known as Western ritual magic. Lists of occult correspondences, invocations of deities, and rituals for summoning spirits were all to be found in the Hermetica. The more philosophical ("learned") books even furnish a rationale for conducting experiments in ritual magic. However the greatest practical magic that was contained within the texts had to do with the perfecting of humanity—the recognition of the divine spark within the human soul—and the means by which this spark could be returned to the Godhead.

Hermes Trismegistos in the Renaissance

Once Christianity had completed its grip on power in the 4th century C.E., rival philosophies were eventually squelched. Here and there different Gnostic sects would again surface briefly, but the Hermetica, surprisingly, remained to a certain degree accepted by the established religious hierarchy. Early church fathers even sanctioned the inspirational books of Hermes. Thus when the social climate of the Dark Ages gave way to the Renaissance, the works of Hermes were already in a good position. Along with the renewal of interest in antiquity, the venerable name of Hermes Trismegistos was given new reverence.

In the mind of the Renaissance philosopher-magician, Hermes was a real person, who, along with Zoroaster and Moses, was thought of as one of the great teachers—the *prisci theogici* who had foreshadowed the teachings of Christ.

In 1460, a monk brought a manuscript of the *Corpus Hermeticum* to Cosimo de' Medici, one of the most powerful and influential nobles in northern Italy. Three years later, Marsilio Ficino was commissioned to translate the book. The works of Hermes were considered so important, that Ficino had to put aside translation of the entire works of Plato until after the *Corpus* had been translated.

For the following two centuries, Hermes' high reputation as one of the *prisci theogici* remained unchallenged. However, in 1614 a scholar by the name of Issac Casaubon confirmed that the author of the Hermetica lived during the post-Christian era—not during the distant times of ancient Egypt. But Casaubon's view was largely ignored, for several mystical thinkers who came after him in the 17th century, such as Robert Fludd and Athanasius Kircher, continued to venerate the thrice-great Hermes.

The Art of Hermes Today

> *If the essence and perfection of all good are comprehended in the Gods, and the first and ancient power of them is with us priests (theurgists), and if by those who similarly adhere to more excellent natures and genuinely obtain a union with them, the beginning and end of all good is earnestly pursued; if this be the case, here the contemplation of truth, and the possession of intellectual science are to be found. And a knowledge of the Gods is accompanied with...the knowledge of ourselves.*[9]

The Occult Revival of the 19th century brought an increased interest in the Hermetic Tradition. With the teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the name of Hermes was invoked to describe a system of Western occultism which combined the many scattered threads of the Hermetic Tradition into a unified body of teaching designed to improve the spiritual health of humanity. The two halves of the tradition, practical and philosophical, were joined; reuniting elements which had been ignorantly separated ages ago by church elders. Consequently, Hermeticism began to enjoy a second renaissance, centuries after the first. The books of Hermes, although always available, were again drawn out into the bright light of day.

It can be said that the figure of Hermes has been noticeably present during the three great revolutions in Western religious history—around the time of the birth of Christ, during the Renaissance and Reformation period, and at the close of the last century (right up to the present). However, Hermes Trismegistos is no longer looked upon as an ancient harbinger of Christianity. The Hermetic Tradition of today, above all else, extols the Gnostic idea that direct personal revelation and experience are essential to spiritual growth. It has adopted certain principles of Greek philosophy, the magical practices of the ancient Egyptians, and the ritual drama of the pagan mystery religions.

In this issue of *The Golden Dawn Journal*, the reader will find several articles by Hermeticists of the 1990's, who together prove that the Western Esoteric Tradition is not only alive and well—it is expanding in its accumulation of magical and mystical knowledge. These authors come from various Hermetic schools of thought, and therefore represent perfectly the kind of amalgamation that created the Hermetic Tradition in the first place.

Aided by a renewal of interest in the subject and the availability of books, today's magicians can look back across the ages and detect the various strands that together have been woven into Hermes' cloak. In the present, they can examine these threads without having to conform to any one source or doctrine; be it the tenets of Plato, the religious laws of the ancient Qabalists, the extreme materialism of the Stoics, or the drastic dualism between spirit and matter of the ancient Gnostics. And in the future, magicians will be well equipped to forge new magical traditions with roots that are planted solidly in ancient and fertile soil.

Some of the articles presented in this issue of the *Journal* deal specifically with Hermes, the archetypal founder of the Hermetic Tradition. The works of Hermes, including *The Emerald Tablet* and the *Divine Pymander*, are examined at length. Many of these articles include new pathworkings, invocations, and rituals dedicated to the Thrice-

Great One. Another important deity is Isis, goddess of the magical arts, who also figures prominently here. The Qabalistic and Hermetic speculations of the Renaissance humanists Pico della Mirandola, Joannes Reuchlin, Christian Knorr Rosenroth, and Henry Moore are explored, in addition to the Hermetic lodge traditions of Masonry, and the influences of both on the Golden Dawn. The ancient Theurgic practice of god-making is investigated, as well as magical grimoires, and symbols of growth in the Hermetic arts. Finally, the article called *The Pillar of Osiris* describes a ritual drama done in the style of a modern-day initiation into the Graeco-Egyptian mysteries.

We trust that the reader will use any knowledge gleaned from this book, through the gracious wisdom of Trismegistos, to expand the Art of Hermes into daily life and practice, and become one of the contemporary living links in the unbroken chain of the Western Mystery Tradition. For as *The Kybalion* states:

> *There were always a few to tend faithfully the Altar of the Truth, upon which was kept alight the Perpetual Lamp of Wisdom. These men devoted their lives to the labor of love which the poet has so well stated in his lines: "O, let not the flame die out! Cherished age after age in its dark cavern—in its holy temples cherished. Fed by pure ministers of love—let not the flame die out!"*[10]

Endnotes

[1] Marvin Meyer & Richard Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1994), p. 135.

[2] In Golden Dawn rituals, the Highest is always invoked first.

[3] Francis King, *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*. (London: Neville Spearman, 1971), p. 33.

[4] Compare this to the Qabalistic principle that the Sephiroth are all specific aspects of God, each connected with the one divine Source, but having different qualities and attributions.

[5] Comparable with the *Rashith ha Gilgalim* or "first whirlings" of the Qabalah.

[6] Compare this to the three main parts of the soul in Qabalah.

[7] For more information on the teachings of the Greek philosophers and Greek magic in general, see David Godwin's excellent book *Light in Extension.*

[8] For a more extensive overview of Qabalistic teachings, refer to *The Golden Dawn Journal—Book 2: Qabalah: Theory and Magic.* (Llewellyn, 1994).

[9] From *The Mysteries* by Iamblichus.

[10] From *The Kybalion* by Three Initiates.

Hermes Mercurius

Hermes: The Chief Patron of Magick

William Stoltz

Was he one or many, merging
Name and fame in one,
Like a stream, to which, converging,
Many streamlets run?

Who shall call his dreams fallacious?
Who has searched and sought
All the unexplored and spacious
Universe of thought?

Who in his own skill confiding,
Shall with rule and line
Mark the boarder-land dividing
Human and divine?

Trismegistus! Three times greatest!
How thy name sublime
Has descended to this latest
Progeny of time! [1]

Hermes, the Greek God of the planet Mercury, belongs to an ancient and widespread family of myths. He appears in many cultures, times, and guises including: Egypt's Thoth and Anubis, the Babylonian Nabu, Mercury—the Roman version of Hermes, Merlin from the Arthurian legends, Hiram Ibif (Hermes-Ibis) the legendary founder of Freemasonry, Hermes of the Greeks, and even St. Christopher prior to his untimely demise from the Christian pantheon. However, it is the name Hermes, or Hermes Trismegistos, from which the Hermetic Tradition derives its name and Magical relevance.

Whether Hermes or Thoth, his Egyptian counterpart (also called Hermes Trismegistos), existed as an actual incarnate being or not, is a matter of debate. The Masonic Tradition will go out on a limb to affix a specific date (year of the world 2670) while other sources leave the question open to broader possibilities.[2] One theory, and perhaps the most credible, suggests that several authors contributed to the corpus of Hermetic works credited to Hermes-Thoth. Therefore Hermes Trismegistos (Thrice Great Hermes) may have been a pen-name used by apostles of the early Hermetic Tradition, not unlike Egyptian pharaohs or priests, using names of patron deities such as Ptah for a prefix. Whatever the

historical facts are about Hermes, all fingers eventually point to a peculiar ancient and deific presence containing identical powers, attributes, and similarities in their myths. Furthermore, as the central patron of the Hermetic Tradition, Hermes-Thoth is a being representing the manifestation of the human mind—a mind that, as a whole, operates as a transconscious entity creating its own unique history and mythos.

The Great God Hermes

Why is Hermes-Thoth considered the patron of Magick and master Magician within the Western Hermetic Tradition? Part of this answer may be found within his genealogy and birth stories. Hermes himself was secretly conceived by Zeus, the father of the Gods, and Maia (or Faun), the Goddess of the fields and daughter of Atlas. Hermes' birth was said to have taken place in a cave at dawn, or twilight, thereby placing him between the principles of light and darkness, as is common in his myths. From birth he was a master of light and darkness, the known and unknown, the heights and the depths, and favored by his companion deities—deities that entrusted him with the role of divine herald and messenger. The traditional Greek story describes him as a babe, barely a day old, when he stirred up Olympus by stealing the cattle of Apollo. This was just the beginning of his long reputation as a precocious youth whose divine mischief was repeatedly overlooked and even supported by his fellow deities. Among all the Gods and Goddesses only Hermes appears to have the unusual powers to move and act freely thoughout all worlds and domains, with something similar to diplomatic immunity. Another important piece of symbolism is in his travels to other worlds. These always resulted in one form of transformation or another, to the other characters and the myth itself, despite the fact that Hermes remained basically unchanged. Regardless of his cultural myth, he is consistently considered a true archetypal Magician and master of transformation. It should also be stressed that although the Mercurial Gods were known as tricksters, and were at times behind some form of tragedy or another, they are more universally known for their generosity and benevolence.

Anubis, a manifestation of Thoth or Tahuti,[3] has a similar birth story to that of Hermes. Anubis was initially conceived by Nephthys[4] (the dark sister of Isis[5]) and Osiris who represented the creative principle, husband, and sometimes brother of Isis. In this myth, Set, the destructive shadow of Osiris and husband of Nephthys, found out about the divine indiscretion and decided to destroy the unborn Anubis. To escape Set's wrath, Anubis sprang out of the side of Nephthys prematurely and was rescued by the nurturing, and apparently very

understanding, Isis. It was Isis who nursed and protected Anubis from the destructive intent of Set, until he established his independence from her. The allegorical elements imbedded in this myth show Anubis inheriting powers unique to the Mercurial Gods; born of and between the realms of light and darkness (conscious and unconscious) through the creative, and usually clandestine act, of a prototypal male.

This formula is also repeated in the stories of Mercury—the Roman adaptation of Hermes. Both Hermes and Mercury are depicted as ithyphalic youths, wearing winged sandals and headdresses, carrying the winged serpent staff, and hovering between the sky and earth. These remarkable beings were widely known as the shrewdest and most cunning of all the deities—swift and graceful in motion. They appeared in more myths than any other single deity.[6] Mercury is well known as a God of the twilight in addition to a guide of the dead and messenger of the Gods.

Hermes—The Magickal Mind

Mythology evolved as a language to express what could not be expressed in other ways. Its use of image, story and metaphor is an ancient, universal form of psychology used to explore and express the mysteries of the soul and nature. The various mythic characters, places and events are also metaphors for different archetypes, levels of the psyche and developmental experiences that are interwoven in the spiritual topography of the stories. For example: Hermes is the bringer of dreams (the dream maker and its process), messenger of the Gods (intuition and creative inspiration), patron to thieves and tricksters (creator of illusion and fantasy), and the guide of souls through the underworld (the process of consciousness moving through and within the unconscious mind). He is the inner transconscious presence continually designing and weaving the fabric of our internal and external existence.

Realizing the Hermes-Thoth archetype is a significant entry point into one's personal mythic journey and Magickal life. Many traditional myths and stories contain the theme of a young traveler who, beginning a mysterious adventure, happens upon an equally mysterious and eccentric guide. As the traveler journeys through strange lands populated by foreign creatures and beings, not all of whom are friendly, the guide Magickally appears and disappears at key times and places. This was an important element in the Arthurian myth where Merlin would move in and out of the lives of Arthur and Uther Pendragon. Although elusive in his comings and goings, Merlin was always a powerful and ever-present influence central to the legend. Whether it was Merlin guiding a path to Excalibur or the Grail, Jason

discovering the Golden Fleece, Perseus reclaiming his love of Andromeda, or numerous other adventurers finding their names among the stars, the story is the same. Victory is achieved on the strength and perseverance of the traveler—but not without the invisible hand of a wise and skillful guide to lead the way.

Other examples of Hermes' myths and attributes that will be explored in this article include a broad aggregate of Magickal powers and titles. The major categories of these, followed by a more detailed examination of each, include:

1. The Messenger and Herald of the Gods.
2. The Psychopomp, Guide of Travelers and Opener of the Ways.
3. The Artist, Inventor of Language, Writing and Music.
4. The Master Magician and Overseer of Divination.

The Messenger

As Messenger of the Gods, Hermes-Thoth dominates the role of mediator between mortals and immortals.[7] Even Anubis is known as the messenger of Osiris and was ordered by Ra, the sun God, to ensure that Osiris achieved immortality. This particular role is important in Hermetic Magick because it links the archetype with the powers of intuition, imagination, inspiration, and consequently the experience of annunciation. The annunciation, or Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, is symbolized in the tarot trump *The Lovers*, which is conveniently titled, "Children of the Voice Divine—the Oracles of the Mighty Gods." This identifies *The Lovers* card with the voice of transcendent knowledge coming from beyond the Veil, or Abyss, that divides the eternal from the temporal worlds. In some tarot decks this divine knowledge is symbolically transmitted by the Mercurial Archangel, Raphael, while the Crowley deck shows a stylized figure of the Hermit, or Psychopomp, rending the Veil of the Abyss. In the traditional Golden Dawn card, Perseus is depicted in his Hermes guise rescuing the soul, Andromeda, from the dark powers of the Lower Self.[8] Regardless of the variant styles, these figures are consistent with the ability of the Hermes archetype to intervene on behalf of the aspiring soul. The Hermes-Thoth figure is a moving force behind the process and mythos of transformation and redemption. Always, he was the master guide and mentor behind the journey of the solar heroes Perseus, King Arthur, Apollo, Osiris, and many others. As a personal

archetype, he depicts that deep state of the human psyche which subtly transforms the uninitiated soul into an evolving hero or adept.

These ideas are further amplified in some of the Golden Dawn rituals (particularly the Neophyte grade) where no less than three officers carry the functions of Hermes-Thoth.[9] Furthermore, the Neophyte formula represented in the Z.1. document, "The Enterer of the Threshold," revolves around a Hermetic genesis formula uttered by the voice of Thoth in the *"General and Particular Exordium"* that follows:

The General Exordium

The Speech in the Silence:
The Words against the Son of Night:
The Voice of Thoth before the Universe
in the presence of the eternal Gods:
The Formulas of Knowledge:
The Wisdom of Breath:
The Radix of Vibration:
The Shaking of the Invisible:
The Rolling Asunder of the Darkness:
The Becoming Visible of Matter:
The Piercing of the Coils of the Stooping Dragon:
The Breaking forth of the Light:
All these are in the Knowledge of Tho-oth.[10]

The Particular Exordium

At the Ending at the Night: At the Limits of the Light:
Tho-oth stood before the Unborn Ones of Time!
Then was formulated the Universe:
Then came forth the Gods thereof:
The Aeons of the Bornless Beyond:
Then was the Voice vibrated:
Then was the Name declared.
At the Threshold of the Entrance,
Between the Universe and the Infinite,
In the Sign of the Enterer, stood Tho-oth,
As before him were the Aeons proclaimed.
In Breath did he vibrate them:
In Symbols did he record them:
For betwixt the Light and Darkness did he stand.

This document describes the symbolic basis for the Neophyte, and the symbolism necessary to initiate a candidate into the Hermetic Tradition—a tradition which emphasizes the restoration of the intuitive, rational, and instinctual levels of the soul.

Normally, and on a more practical level, it is in the psychological nature of *intuition, inspiration,* and *imagination* that we see the shadowing of the Higher Soul at work in the unrealized Self. It is also in the nature of these three transpersonal states that Hermes is most evident and tangible. In my work as a therapist (and reader) I will often intervene on a client's assumed limitations to a problem, or inquiry, by slipping in a question such as—what does your intuition tell you? The usual response, before they know what they are saying, is a remarkable piece of advice or insight. This is characteristic of the psyche's insight and creativity when it is given a chance to cultivate them in an open and validating fashion. These inner resources are also utilized on a regular basis in the fields of therapeutic hypnosis and creative imagery, where the Mercurial states are used in a wide range of techniques to enhance body/mind healing and inner alchemy. I have observed some of the most remarkable phenomena occur in these areas when the deep inner mind is allowed to work unobstructed by one's ego, behavior patterns, and belief systems. The inner messenger speaks to various levels of Self in the languages inherent to its nature and disposition—and in a way that transcends the normal assumptions of time and space. (The transconscious is a time machine that can use memory to conjure the past, or the imagination to travel to the future.) This inter-psychic presence brings a unitive and healing influence to the body, mind, and soul of the individual, in addition to its ability to transform rather ordinary experience into the extraordinary.

The Psychopomp

In the role of Psychopomp, the Hermes archetype surpasses all other mythological figures. The term "Psychopomp" refers to the one who guides souls to other worlds. It is generally and falsely assumed that he guides the soul to the underworld or Hades only. His full function is more obvious in a Roman myth of Mercury, guiding Psyche (soul) into Hades to retrieve a gift from Persephone. Following her descent into the underworld, it was again Mercury who guided her into the realm of the Divine Ones, at which point she became immortalized by Jupiter. The statement made by this myth is of the utmost importance to students of Hermetics. It supports the notion of the Mercurial aspect of Self as the guide to the most subterranean parts of the

unconscious, to the presence of the superconscious, and eventually integration, illumination, and immortality.[11]

Both Hermes and Anubis hold the titles of: Opener of the Ways, Opener of Roads, Psychopomp, and the God of the Crossroads. *Hermanabus*, a Graeco-Egyptian synthesis of Hermes and Anubis, is a very obscure figure who evolved from the crossover of these two mythologies and their cultures. The God of the Crossroads is an ancient and universal archetype representing the intuition, insight, and instinct needed to choose the correct path when we humans are faced with crossroads in our lives. At these crucial points the proper insight and guidance may make the difference between choosing a path of providence—or one of ill fate. In times of need, people today will consult clergy, therapists, lawyers, psychics, or travel agents, whose professions are under the jurisdiction of Hermes. In ancient times his image, or simple stone markers, were often placed at the junctions of roads or paths to serve as a reminder of "That which watches over us." Even the pre-Christian roles of Hermes as the *Divine Pymander* (good shepherd) and patron to travelers, thieves, and merchants was so resilient, they where incorporated by the Catholic Church as aspects of Christ and St. Christopher.

The Psychopomp is further illustrated in the tarot by *The Hermit* card. The Hermit is the Light Bearer who secretly opens the pathways to occult wisdom and sees that the aspirant is brought, in due time, to the light of the greater mysteries. He is at once our Magickal will and imagination functioning as the mediator between and within the poles of our higher and lower natures. He is the Transconscious Self whose Magickal Title is, "Magus of the Voice of Light, the Prophet of the Gods." As a lower expression of the primal Mercury (in the Magician) the Hermit has been transformed into the image of a sage—to represent the wisdom of the concealed mind. The title allocated here from the Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom is called "the Intelligence of Will." This is not to be mistaken as the mundane will or desire, but rather the will of the innermost and secret Self silently drawing the ego and personality to its light.

The Artist

It can never be said that Hermes is a stingy God. He is renowned as the patron of the arts and sciences and the giver of the gifts of science, letters, language, music, and medicine to the human race. This generosity was often reflected in his myths, such as when he gave gifts of the Caduceus Wand to Asclepius the God of healing,[12] a sword and shield to the hero Perseus, music and the lyre to Apollo, and the pipes to the God Pan.

His role as artist, a principle creator, also links him to the tarot trump *The Magician* which is allocated to the Hebrew letter, Beth, which

means "house." The relevance of Beth is its ability to transmute the formless cosmic energy of Spirit, represented by Kether, into numberless forms, images, and meanings; thus becoming the shape-maker who creates through and within all planes of existence. In this respect he manifests as the mind of reason, capable of the most wonderful creations, but equally capable of weaving fantasy and illusion. To invoke this aspect of Mercury, therefore, is to call upon truth and illusion, the Logos and Lord Maya *simultaneously*—a presence as perilous as it is illuminating. Yet the aspect of divine artist, above all, represents one's individual *will to create* from the deep well of the imagination. It does not matter if one's art is painting, building, healing, writing, or Magick, since the creative process is basically the same; drawing statements of beauty and mystery from the seemingly mundane and ordinary.

The Magician

All previously mentioned aspects of this archetype come together in that of the Magician. The Magician, Hermes, and the Magickal Mind are one and the same. The Magician therefore embodies the qualities of: guide, artist, teacher, healer, mystic, seer, philosopher, poet, and lunatic in one. Such a person has acquired awareness of his/her true nature and chosen a life consistent with its own unique purpose and design—one often colored with a healthy mixture of wisdom, wit, and simplicity.

The archetypal presence of Hermes-Thoth has for millennia been known as the Chief Magician and overseer of divination. No form of ritual, act of Magick, or process of divination begins without first invoking him—whether it be conscious or not. Regarding his place in prophecy and divination, he is also widely known to bring prophetic dreams, and is credited as the inventor and guardian of the tarot.[13] This is not to suggest the tarot can only be used for divination. If the Hermetic Magickal Tradition has the equivalent of a Bible anywhere, it would have to be in the tarot.

The main figure in the tarot trump *The Magician* is traditionally depicted standing before a table whereupon lay the Elemental Weapons. These implements represent the basic powers and levels of the soul, and of nature, under the dominion of the realized Self which organizes and controls them.[14] One common interpretation of this card shows the Magician with an upraised right hand, symbolizing the directing will, and a lowered left hand pointing toward his field of awareness, representing the power of the creative imagination.

The subject of Magick and the skill of a Magician, to a great degree, hinge upon the psychic capacities of will and imagination. In the Western Tradition they are represented by the Wand and Cup, or

Yod and *He*, the principle powers of Tetragrammaton symbolizing the archetypal Father and Mother principles. When these two great powers are wedded together they are often represented in Hermetic symbolism as the divine androgen—itself representing a form of the alchemical Mercury. The images of this androgen, or archetypal Mercury, are quite common throughout the 12th to 18th century alchemical writings of Flamel, Valentinus, and other notable luminaries; emblems that now appear in the *Temperance*, or *Art* card, of the tarot. Now, this is not to suggest that in order to become a Magician a man must become more feminine or a woman more masculine. The popular trend to encourage androgyny and compromise more variant gender differences is utter nonsense. This assumption arises out of a misconceived model concocted and supported by lay sociologists holding degrees in social work and psychology. These people hardly understand the concepts of integrity, individuality, and personality, let alone Magick or Mysticism. There is no standard of how a Magickal personality is to evolve, since it is based on a developmental model of individuation—that is, reclaiming the unique and hidden nature of the Divine Genius. What is necessary within the developmental process is a solid esoteric training of the ordinary will and imagination. Without training and discipline, these two components cannot become the true vehicles of the Genius or the instruments of the Magician they need (and are intended) to be. Additionally it is in the mundane faculties of volition (will) and reflection (imagination) that we find the lower octave of the very heart and mind of the HGA or Divine Self. In this respect they are at once the source and the means by which we attain union with the HGA and continue to tap its creative power.

Practical Working: Constructing a Hermes Shrine

A shrine is a center of power and focus built up around a particular deity or principle. It should, above all, be a sacred space that has been properly selected, ornamented and consecrated to the deity (in this case Hermes-Thoth) by whatever skill the individual or group may possess. When this is done properly the shrine will act as a lens whereby the intended presence can be concentrated and converted to personal use. Its design can and should vary depending on the system, person or group using it. It can be an old established site with traditional appearance, or one highly personalized and more or less temporary, as long as it is set apart from the mundane world.

Some excellent instructions are given in Crowley's *Liber Astarte* on how to construct and use such a place.[15] What will eventually make it more than a curiosity is what you personally do with it in your heart

of hearts. It is absolutely necessary to find the passion and energy within to breathe life and fire into the heart of the shrine. Therefore, when Crowley said *"inflame thyself with prayer,"* he was stating the formula to supply the initial flame whereby to call down the fire from Heaven, and thus illuminate the shrine of the heart, and its outer reflection which the Magician has created. In this way devotion becomes a direct vehicle of transformation and can initiate experiences of a transpersonal dimension. The most exquisite ritual or shrine is, for all practical purposes, empty and magically dead without applying this formula—and yet the simplest of these, through Magickal devotion, becomes a radiant portal between the worlds of spirit and form.

Ideally, a shrine should be adorned with a statue or emblem essential to the deity's nature. In this case a statue or picture of most any Mercurial deity will work. The Caduceus or winged serpent staff, the most universal emblem of Hermes, is an excellent symbol to have present. The shrine should also be decorated with other things held sacred or sympathetic to a deity's nature. Here it may include various gem stones, symbols, flora and colors appropriate to Hermes.[16] For example; Mercurial gems include opal, carnelian and agate; symbols would be the Caduceus, the Magickal book and pen, the vessel of sanctified water, a flame, and the tarot deck; the flora include the palm tree, lavender, almond and medicinal herbs; for incense, mastic, storax and yellow sandalwood are appropriate; and for colors, orange, yellows, silver and blue.[17] I personally like the presence of a tarot deck at any ritual or working of Hermes-Thoth. The tarot (and I am referring to a deck drafted within the Hermetic and Qabalistic system) embodies so much of the Hermetic spirit and teachings that it readily provides an excellent vehicle to attract Hermes' presence. It is by far the most powerful and complete Mercury talisman I can think of. You may also consider more modern icons sympathetic with the nature of Mercury. Here I have found the use of objects (or talismans) such as a driver's license, passport, airline tickets, Mercury dimes and the like, effectively appealing to the unorthodox side of this deity.

Ritual and Invocation

Ritual and invocation are particularly potent when used in conjunction with a shrine or properly arranged Altar. This form of Ceremonial Magick provides a living structure in which to celebrate a concealed mystery in an outer form. In the case of Hermes-Thoth, I suggest personalizing the ritual along the lines of specific qualities you would like to invoke. If you are invoking Hermes as Logos, select *The Magician* card, invoke him at dawn, and use sympathetic symbols such as the Magickal book,

Elemental Weapons, and Tree of Life. In contrast, if the Psychopomp is preferred, you would use *The Hermit* card, invoke him at dusk or night, and use associations of the subconscious and unconscious planes.

One can also adopt rituals along established traditions such as those of the Golden Dawn or the Aurum Solis. The best examples within a G.D. context include "The Invocation of Hermes-Thoth" in *The Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple* (pp. 95-102), and two "Tarot Consecration Rituals" from *The New Golden Dawn Ritual Tarot* (pp. 166-185).[18] The Aurum Solis has developed a solid system of planetary workings, including a broad range of Mercurial workings outlined in the book *Planetary Magick*, by Denning & Phillips.[19] This book provides an excellent system for working each of the planetary powers, their ruling deities, and various types of work including talismanic Magick, planetary blessings, and dream work.

The following Hermes ritual is fairly eclectic and easily adapted to various degrees of complexity and levels of work, depending on the ingenuity and purpose of the ritualist. If one wishes to use a Mercurial deity other then Hermes (i.e., Thoth or Nabu) it is a simple matter of changing the name and visualization to that corresponding Godform. My personal preference is to avoid mixing pantheons in the same ceremony and to keep planetary workings as uncomplicated as possible. In light of this, the following ritual could be streamlined more by adapting a very simple opening and closing—yet leaving the invocations and visualizations intact.

THE RITE OF HERMES

Arrange the Altar/shrine in either the East or the center of the ritual space. Upon the Altar should be: one white candle positioned in the center, one smaller orange votive just West of this, incense in the East, a Wand in the South, a Cup of Water in the West, Mercurial stones or talisman in the North and all other Mercurial items placed as desired. If using an image (i.e., *The Magician* or *Hermit* card) or statue of the God, and the ritual is to manifest on the outer and conscious level, place the image Northeast facing East. However, if the rite reflects aspects of the Psychopomp, dream work and the nature of the unconscious, the image may be placed in the Southwest facing West. (These positions reflect the rising and setting influences of the sun—and also the stations most frequently used by the Kerux, or Anubis, in the G.D.

Neophyte Hall). For general purposes any statue or picture should be in the center or Eastern quarter of the Altar. Regarding the ideal times for a Mercury working, one can either refer to the *Table of Planetary Hours* (available in many occult books), or perform it on Wednesday at sunrise or sunset—these being his most sacred day and times. However, one should not be overly concerned with the particular times of a ritual, with the exception of solar and lunar workings and their tides. I have seen rituals that were meticulously timed and performed become complete duds, while other more impromptu and casual ceremonies had absolutely stunning results. This is particularly true of the Mercurial deities. Due to their rather oblique and versatile natures they can usually be invoked outside the conventional perimeters of occult rules without a problem.

Before beginning the ritual proper, it is always a good idea to do some kind of relaxation in addition to a practice for activating the centers of power. A good technique for relaxation and centering is the "Fourfold Rhythmic Breathing" given in the First Knowledge Lecture of the Golden Dawn. Concerning the activation of the centers, the Golden Dawn's Middle Pillar Ritual, or the Rousing of the Citadels from the Aurum Solis, are both good techniques to employ.

Begin by lighting the white candle, followed by the incense. Then standing in the center of the temple facing East, aspire to the Divine and recite the following invocation:

> *Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe! Holy art Thou, Whom Nature hath not Formed! Holy art Thou, the Vast and the Mighty One! Lord of the Light and the Darkness!*

Establish a parameter of protection by performing the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP) and/or the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Hexagram (LBRH) if you know them. (Note: If you are invoking Hermes-Thoth as Magus and Lord of the elements, and would like a more "high church" ritual, perform a Supreme Invoking Ritual of The Pentagram, or even a Watchtower Ritual, after the purification and consecration.)

As an alternative, (or a follow-up of the previous step) proceed with the following purification and consecration.

Take the white candle and trace a bluish-white clockwise circle moving East, South, West, North, and back to East. Standing Northeast facing West, raise the flame and/or Wand, and with authority say: "*HEKAS, HEKAS, ESTE BEBELOI!*" ("Be gone, be gone, all that is profane.")

Next, bring the Cup of sanctified Water to the East and while making a downward pointed triangle ▽ (moving clockwise from the bottom point), say:

> *So therefore first the priest who governeth the works of Fire must sprinkle with the Water of the loud—resounding Sea.*

Then sprinkle three times in that direction. Repeat this in the other directions, moving clockwise. Upon returning East—raise the cup and say: *"I have purified with water."*

Now bring the incense to the East and make an upward pointing triangle △ (moving clockwise from the top point over the Water triangle to form a hexagram ✡) in the air saying:

> *Thou shalt behold the holy and formless Fire shining and flashing through the depths of the Universe: Hear thou the voice of Fire.*

Follow the same procedure as in the previous step, but on returning East—raise the Censer and say: *"I have consecrated with Fire."*

Return to the West of the Altar, replace incense, and face East across it. (Note: At this point, if you would like a more formal invocation of Spirit, I recommend performing the Rose Cross Ritual [R.C.R.] from the G.D. Inner Order curriculum. This will enhance the unifying light of Spirit in the midst of the elements. In addition, it will form an astral web that will help hold the energies of the ritual in a balanced state. Another little known effect about the R.C.R. is that once it is properly executed, the basic structure never entirely dissolves on the astral level. When it does begin to fade, which it will in time, you can simply use a clear visualization of the structure and the "Analysis of the Key Word" to bring it fully back to life.)

Stand before the Altar. From the white flame, kindle the smaller orange votive.

Relax and begin to visualize a field of rich orange light surrounding the top of the Altar. As it grows in size and intensity visualize, as though woven within it, a latticework of gold and silver light strands resembling the pattern of DNA molecules.[20]

Allow these images to develop while slowly reciting the following invocation:

> *O thou swift and unconstrained traveler in the Ways between the Worlds, Divine imparter of secret tidings to Gods and to humankind, bountiful bestower of aid in Art Magick!— Knowledge and skill, rite and high result are thine to impart! Thine are the Tongues and the Numbers, thine the Signs and the Sigils and the words of Power. Thine it is to heal, and to teach, and to watch upon the way. Hail to thee!*[21]

From within the luminous field now visualize Hermes manifesting—as if coming forward out of a mist. He appears as a sleek and graceful youth, wearing winged sandals and helmet, and is suspended between the earth and the sky. Although he is predominantly gold-orange or silver in color, he will appear to have a shifting prismatic sheen about him. As this figure grows in size and dimension, you will also notice a Caduceus Wand in his upraised right hand, and what at first appeared as DNA spirals, you now recognize as numerous living Uraei populating his auric field.

Bringing your hands over the Altar, make the sign of "The Rending of The Veil," as though you are spreading open a curtain and say:

> *Lord of the radiant staff about which the two serpents are entwined! Exalted herald of the Gods! Thee I Invoke! Divine Messenger and bringer of dreams! Protector and Guide of humanity! Thee I invoke! Swift Lord of oracles! Giver of light to the mind! Patron of the Arts and Sciences! Thee I Invoke! Divine Scribe and Lord of the sacred texts! Thou who art known as HERMES, the Lord of Magick! I Invoke you to enter this sacred place and grant unto me your Wisdom and Powers. Thus may I at length comprehend and unite with, the hidden forces that move through the Universe, so that I may be better able to embrace and complete the Great Work.*[22]

Raise the Wand with your right hand and imagine your breathing pattern mirroring that of the figure before you. As you do this, visualize and feel the influence and light of Hermes entering your sphere of sensation to the extent that you can feel his image shaping itself within your aura. As you bring yourself into harmony with this archetype, relax into it and imagine yourself moving forward, or backward,

in time. Gradually experience yourself acquiring the qualities and powers of this archetype. See and feel yourself becoming more like Hermes and mentally practice the various skills and powers attributed to him. For example, see yourself night after night awakened in your dreams by Hermes giving you guidance and instruction in tarot, divination, healing, Magick or any number of skills native to him. Continue to meditate on this experience for as long as you like; paying particular attention to any insights or communications you may receive. As you finish the meditation, gently orient yourself to place and time and say:

> *I have known your breath as my breath, your mind as my mind, your heart as my heart, and your form as my form. I have acquired the skill and wisdom of Hermes—Hail to thee great Lord of Art, Magick and Wisdom—Hail to thee from the center of my everlasting Soul!*

See the Godform withdraw now and recite the following (slightly updated version of *The Farewell to (Hermes) the God:*

> *I give thee thanks, O Lord Hermes. Depart O Lord, to thine own heavens, thine own realms, thine own course, preserving me in health, free from all harm, free from all fear of any ka, free from all strife, and all dismay, hearken to me for all the days of my life!*[23]

Make the sign of "The Closing of The Veil" over the Altar.

Extinguish the flame of the orange votive. Purify and consecrate the working space again.[24]

Perform the LBRP and/or the LBRH if they were used in the opening. Close the ritual with a license to depart by saying:

> *I now release any Beings or Spirits attracted to this work. Return to your habitations and abodes and may the Blessings of Divine Providence go with thee.*

Finally, extinguish the white candle and say: *"So Mote It Be!"*

Make a complete record of your operation in your Magickal diary.

The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistos

The *Emerald Tablet* is one of the most profound of all texts attributed to Hermes Trismegistos. One legend reports that the text was originally carved with a diamond on a large piece of emerald by Hermes himself. This artifact was supposedly found, cradled on the chest of Hermes, in an Egyptian tomb by Alexander the Great.[25] Outside of the more dubious origins of this text, some of the earlier recorded renditions include a Latin translation dating from the 11th century or earlier, and the Arabic version extant by the 8th century. Despite its size—this diminutive text totals only twelve brief statements—and the fact it survives outside the more widely accepted body of Trismegistic literature, the *Emerald Tablet*'s formulas, axioms, and allegories are entirely compatible with the alchemical and Hermetic Tradition. It is also interesting, whether coincidence or not, that the first ten assertions of the text conceptually match the ten Sephiroth from the Tree of Life with remarkable similarities. As for the remaining two assertions, they appear to be descriptive notes and summaries about the author, and his function, and not a natural progression of the text's philosophy and ideas.

Like other writings of this nature, interpretation may take place on several different levels simultaneously and carry a different set of interpretations and dialogue, depending on the system using it. My own commentary accompanying this text will therefore be limited to ideas along Hermetic and Qabalistic lines—with the inclusion of compatible notes from Eastern systems. The limitations of my own, or any other comment on a work of this nature, is readily overcome by individual meditation and exploration on each of the *Tablet*'s assertions. This will also help bring the *Tablet* to life within the psyche of the student as it is meant to be.

The original text of the *Tablet* will be shown in itallic, followed by my commentary in standard type. (This translation of the text is from the Latin version which can be found in Burckhardt's *Alchemy*.)

> 1. *In truth certainly and without doubt, whatever is below is like that which is above, and whatever is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.*

"*In truth certainly and without doubt*" appears to be addressing two levels of validity unless Hermes is beginning this with a stutter—which I very much doubt. It suggests "*certainly*" as the principle and universal, while "*without doubt*" addresses the individual incarnate mind. The now famous "as above so below" axiom is the foundation principle for the law of correspondence used so frequently in medita-

tion and Magick (as in the 777 correspondences and the early work of Cornelius Agrippa). Furthermore its Qabalistic equivalent "Kether is in Malkuth as Malkuth is in Kether" denotes extreme, but essential, interrelated polarities producing the divine interactive process of creation. In yet another regard this passage resolves any apparent moral dualism arising between spirit and matter, man and macrocosm, sex and illumination, so prevalent in Gnostic and Judaeo-Christian thought. Finally *"to accomplish the miracles of one thing"* is likely a statement of the individual microcosm, or unity, engendering the miraculous diversity of the Magickal universe. This is consistent with the idea of the Magician, Thoth, creating diversity out of unity, as represented by his gesture on the tarot trump *The Magician.*

2. *Just as all things proceed from One alone by meditation on One alone, so also they are born from this one thing by adaptation.*

This is a reasonable progression of the first passage. Although a little "Zen-like" in its wording, this passage suggests the unification of one's fragmented field of experience by *"meditation on One alone"*: that is on unity. Here the term *"meditation"* appears as a personal microcosmic act, or process. Yet, it should be remembered, the divine macrocosm created "all things" through Self-reflection (i.e., meditation), as the primordial Spirit was reflected on the face of the deep and was broken up. True meditation produces a death of Self (the *Solve* of *Solve et Coagula*) followed by a rebirth of Self (the *Coagula*). Here we have another great Hermetic alchemical formula in the text—the formula of regeneration.[26] This is further reinforced in the last section *"so also are they born from this One thing by adaptation."* This is clearly not speaking of a common type of birth but of a true metamorphosis or transformation of Self and its universe requiring time, conscious selection, and combination.

3. *Its father is the sun and its mother is the moon. The wind has born it in its body. Its nurse is the earth.*

This passage is more complex than it would first seem. *"Its"* refers to the Philosopher's Stone,[27] or resurrected psyche, and also the principle of alchemical Mercury. The *"father-sun"* is the archetypal Animus and the *"mother-moon"* the archetypal Anima who together produce Puer Aeternus, the eternal (Magical) child endowed with the full powers of the Supernals and of Mercury. This self-enclosed paradox is perfectly in line with the concept of a Philosophical Stone whose very name suggests the ethereal (Philosophical) and solid (Stone) operating

together. *"The wind"* is the divine breath or Pneuma, the universal Ether, that animates the souls of the deities. *"Its nurse is the earth"* can be interpreted in two distinct modes; the creative and reflective. The creative involves the natural tendency for spirit to shroud itself in matter for the sake of its own self-expression and pleasure which, consequently produces the Philosophers' Stone. We must first have a piece of the stone (which we do) before we can produce it ourselves. This is born out in the axiom of the reflective side of the formula, *"Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem,"* or "Visit the interior parts of the earth—by rectification thou will find the hidden stone."

4. It is the Father of every miraculous work in the whole world.

"Father" here is creating a shift to a specific gender or function. The father symbolizes the animating force of the Word, or Logos, and therefore represents all thing, produced in accordance with divine will. This also suggests a complete alignment of the force of will on the three levels of the soul and of existence. These include: spirit or the Neshamah (alchemical Sulfur or Fire), soul or Ruach (Air or Mercury), and body or Nephesh (Salt or Earth). This is also mirrored in the structure of the sentence beginning with the transcendental and singular *"It"* and ending with the manifest and diversified unity *"whole world."*

5. Its power is perfect if it is converted into earth.

The Divine is not complete (perfect and whole) without its physical counterpart. Moreover the volatile Mercurial force of nature expresses its perfection when *"converted into earth."* This suggests a certain predisposed perfection in nature, yet this is still not complete in our world until it is fully ratified by individual perceptual realization. The difficulty here is that the Divine is not, by any sense of the imagination, a moral presence, and therefore is eclipsed by anything personal or sentimental—sorry, you still may not look on the face of God and remain mortal. Within this section is also the formula for the proper construction and charging of a talisman, let alone the formula for initiation, wherein the alchemist must fix the volatile and assume control over its modus operandi.

6. Separate the earth from the fire and the subtle from the gross, softly and with great prudence.

The formula encapsulated in assertion number five is further unlocked by the alchemy, *"Separate the earth from the fire and the subtle*

from the gross." This is performed through the conscious work and meditation of separating the soul from the body. Esoteric schools have always regarded the practices of meditation, astral projection and scrying essential to the Great Work because they develop the skills to consciously control the subtle and course vehicles. This helps the psyche unlearn the limitations of the physical body so it can rejoin, with relative ease, the levels of its eternal nature. The second part of this equation is extremely important, because this process requires sensitivity and patience to prevent the bruising or provoking various levels of the psyche. It makes no sense to rescue a person if you kill, or injure them more, in the process. This gentile and careful pacing is frequently a part of alchemical instructions regarding the slow and prolonged use of alchemical heat.

> 7. *It rises from earth to heaven and comes down again from heaven to earth, and thus acquires the power of the realities above and the realities below. In this way you will acquire the glory of the whole world, and all darkness will leave you.*

This discourse describes the two currents of Mercury's force as animating and integrating, the Lightning Flash and the Serpent, Shiva and Shakti (kundalini), and the solar and lunar forces. When you have harnessed the interplay of these two energies you will *"acquire the glory of the whole world."* In the Eastern alchemical traditions[28] the control and fusion of the two currents result in the removal of ignorance and other obstructions followed by the dawning and stabilizing of what is called the Clear Light; thus, *"and all darkness will leave you."*

> 8. *This is the power of all powers, for it conquers everything subtle and penetrates everything solid.*

The *"power of all powers"* refers to the presence underlying the twin powers of Hermes, for the solid and the volatile are conquered by the still and clear consciousness typical of Hermes himself. The 12th Path of Wisdom taken from the *Sepher Yetzirah*, and ruled by the planet Mercury, is called the Transparent Intelligence. As it is also attributed to the Magician, it represents a presence, poised in juxtaposition, mediating between the principles of Kether and Malkuth. Furthermore it represents a body sharing in the infinite definition of all dimensions and is the synthesis of the cube, or Merkabah—the Chariot of the Divine.

> 9. *Thus the little world is created according to the prototype of the great world.*

The *"little world"* is transformed by the power of the Stone and becomes like the *"prototype of the great world."* This is consistent with the regeneration and resurrection of Osiris and the fulfillment of the Gnosis, whereby divine knowledge and understanding, closes the Abyss between the eternal and temporal worlds. This is clarified by the statement *"created according to the prototype,"* or the essential design of the Qabalistic Macroprosopus. One representation of the completion of the Great Work on the Tree of Life shows the shadow Sephirah of Daath restored, and Malkuth lifted into Yesod, thereby forming a completely symmetrical prototype. Symbolically the true nature of matter (Malkuth) is understood (Binah) as the image (Yesod) of the Divine, thereby liberating the Ruach and Nephesh from the Qlippoth or shells of the dead—in other words restoring the exiled Shekinah to her rightful home.

10. From this and in this way marvelous applications are made.

Following the restoration of the Self, and by methods already established, *"marvelous applications are made."* This is where the real theurgy begins for the adept. At this stage s/he has the knowledge and skill to transmute his or her universe in accordance with the nature of the personal Angel—and divine providence. In support of the previous comment, the creation and transformation of *image* is central to this work—control image and you control the astral light and its subsequent structures.

11. For this reason I am called Hermes Trismegistos, for I possess the three parts of wisdom of the whole world.

The magus, Hermes, does *"possess the three parts of the wisdom,"* which are the mysteries of body, soul, and spirit or the alchemical equivalents of Salt, Mercury, and Sulfur. In another respect it may refer to the threefold nature of alchemical Fire—these being the terrestrial, astral, and celestial Fires.

12. Perfect is what I have said of the work of the sun.

Here the text is again revealing itself as a manual for the Great Work or the *"work of the sun."* This alchemy is made possible through the agent of the principle archetype Mercury. This archetype takes part in everything, and in every one, as the personal and consensual presence known as Mind—or Hermes.

Endnotes

[1] Longfellow, *Hermes Trismegistus.*

[2] See the introduction to *The Hermetica* by Walter Scott or *Thrice Great Hermes* by G. R. S. Mead. In contrast to these sources the *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* by Mackey describes Hermes Trismegistos as an Egyptian Priest and philosopher living under the reign of Ninus. To make things even more interesting, *The Magician's Dictionary* by E.E. Rehmus, suggests Hermes Trismegistos is likely Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of Christ. It is possible they are all correct!

[3] Thoth, or Tahuti, was produced by Parthenogenesis or Self Creation. As the supreme Mercurial deity within the Egyptian pantheon he exhibited distinct, and important, sub-persona in the forms of Anubis and the Cynocephalus or Ape of Thoth.

[4] Nephthys is all that is unmanifest, unconscious and Dark.

[5] Isis is all that is manifesting, conscious and Light. Isis is also, by far, the most widely accepted Patroness of Magick and in many respects co-equal to Thoth.

[6] See E. Hamilton, *Mythology*, (Little, Brown and Co., 1948).

[7] This role has surfaced in contemporary myth as the winged footed FTD messenger delivering flowers to your mother, the line of Mercury autos, and the American Express logo.

[8] Hermes armed Perseus with a sword (*Zain* or Sword is the attribute of this path) and shield depicted in this tarot key.

[9] These include the Hegemon in her function as Psychopomp; Kerux, as the Herald of the Gods; and the Sentinel, who guards the portal between the world of light and darkness. The Sentinel is also equivalent to Cerberus, the three headed dog watching the gates of the underworld.

[10] See Regardie's, *The Golden Dawn*, Llewellyn, 1989. This, and it's companion, *The Particular Exordium*, are condensed and powerful formulas that can be used for Hermes-Thoth invocations.

[11] This is echoed in the mysteries of the preparation of the body of Osiris by the Psychopomp Anubis. It is his job to integrate and protect the soul of Osiris and secure his transition across the Abyss.

[12] Hermes himself was famous for his powers as a healer. This is evident by his grand symbol, the Caduceus, which remains the most universal emblem of healers in the Western world. Hermes is the "medicine of the mind" and occult patron of the healing arts.

[13] The Mercurial stream of consciousness, both personal and universal, has its unique fingerprints on many sacred works of this type.

[14] The Wand represents will or volition, the Cup imagination or reflection, the Dagger reason or intellection and the Disk structure or form.

[15] *Gems from the Equinox.* Llewellyn Publications, 1974.

[16] The Golden Dawn correspondences provided in Crowley's *777*, and numerous other sources, are essential to ritual work. Although usually credited to Crowley, the original text was taken from the Golden Dawn teachings.

[17] Blue was attributed to Mercury by the ancient Persians and honored as such in Craft Masonry by the establishment of the so called Blue Lodge. See F.C. Higgens, *Ancient Freemasonry*, Pyramid Book, 1923.

[18] Chic & Sandra Cicero, *Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple*, Llewellyn Publications, 1992. Chic and Sandra Cicero, *The New Golden Dawn Ritual Tarot*, Llewellyn Publications, 1991.

[19] Denning & Phillips, *Planetary Magick*, Llewellyn Publications, 1989.

[20] At this point in the ritual it would be appropriate to add any signs or sigils that you wish.

[21] Denning & Phillips, *Planetary Magick* (pp. 173-174).

[22] Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero, *Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple*, (p. 98).

[23] See G. R. S. Mead, *Thrice Greatest Hermes*, (John M. Watkins, 1906).

[24] This is not an arbitrary repetition but, along with the final banishing, a method of cleansing, or reorganizing, any psychic roughage shaken loose during the ritual.

[25] I doubt if Indiana Jones would even go for this one. However, this could be a metaphor saying: "the truth and mysteries of Spirit (the text) are written upon the face of nature (emerald tablet) by the mind of God (the diamond)."

[26] The tarot trump aligned with this association is *The Devil*, who is Pan, or All. The path attribute is to the letter Ayin and "The Regenerative, or Renewing Intelligence," from the *Sepher Yetzirah.*

[27] See Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, Penguin Books, 1971.

[28] In Tibetan Buddhism these teachings are most clearly presented in the six Yoga's of Naropa. In Taoist inner alchemy they can be found in the Lesser, and Greater Enlightenment of Kan and Li.

About the Author

William Stoltz is an active member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a Ceremonial Magician, and a twenty-year student of the Esoteric. In addition to his involvement in the Western Mystery Tradition, he is an initiate in two orders of Tibetan Buddhism and has studied Tantra under a Western Tantric master for eight years.

Academically William earned his Masters Degree in Psychology and Human Development from St. Mary's College of Minnesota. The majority of his graduate work focused on the structures of the psyche and the application of transpersonal and clinical psychology. A pet interest of his continues to be the exploration of the imagination and its role in body-mind healing and human development. Currently William works as a therapist, teacher, and tarot reader in Minneapolis-St. Paul. A few of William's other interests include scuba diving, hypnosis, the creation of Magickal implements, ancient civilization, and traveling.

The Emerald Tablet of Hermes:
and the Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel

Lon Milo DuQuette

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

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

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

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

Abra-Melin reveals that each of us is linked to a spiritual being whom he calls the Holy Guardian Angel. Until we have become spiritually wedded to this being we are not fully equipped as human beings to rule the denizens of our lower nature or advance spiritually. The primary focus of the Abra-Melin operation is union (*"Knowledge and Conversation"*) with one's Holy Guardian Angel. Until this is accomplished it is useless to even attempt to manipulate the circumstances of life because we are as yet spiritually unprepared to adequately comprehend the nature of our true will, let alone competent to exercise that will upon the cosmos. After Knowledge and Conversation is achieved the angel becomes the magician's counselor and directs from a position of supreme wisdom all subsequent magical activities.

This is a striking philosophical departure from the ceremonial magic practices that were popular among the contemporaries of Abraham the Jew. Solomonic magic texts[4] (so called because they were supposedly derived from the magical writings of King Solomon) place the magician in the position of whining to an all-powerful (yet inexplicably gullible) God to temporarily be allowed to address the spirits with borrowed divine authority—literally attempting to bluff the infernal minions into believing they are being conjured by a new Moses, or Elijah, or Solomon. The technique is not dissimilar to that of a spoiled rich boy coercing his powerful father into allowing him to beat the butler.

This is not to say that such magical practices are ineffectual; on the contrary, they can achieve seemingly astounding results and phenomena. All magical activity, whether guided by the perfect wisdom of the Holy Guardian Angel or by the most unworthy motives of an unenlightened villain, sets into motion a chain reaction of unseen effects that seek and eventually find a medium in which to discharge the energy of the working. If the magician's spiritual sight is clear then the momentum of the entire universe impels the energy to find its perfect mark and the object of the operation is accomplished. However, if the magician is deluded as to any aspect of the circumstances surrounding the working, then the energy generated by the ceremony will seek out the path of least resistance and eventually miscarry as a malignant tumor in the fertile soil of the magician's own delusions.

Unless one is divinely inspired by the Holy Guardian Angel, he or she will continue to operate in the dark, motivated by ill-considered desires and guided by defective powers of perception.

While the term "Holy Guardian Angel" used in this capacity appears to have originated with the *Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, the concept of a personal divine entity is unquestionably much older. Zoroaster[5] writes of the Agathosdaimon, a personal guardian spirit who must be contacted before any theurgic ceremony is initiated. These spiritual guides were called *Iunges*, ferrymen, and together with the *Synoches* and *Teletarcae* comprised the primary hierarchy of Chaldean archangels.[6] The Platonic philosophers taught that between humanity and the gods there exists an intermediate class of spiritual beings called *Daemonos*. Each individual is assigned a personal daemon and it is the daemon, not the gods, who directly hears and answers the prayers of our race. Socrates called his daemon "genius."

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

Angel by definition means "messenger" and students of the Western Tradition will recognize the concept of such a divine intermediary as decidedly Mercurial in nature. Hermes/Mercury is the messenger of the gods and psychopomp of the dead. Avatars of the world's great religions all have presented themselves as guides, shepherds, and messengers of divine truth. The fact that the gods need a messenger reveals that direct communication with and between the gods (vibratory frequencies, levels of consciousness, degrees of awareness, qabalistic worlds, stages of existence, evolutionary steps, facets of being, etc.) is not a good idea. Remember the fatal consequences

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

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

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

this I will briefly review basic Qabalistic principles as they relate to the fundamental document of Hermeticism, the *Emerald Tablet of Hermes.*[7]

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

α

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

It is written in Genesis I: 27—"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The *Sephir Dtzenioutha* tells us that—"before there was equilibrium, countenance beheld not countenance....The Vast Countenance is hidden and concealed; The Lesser Countenance is manifested, and is not manifested. When he is manifested, he is symbolized by the letters of יהוה."[8]

The Vast Countenance is the *macro*cosm, the big world, abode of deity and to some extent deity itself. The Lesser Countenance is the *micro*cosm, the little world, the emanations and expressions of deity. Upon the lowest end of the *microcosmic* scale is found the material universe and human beings. After balance was achieved early in the creation scenario these two Countenances, the superior and the inferior, beheld or reflected each other. The two Qabalistic texts quoted above confirm the *Emerald Tablet*'s opening statement and reveal a universe of repeating patterns. Like the keyboard of a piano, the notes that make up the worlds above us have their counterpart in our lower octave. The *"superior agrees with the inferior, and the inferior with the superior"—As above, so below.*

There are numerous ways the Qabalistic texts attempt to illustrate the relationship of the macrocosm and microcosm; some defining the microcosm as all nine emanations (sephiroth) below Kether (the first sephirah, "Crown") of the Tree of Life;[9] some viewing the tenth sephirah, Malkuth ("Kingdom") as the microcosm and the next six sephiroth above Malkuth as the macrocosmic world. It is a curious characteristic of Qabalistic thought that both of the above definitions (and a wide assortment of others) can be considered simultaneously true. Keeping the first statement of the *Emerald Tablet* in mind, we could even venture to say that every plane of existence is a macrocosm in relation to the plane beneath it and a microcosm in relation to the

plane above it. For the purpose of this little essay I will use the terms as they are most commonly applied to modern ceremonial magick:

Microcosm—is characterized by the magical formula of the four elements (Fire Water, Air, and Earth) ruled, vivified, bound together, and separated by the quintessential element—Spirit. The number five is a particularly suitable glyph of the microcosm, for it expresses the magical formula which sustains the elemental world. In the Holy Hebrew alphabet the number five is expressed by the letter (ה) Heh.

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

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

β

> *As all things owe their existence to the will of the Only One, so all things owe their origin to One Only Thing, the most hidden, by the arrangement of the Only God.*
>
> —*Tabula Smaragdina, v. II*

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

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

"One Only Thing, the most hidden" is the creator, a hidden and unknowable "thing." Its supreme mystery is the secret of how it came forth from negative existence. It contains all things great and small. To see it, know it, even think about it is as impossible as trying to see the back

of your own head by turning around. In the Qabalah, the first sephirah, Kether, is called "Temira De-Authiqin, the Concealed of the Concealed."

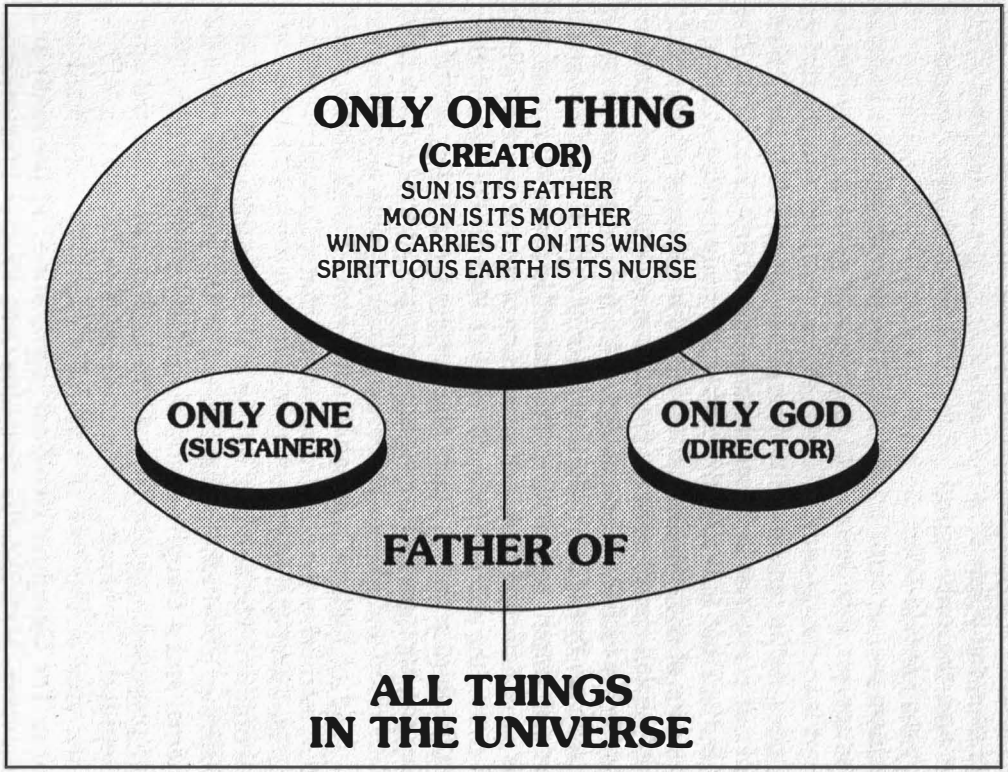
"*Only One*" is the sustainer; the *To On* of the Greeks, or the *Tao* of Lao Tzu. If "One Only Thing" is the power generator, "Only One" is the electricity itself.

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

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

The Qabalah also dissects the mechanism of creation and expresses the process in the ineffable name of God, יהוה. Yod (י) the great Father, is positioned on the Tree of Life with its tip in Kether and its tail in Chokmah (the second sephirah, representing the first reflection/extension of the One. This act of reflection starts a chain reaction of cosmic events by which godhead creates the universe from out of itself. Heh (ה) the great Mother, resides in the third sephirah, Binah. She receives the infinitely extending Yod, increasing her capacity to *enfold* in exact proportion to his capacity to *unfold*. Father-Yod and Mother-Heh are co-equal infinities and define the supernal triad of Kether-Chokmah-Binah which, though abstract and unmanifest, establishes the primordial patterns that will shape the characteristics of the lower sephiroth which follow.

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



The Threefold Deity of The Emerald Tablet of Hermes

germinate this seed, and that gardener is the Vau (ו) of the ineffable name, our Holy Guardian Angel.

γ & δ

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

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

—Tabula Smaragdina, vs. III & IV

Like all true holy books, the *Emerald Tablet* is constructed with such perfection that it simultaneously addresses all levels of existence and consciousness.[11] The mysteries of its thirteen short verses can be applied to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, the alchemical transmutation of lead into gold, or even the mastery of the perfect golf swing.

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

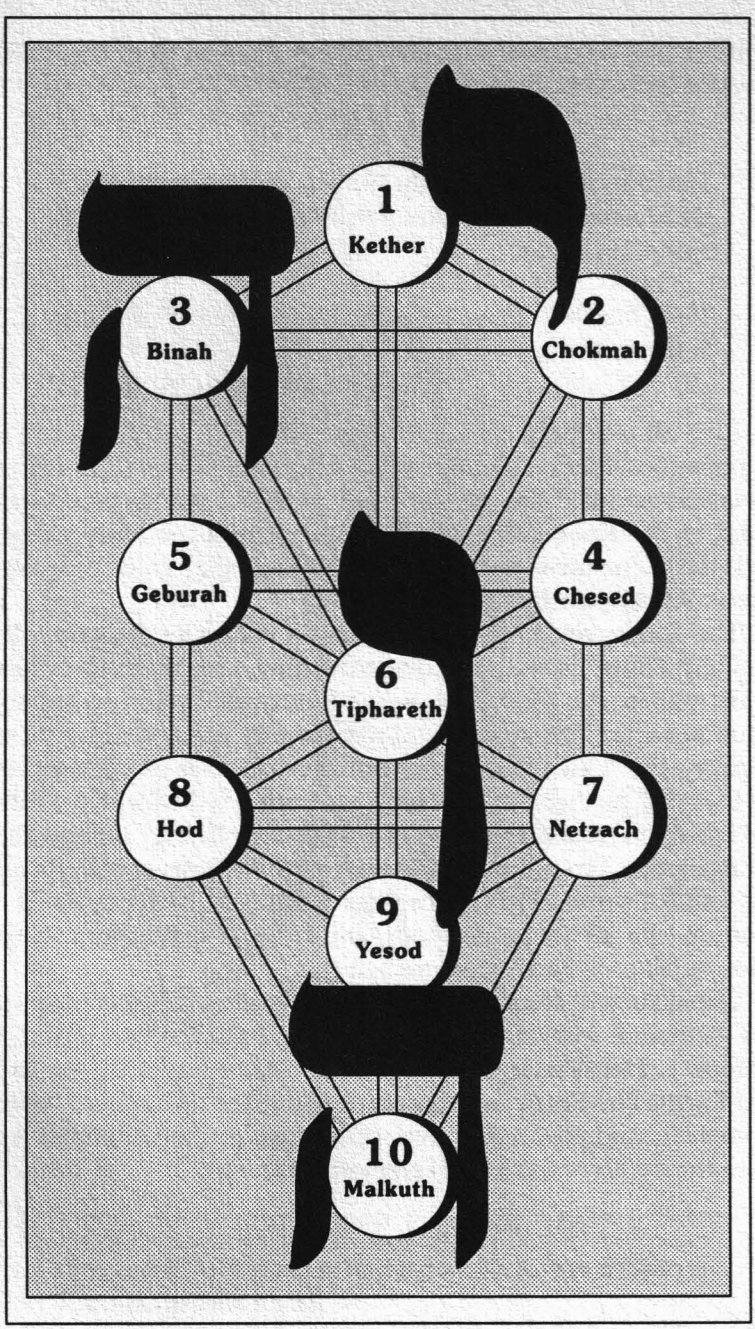
Qabalists will recognize that the above verse reveals the pattern of the elemental formula as established by יהוה; the Sun is Yod-Fire, the Moon is Heh-Water, the wind is Vau-Air, and the nurse is Heh (final)-Earth. The Earth in verse three is further designated "spirituous" as if to underscore the living presence of the Universal Agent even in the depth of the lowest elemental world.

ε

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

—Tabula Smaragdina, v. V

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



The Ineffable Name Projected upon the Tree of Life

King Yod, the Unknowable[12]

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

Queen Heh, the unquenchable[13]

She whose lands and possessions are everywhere and everything.

Prince Vau—heir to the throne of the King[14]

The handsome first born of King Yod and Queen Heh, who, because he is one generation removed from the infinite power of his Father, is prevented from living in the royal palace and instead sets up a principality in the macrocosmic countryside.

Princess Heh-final[15]***—heir to the throne of the Queen***

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

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

The Holy Guardian Angel is, of course, Prince Vau, and verse five reveals to us that he needs the Princess as much as the she needs him! *"...the power is perfect after it has been united with spirituous earth."* The only way Princess Heh-final can escape the endless curtain calls of incarnations is to marry Prince Vau, and the only way Prince Vau can regain his birthright as a King is to make Princess Heh-final his bride. When this is accomplished *the power is perfect.* Prince makes Princess pregnant—making her the Mother-Queen—making him the Father-King. Just as it took "two to tango" (Yod & Heh) to initiate creation/involution, so too it takes "two to tango" (Vau & Heh-final) to begin the assent/evolution back to the Godhead.

F

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

—Tabula Smaragdina, v. VI

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

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

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

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

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

The Hindus call this aspect of the holy science, Bhakti yoga, union with god by means of devotion, and consider it to be the fastest, most direct route to enlightenment. The flame of devotion can be enkindled toward any object of worship. It does not matter if the beloved is called Krishna, or Shiva, or Christ, or Fred. If devotion is offered with perfect, one-pointed ardor (*"with great attention"*) union can be achieved.[16] No religion, philosophy, cult, fraternity, or school of thought has yet cornered the market on falling hopelessly in love.

The human life cycle presents us with a frustrating challenge. In our youth (before the advent of responsibilities, regrets, painful memories, and spiritual cynicism) we find it quite easy to achieve this one-pointed devotion. But the roaring hormonal flame of youthful devotion is far from the "gentle heat" required for this delicate operation. Also, the juvenile attention span is so short that we don't give *great attention* to anything for any significant length of time. Hopefully, as mature adults, we have become disciplined enough to have conquered the great attention part of the equation, but for many of us the winds of the cold, cruel world have extinguished all but the pilot light of our devotional hearth.

Keeping this in mind, some of the more curious aspects of Abra-Melin's instructions make more sense. The magician should be over twenty-five years of age, but less than fifty. He[17] must be sufficiently set in life to afford to retire from the mundane world for six consecutive months, in which time he is to have only the minimum contact with the outside world. If he be married he can continue with the moderate exercise of his husbandly duties, but whether married or single, everything must be done to withdraw from the world of matter. Strict rules of diet and a regimen of daily devotional observances are recommended not as magical oblations but simply to focus the mind toward the object of the operation. After two months the daily routine of prayers, confessions, and devotions is intensified to help further magnify the magician's longing for the angel. For the last two months the activities are yet again intensified. The magician becomes totally obsessed with desire for the angel and is perpetually enflamed with prayer. At the end of six months, at the climax of an elaborately prepared ceremony, the magician is at last received by the angel. Abraham the Jew's reverent description of this

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

ζ

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

—*Tabula Smaragdina, v. VII*

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

Abra-Melin instructs the newly *H.G.A.-ized* magician to intimately commune with the angel for a period of three days, after which, under the angel's guidance, the four great Princes of evil, Lucifer, Leviatan, Satan, and Belial are to be summoned and an oath of unquestioning obedience is demanded of them. On the following day the magician is to summon the eight Sub-Princes; Astarot, Magot, Asmodee, Belzebud, Oriens, Paimon, Ariton, and Amaimon and extract from them the same pledge of service. The next day the evil spirits under the command of the eight Sub-Princes are conjured and subdued, and so on, and so on, until all of the minions of hell have appeared before the angel-glorified magician and surrendered any inclination of sovereignty they may have imagined they had over his person.

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

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

harness this new energy it will overtake and destroy him or her the instant the afterglow of the angel's presence begins to wane.

It is not my intention in this place to embark upon a lengthy oration upon the character or even the relative existence of infernal spirits. Let us simply advance what momentum remains in this little essay and view them as the inhabitants of the lowest sub-levels of the microcosm—disorganized and fragmented pieces of energy which, when properly directed, are responsible for doing all the heavy work in the universe. However, like circus tigers they have the nasty habit of tearing apart and eating anyone whose skill, courage, and concentration are not up to the task of caring for them properly.

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

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

η

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

—*Tabula Smaragdina, v. VIII*

Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian brings with it clarity of vision and the realization of the central purpose of one's life. It does not guarantee an end to your troubles. On the contrary,

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

θ

> *This is the potent force of all force, for it will overcome everything subtile, and penetrate everything solid.*
>
> *—Tabula Smaragdina, v. IX*

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

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

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

Heh-final already *is* one with Vau.

Heh already *is* united with Yod.

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

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

l

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

—Tabula Smaragdina, v. X

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

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

The above comments should also be applied to all fields of spiritual exploration. One of the major shortcomings of guided meditations and pathworking is the insistence by misguided group leaders that everyone "sees" standardized images in each path or sephirah. Discarding your own visions and allowing your psyche to be programmed by those of another individual or group is the fastest way I can think of to become spiritually crippled. *"The arrangements to follow this road are hidden,"* so be extremely cautious of those who would insist that they can show you the way.

k

For this reason I am called Chiram Telat Machasot, one in Essence, but three in aspect.

—Tabula Smaragdina, v. XI

I will not even attempt to project a pretense of knowledge of the Chaldean language. Any attempt on my part to appear occult, erudite, and recondite on this subject would be instantly exposed as transparently fraudulent by all serious and knowledgeable readers of this essay. The best I can do is to ask you to join me as I muse to myself

about the last three verses of the *Emerald Tablet of Hermes* and hope that my words will not unduly hinder your meditations on the subject.

The opening words of the *Emerald Tablet* names the Secret Work *"Chiram Telat Mechasot"; Chiram* is the Universal Agent, and the remaining words translate roughly *"one in Essence, but three in aspect."* In his *Lost Keys of Freemasonry*,[18] Manly Palmer Hall states that it is believed that the Chiram of the *Emerald Tablet* is the earliest representation of "Hiram" the Master Builder, grand architect of King Solomon's temple and the central hero of Masonic mythology.[19] He goes on to quote an ancient and unnamed source who provides us with more clues concerning the birth of the precious spirituous earth.

Chiram can be interpreted by Qabalistic notariqon combining the Hebrew words *Chamah* (Fire), *Ruach* (Air), and *Majim* (Water). These three principles are not the elements themselves but the primitive roots of the elements.[20] The threefold Chiram is the father of the four elemental building blocks of nature, Fire, Water, Air, and Earth, and broods in its unmoved state as the primal electrical fire, but when it moves it manifests as visible light. When focused and agitated, this light produces heat and literally becomes corporeal fire. Combined with the humidity produced by its three aspects (primitive Fire, Water, and Air) the Chiram solidifies like clotted blood to bring forth the material universe and Earth. And, just like blood, the spirituous earth entombs the living and perfect image of the Creator in every cell.

λ

In this Trinity is hidden the wisdom of the whole world.
—Tabula Smaragdina, v. XII

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

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

μ

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

—Tabula Smaragdina, v. XIII

Is not Mercury the Sun-God, when hidden during the Night, among the souls of the dead? Hail unto Thee, Trismegistus, Hail unto Thee![21]

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

Endnotes

[1] Invocation from the Rite of Mercury, the Rites of Eleusis. *The Equinox Vol. I. no. 6.* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1993) p. 98.

[2] Found in the Bibliotheque de l'Arsenal in Paris, the full title of the text is *"The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin, the Mage as Delivered by Abraham the Jew Unto His Son Lamech, a Grimoire of the Fifteenth Century."* Translated into English by Golden Dawn adept S.L. MacGregor Mathers, the original manuscript indicates it was first written down in Hebrew in 1458 and translated into French in the late seventeenth century. Most recent edition: (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983).

[3] The Twentieth Century Pope of the same name and number was the second pontiff to choose the name John XXIII—*go figure!*

[4] Among the most popular Solomonic texts were the five books of the Lemegeton, particularly the first book, *Goetia* (translated by McGreggor Mathers in 1904, Ed. Aleister Crowley. Foyers, England: Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth. Reprint: New York: Magickal Childe Publications, 1992).

[5] *See The Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster.* Trans. Ruth Majereik. (London and New York: Brill, 1989).

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

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

[8] יהוה *Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh* (Hebrew is written from right to left) the ineffable name of God. Pronounced Jehovah by the profane, its true pronunciation was a carefully guarded secret of the Levite priests.

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

[10] "...the heaven is in the earth, but after an earthly manner; ...and the earth is in the heaven, but after a heavenly manner."—*Proclus*

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

[12] Ain Soph centering to Kether-extending to Chokmah.

[13] Binah. (Kether-Chokmah-Binah together are referred to as the "Supernal Triad" positioned above the abyss which separates the ideal from the actual.)

[14] Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod, and Yesod (but centered in Tiphareth), the Macrocosm.

[15] Malkuth, the tenth and last sephirah. Positioned at the bottom of the middle pillar of the Tree of Life it is the reflection of a reflection (Yesod—9) of a reflection (Tiphareth—6) of supreme godhead (Kether).

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

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

[18] See footnote 7.

[19] Depending upon Hebrew dialect and pronunciation marks H and Ch (ה and ח) can both be pronounced the same.

[20] See The *Sepher Yetsira*, verses 10, 11, 12. Carlo Suares (London: Shambhala, 1976) pp. 73, 74.

[21] Rite of Mercury, the Rites of Eleusis. *The Equinox Vol. I. no. 6*, (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1993) p. 104.

About the Author

Lon Milo DuQuette is the author of *The Magick of Thelema*, (Samuel Weiser, 1993) and the creator of *The Tarot of Ceremonial Magick* (U.S. Games Systems/Samuel Weiser, 1995). He has been a national administrative officer of Ordo Templi Orientis since 1975 and is lodgemaster of Heru-ra-ha Lodge in Newport Beach, California. With Christopher S. Hyatt, Ph.D. he co-authored *Enochian World of Aleister Crowley, Taboo, the Psychopathology of Sex and Religion, The Way of the Secret Lover,* and *Aleister Crowley's Illustrated Goetia* (New Falcon Publications, 1991, 1992).

An expert in Enochian magick, he was asked by Magickal Childe Publications to introduce the 1992 reissue of Meric Casaubon's 1659 classic text, *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed For Many Years Between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*, and has produced a sixty minute video, *Enochian Magick* (Hooded Man Production 1994).

Mr. DuQuette lives in Newport Beach, California with his wife, Constance and their son, Jean-Paul.

ISIDIS
Magnæ Deorum Matris
APVLEIANA DESCRIPTIO.

Nomina varia Iſidis.

Iſis
Minerua
Venus
Iuno
Proſerpina
Ceres
Diana
Rhea ſeu Tellus
Peſſinuncia
Rhramnuſia
Bellona
Hecate
Luna
Polymorphus dæmon.

Explicationes ſymbolorum Iſidis.

A Diuinitatem, mundum, orbes cœleſtes
BB Iter Lunæ flexuoſum, & vim fœcundatiuam notat.
CC Tutulus, vim Lunæ in herbas, & plantas.
D Cereris ſymbolum, Iſis enim ſpicas inuenit.
E Byſſina veſtis multicolor, multiformem Lunæ faciem.
F Inuentio frumenti.
G Dominium in omnia vegetabilia.
H Radios lunares.
I Genius Nili malorum auerruncus.
K Incrementa & decrementa Lunæ.
L Humectat. vis Lunę.
M Lunæ vis victrix, & vis diuinandi.
N Dominium in humores & mare.
O Terræ ſymbolũ, & Medicinæ inuentrix.
P Fœcunditas, quæ ſequitur terram irrigatam.
Q Aſtrorum Domina.
R Omnium nutrix.
S } Terræ matriſque
M } Domina.

Ἀκεσὶ Θεῶν Μήτηρ ταύτη πολύμορφος ΙΣΙΣ.

The Hermetic Isis from Kircher's Oedipus Aegyptiacus

The Hermetic Isis

M. Isidora Forrest

Give heed, my son Horus, for you shall hear secret doctrine, of which our forefather Kamephis was the first teacher. It so befell that Hermes heard this teaching from Kamephis, the eldest of our race. I heard it from Hermes, the writer of records, at the time when he initiated me in the Black Rites, and you shall hear it now from me ...

— Isis to Horus, from the holy book of Hermes Trismegistos which is entitled Kore Kosmou

Ancient Egypt produced two of the greatest divine magicians the world has ever known. In their own land and throughout the Græco-Roman world, both these deities were renowned for the power of their magic, the depth of their knowledge, and the perspicacity of their wisdom. They were further allied in their ability to communicate this power, knowledge, and wisdom through the sacred craft of writing and the power of the Word. And both were intimately associated with that late Pagan branch of esotericism which became known as Hermeticism.

The first of these great magicians we know as Thoth, which is a Greek attempt at the Egyptian name, Djehuti. In an effort to express the majesty of the God's power, when writing his name, Egyptian scribes would often append to Thoth's name the epithet "Great, Great, Great" as an intensifier. The Greeks, identifying Thoth with their God, Hermes, picked up the Egyptian epithet as Hermes Trismegistos, or Thrice Greatest Hermes.

Just as Thoth was considered to be the all-wise font of sacred knowledge and author of all sacred books in Egypt, so in the Græco-Roman world, and later, in Renaissance Europe, Hermes Trismegistos was considered to be an unimpeachable authority on things sacred and author of the influential body of literature known as the Hermetica.

The Hermetica address a wide range of topics, including cosmic principles, the nature and orders of Being and beings, the human desire to know the Divine, astrology, alchemy, magic, and medicine, among others. Scholars generally place the individual texts of the Hermetica in one of two camps: the "philosophical" and religious Hermetica, or the "technical"—that is, magical or theurgic—Hermetica.

Until recently, many scholars would deign to study only the philosophical Hermetica, rejecting the magical "rubbish" (as one open-minded scholar so generously put it) of the technical Hermetica. Thankfully, historians of religion are broadening their horizons and the technical Hermetica along with other magical texts are becoming more and more available to those of us who see in them not rubbish but riches.

The main philosophical Hermetic texts which have come down to us are contained in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of approximately seventeen treatises written in Latin and Greek. The exact date for the composition of the texts is unknown, but most scholars place at least the main texts of the *Corpus* in the second or third centuries C.E. Technical Hermetica range more broadly, and are tentatively dated to a period spanning the first century C.E. to the fourth.[1] It is quite possible, however, that at least some of the texts were based on significantly earlier models. Thoth and Hermes Trismegistos were already identified at Saqqara, Egypt as early as the second century B.C.E.[2]

In addition to the texts contained in the *Corpus* there are many other writings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistos, and as such, are by definition, Hermetica. Among these are the famous *Asclepius* (also called the *Perfect Discourse*), which is both philosophical *and* magical, and texts such as *The Ogdoad Reveals the Ennead*, which is a philosophical Hermetic text not in the original *Corpus*, but added to the Hermetic collection after being discovered among the Gnostic texts at Nag Hammadi. There are also a significant number of the magical papyri originating in Pharonic and Ptolemaic theurgy said to be the work of Hermes Trismegistos. It may even be, given Thoth's position as *Great Divine Magician*, that the first Hermetica were not the philosophical texts such as those in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Nag Hammadi find, but were technical, that is, magical texts.[3]

We must remind ourselves that the term "Hermetic" covers a wide variety of topics and outlooks. While some Hermeticists would indeed have rejected the theurgic texts, preferring hymning and astral travel as the proper method to know God and become "deified," others would have practiced the theurgic arts with piety as part of their spiritual search.

The structure of the Hermetic texts, whether philosophical or technical, are often in the form of discourses between a teacher and one or more students. The *dramatis personae* of these discourses are the most well-known of the Egyptian Gods, at least from the Greek perspective. Among Them are Hermes Trismegistos, Asclepius-Imouthes, Ammon, Osiris, Horus—and Egypt's other *Great Divine Magician*, the Goddess Isis.

Isis is, in fact, the only female figure to serve as teacher in the philosophical Hermetica.[4] While, in the Late Antique Period, Hermes is sometimes considered to be her father and teacher, by the time of the Renaissance, Isis may have been considered to be Hermes' instructor. The Renaissance painter, Pinturicchio, painted Isis, serenely reading from a book upon her lap while both Mercurius (Hermes Trismegistos) and Moses are seated at her feet.[5] In another work by the same artist, Isis, Mercurius, and Moses, the three primary exponents of the ancient wisdom tradition, are shown grouped together in the sacred procession of the Apis bull.[6]

In her role not only as Hermetic teacher, but as the soul of Nature, and the revealer of mysteries, Isis' inspiration of Hermeticism and the Western Esoteric Tradition is fully as dramatic as that of her thrice-great fellow mage.[7]

Egyptian Isis and the Hermeticists

Hermeticism was one of the many products of the meeting of the ancient Hellenic and Egyptian cultures in the centuries surrounding the beginning of the Common Era. Inspired by Hermes Trismegistos, a God born from the marriage of two cultures, Hermeticism combined Egyptian and Greek theology with Hellenistic philosophy—at least in its most simple form.

But of course, it was *not* that simple. The great syncretic Egyptian capital of Alexandria was Hermeticism's most fertile home. Religious wisdom and philosophy flowed into Alexandria from many cultures, and likewise, into Hermeticism. Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism all added to the Hermetic amalgamation. Some scholars have also emphasized the Iranian Zoroastrian elements in Hermeticism.[8]

It is doubtful that there was any single Hermetic school of thought; significant philosophical differences between the Hermetic treatises seem to preclude this. Instead the early Hermeticists display the same independent spirit we recognize among alternatively spiritual people today. Probably they studied together in small groups, perhaps with a single teacher and a group of students, following the structure of the Hermetic discourses themselves. It also seems evident that some Hermeticists, inspired by the Divine, added their own revelations to the core Hermetic philosophy, which was itself heavily influenced by Platonism, Neo-Platonism, and Pythagorism. They searched, as we do, for Truth. Not just as an abstract and scholarly concept, but as a very real, very personal part of their spiritual lives.[9]

There are a number of reasons why Egyptian Isis was a good candidate for prominence in the Hermetic environment. The first, we have already mentioned. Like Thoth-Hermes, Isis was known to be a

powerful magician and a patron of magic. This was true from the earliest manifestations of her cult to the latest. A common Egyptian epithet for the Goddess was *Nebet Hika*—"Lady of Words of Power," or "Lady of Magic." She was also called "Great Magician" and "Isis, Great of Magic." Thus Isis commanded what, to the Egyptians, was one of the primordial universal powers: the power of magic.[10]

Isis was known to use her magical powers to aid those she loved. She protects her son, Horus as he battles Set, and her deceased worshippers as they travel through the Underworld. With her wings outstretched, she provides, by her divine presence and her magical power, a shelter from all harm. One of the most powerful protective amulets placed upon the mummy was the Knot of Isis over which was spoken the formula:

> *You have your blood, O Isis; you have your power, O Isis; you have your magic, O Isis. This amulet is a protection for this Great One which will drive away whoever would commit a crime against him.*

The rubric goes on to say,

> *As for him for whom this is done [that is, the creation of the amulet and placing it on the body before interment], the power of Isis will be the protection of his body, and Horus, son of Isis, will rejoice over him when he sees him; no path will be hidden from him, and one side of him will be towards the sky and the other towards the earth.*[11]

This same Knot, tied into the robes of her Priestesses, became a well-known symbol of the Goddess in later Græco-Roman times. The passage above, in addition to declaring Isis' protective powers, also states that no path will be hidden from him who has the amulet, and hints at the Goddess' function as revealer of hidden things—a role which was particularly important to the Hermetic alchemists. In the Coffin Texts, Isis is known as "Lady of All in the Secret Place"[12] and the soul of the dead person is made to say that it has come forth from the House of the Double Lion:

> *to the House of Isis, to the secret mysteries, I have been conducted to Her hidden secrets for She caused me to see the birth of the Great God.*[13]

Isis' connection with occult things, secrets, and Underworld mysteries, as well as her later identification with the Greek mystery

Goddess, Demeter, led directly to her renown as Goddess of the mysteries and to the prominence of the Isiac mystery religion of the Græco-Roman (and Hermetic) period.

One of the greatest of her mysteries and the most celebrated of her magical powers was her power to resurrect. This was the magic she worked for her murdered husband, the God, Osiris:

> *She recited formulæ with the magical power of Her mouth, being skilled of tongue and never halting for a word, being perfect in command and word, Isis the magician avenged Her brother. She went about seeking Him untiringly. She flew round and round over the earth uttering wailing cries of grief, and She did not alight on the ground until she had found Him. She produced light from Her feathers, She made air to come into being by means of Her two wings, and She cried the death cry for Her brother. She made to rise up the inert members of Him whose heart was at rest.*[14]

For the deceased human being, Isis was expected to provide a similar resurrection through re-birth. In the Coffin Texts, the dead person is referred to as a "God-like spirit [. . .] whom Isis has made into her child."[15]

As a Great Magician, Isis had not only power, but wisdom—a requirement for effectively wielding the power of magic. Isis' wisdom is extolled from early on. In the Turin papyrus' version of the *Legend of Isis and Re*, we learn that:

> *Isis was a woman wise in speech, her heart more cunning than the millions of men, her utterance was more excellent than the millions of gods, she was more perceptive than millions of glorified spirits. She was not ignorant of anything in heaven or earth...*[16]

Plutarchos, in his essay *On Isis and Osiris*, says to his corespondent, Clea, an Isiac Priestess, that the search for Truth about the Gods shows a longing for the Divine and:

> *is a task well-pleasing to that Goddess Whom you worship, a Goddess exceptionally wise and a lover of wisdom, to Whom, as Her name at least seems to indicate, knowledge and understanding are in the highest degree appropriate.*[17]

The Throne of Nature

In addition to Isis' magical powers and her wisdom, her associations with Nature also played well with the Hermeticists. By the period of the Hermetica, Isis was known to be a Nature Goddess *par excellance*. Her rulership of agriculture, wind, and sea were unquestioned. Yet even very early in the development of the Isis religion, Isis had connections with the land. And while Plutarchos was incorrect in his derivation of her name from a Greek word relating to wisdom, there is much we can learn from her name—about her deep roots in the earth.

In its simplest form, her name which, in Egyptian, is Iset (pronounced Ee-set), consists of the hieroglyph *throne*, and the *semi-circle* (the sound *t*). Hence, it is said to mean "Throne" and she is thought of as a personification of the royal throne. But this designation has a much more significant—and far more ancient—meaning than one might at first think. The Egyptian word, *iset*, can mean not only throne, but also seat, place, abode, tomb, room, and chamber. Most Egyptian words spelled with the *throne* and *semi-circle* have to do with place, both secular and sacred. A Temple is sometimes designated as an iset such as the *Iset Heqit* (Heqet), the Abode of the Frog-Goddess, Heqit, or the *Iset en Net*, the Temple of Neith in the Gynaecopolite Nome.[18] In fact, one of the earliest Egyptian words for a type of settlement was "seat" or "abode"—and it especially referred to the seat or abode of a deity.[19] It is through the concept of *iset* in relation to deity that Isis can be identified as one of the most ancient, archetypal forms of Goddess: the Great Mother, she who was the throne, the settlement, the place, the Earth itself.

In discussing this primordial Goddess, analytical psychologist Erich Neumann states that:

> *the Great Mother is the "throne," pure and simple, and characteristically, the woman's motherliness resides not only in the womb, but in the seated woman's broad expanse of thigh, her lap on which the newborn child sits enthroned. To be taken on the lap, like being taken to the breast, is a symbolic expression for adoption of the child, and also of the man, by the Feminine. It is no accident that the greatest Mother Goddess of the early cults was named Isis, "the seat," "the throne"...*[20]

As Throne, Isis was the bountiful Mother, the Earth, Nature itself.

With all these colors on her divine palette—the red-orange of Egyptian magic, the white Light of wisdom, the green of Nature, and the

black of the mysteries, Isis, Mistress of the Hermetic Arts, was a natural choice to play a significant role in the Hermetic world.

The Religion of Isis in the Hermetic Milieu

During the first, second, and third centuries C.E.—broadly the period of the composition of the main Hermetic texts—the religion of Isis was at the height of its popularity in the Mediterranean. As an example of the penetration of the religion into society, it is estimated that of the twenty-thousand people living in the city of Pompeii in the first century C.E., a full ten percent of them were Isiacs.[21] Furthermore, Isis had come to be considered by her many devotees as *the* Universal Goddess. All other Goddesses were Isis, but under another name. A Lady of power, compassion, mystery, magic, and wisdom, a divinity of both commoner and emperor alike, a healer, protector, and savior, Isis was known and loved throughout the Mediterranean world.

Not only was Isis *the* Goddess, she was *the Egyptian* Goddess—and as such she partook of all the considerable charisma with which Egypt had always intrigued the world. Considered the primordial home of religion, ancient wisdom, and magic, Egypt exerted a cultural influence far beyond its political authority at the time. The great exotic Egyptian Queen Isis, who had a Temple in every port, whose religion had penetrated far into the known world, whose magic was as famous as that of Hermes-Thoth himself, could hardly have gone unremarked by the Hellenized Egyptians and Egyptianized Hellenes who composed the Hermetic texts.

And, of course, she did not. From the very beginning, Isis is among the Hermetic teachers.

The most extensive surviving Hermetic text in which Isis serves as instructor is called the *Kore Kosmou*, or the "*Virgin of the World*." It is in the form of a dialog between Isis and her son Horus—as are all the other fragments of Isis' Hermetic teachings which remain to us. From the fragmentary evidence, we can guess that there may well have been quite a large body of Isis-to-Horus Hermetica at one time. Even within the body of the *Kore Kosmou* itself, it is obvious that at least two, if not more, treatises have been combined into the single text called *Kore Kosmou*.

The *Kore Kosmou*, like a number of other Hermetica, is a creation story. In it, Isis describes to her son, Horus, how the Universe, Nature, and the Elements were created. Next she describes how the Souls—which are divine and share with the Creator the ability to create—were made, how they became too proud of this ability, and finally how they were placed into human bodies by Hermes Trismegistos, on command of the Sole Ruler, as punishment for their

pride. Yet the Creator is merciful. As consolation to the imprisoned souls, he allows them to forget their heavenly origins and sends the deities Isis and Osiris, who are forms of the Sole Ruler upon Earth, to help create order, religion, and civilization.

It is unclear who the "Virgin of the Universe" of the title is supposed to be. We *do* know that this Virgin is female, for Kore is a feminine word. It may be that the Kore, the Virgin, is Nature. Nature is the most important female character in the story Isis tells. She is described as:

> *a Being in woman's form, right lovely, at the sight of Whom the Gods were smitten with amazement.*[22]

Nature is sexually virgin in the tale. She creates her own abundance from seeds which she herself supplies to the Sole Ruler and which he returns to her in order to start the chain of fruitfulness upon the Earth. We also find identification of Kore with Nature in the *Perfect Discourse* (or *Asclepius*) in which it is said that the Creator:

> *does not possess the nourishment for all mortal living creatures, for it is Kore Who bears the fruit.*[23]

It is just as likely that the Virgin referred to is Isis herself—or even that we are intended to know that Isis, Nature, and Kore Kosmou are one. For even though Isis is a Great Mother Goddess, the mother of a child, and does indeed have sex with her divine husband/brother (Plutarchos tells us that Isis and Osiris were so in love with each other that they even made love inside their mother's womb), Isis could be considered a Virgin Goddess as well.

In one of the Hymns to Osiris, Isis is specifically called the Great Virgin.[24] The association of Isis with the constellation Virgo is also quite ancient. Eratosthenes, the famous mathematician and chief librarian of the even more famous Alexandrian Library, already calls this constellation "Isis" by the third century B.C.E. The astrological associations of Virgo seem particularly appropriate to Isis as Hermetic Goddess as well. As an earth sign, it alludes to her position as Queen of the Earth, as Throne, and to her agricultural and fertility aspects. Yet it is also a sign associated with mind, and furthermore, with mind operating in the spiritual realms. It is a sign of learning, knowledge, and intelligence. As Virgo, we again find Isis in the company of Hermes, for Virgo is ruled by airy Mercury, the Roman name for Hermes. The modern Hermeticists of the Golden Dawn's Second Order continue this ancient association of Isis with Virgo. In the L.V.X. formula, Isis is invoked as "Virgo, Isis, Mighty Mother."

The late Græco-Roman Isis religion provides us with other reasons to consider Isis as a chaste virgin. The religion had quite a reputation for at least periodic sexual abstinence, especially in preparation for holy celebrations. Isis herself was considered to be a guardian of the chastity of youths who were vowed to her before their marriage as well as a protectress of true love and a guardian of true and faithful lovers.[25]

It was this same designation of Isis as Virgin which made it so easy for the Christian Queen of Heaven, the Virgin Mary, during the rise of her cult, to pick up so many of the epithets and so much of the iconography of the Pagan Queen of Heaven, the Great Virgin, Isis.

"A Wiser Magician and More Excellent Than Any Other God"

The *Kore Kosmou* is numbered among the "philosophical" or non-magical Hermetica. But as we've mentioned, there are also Hermetic texts which specifically discuss magic. The *Asclepius*, for example, discusses the ensouling of sacred statues—the "making of Gods." Astrological texts detail the "virtues" of certain plants and animals for theurgic purposes. Alchemical texts provide information on that art from both the physical and the spiritual viewpoint. In addition, a number of the magical papyri, which deal with divination, visions, and other magical works, are specifically said to be from the hand of Hermes Trismegistos. Others of these texts are attributed to many of the usual Hermetic teachers—with Isis prominent among them.

In her guise as magician, healer, and revealer—mystical and mundane—Isis is frequently cited in the Græco-Egyptian magical papyri. Among these Isis Formulæ is a working to receive an omen which pairs Isis and Hermes and is said to have been found "in the archives of Hermes":

> *Great is the Lady Isis! [This is a] copy of a holy book found in the archives of Hermes: the method is that concerning the 29 letters [of the Coptic alphabet] through which letters Hermes and Isis, who was seeking Osiris, her brother and husband, found him. [A description of a method of divination follows this.]*[26]

In another example, Isis is considered to be an even greater healer than her Hermetic companion, Asclepius.

> *Preparation of the ink: 3 dried figs, 3 stones of the Nicolaus date, 3 fragments of wormwood, and 3 lumps of myrrh; mix*

> *together, then pulverizing them, write the following formula. Isis uttered it and wrote it when, after taking up Osiris, she fit together his separated members. Asklepios saw Osiris and admitted that he could not put together someone who was dead even with the help of Hebe or of anyone else...*[27]

Our final example is a formulæ written in Demotic with a strongly Egyptian flavor. It is a charm for healing a dog bite which is commanded to heal "according to the voice of Isis." In the magical papyri, Isis is often called upon as the voice of supreme authority in magical workings. It is the fact that the magician speaks to the dog bite with the voice of Isis in the following formula which makes the spell efficacious. In other formulæ, particularly formulæ to cure poisonous bites, the magician takes on the Godform of Isis, and thus her authority, to command the poison to leave.

> *To be said to the bite of a dog: [. . .] If you do not extract your venom and remove your saliva, I shall take you up to the forecourt of the temple of Osiris, my watchtower. I will do for you [. . .] according to the voice of Isis, the magician, the lady of magic, who bewitches everything, who is never bewitched in her name of Isis, the magician.*[28]

Isis is also conspicuous in the technical Hermetic texts which have to do with alchemy—some of the most popular of the Hermetica. A text, preserved in part by the alchemist *Zosimus* of Panopolis, who probably worked sometime around 300 C.E., is entitled *Isis the Prophetess to Her Son Horus.* It is thought to date to the first century C.E. In it, we can clearly see the blending of Pagan Hermetic thought with Jewish myth. In the text, Isis tells Horus the story of how she learned the alchemical secrets from an Angel. In the tale, she is regarded not as a Goddess, but as a human Queen and Prophetess. In the same way that Hermes Trismegistos is made into an historical—although very eminent—human figure, so is the Great Goddess Isis humanized.

The story in the text is strongly reminiscent of the Hebrew *Book of Enoch* in which the Angels desired the "daughters of men," mated with them, and imparted forbidden knowledge to them. In *Isis the Prophetess,* Isis tells her son that an Angel saw her from above and desired her, but that she refused him until he would reveal to her the secret of the working of silver and gold. This particular Angel could not speak of that secret "on account of the supreme importance of the mysteries," but he told Isis that the first of the Angels, Amnael, would come to her with the solution. The Angel would also bear a certain sign on his head and

would show Isis a bowl of translucent water. At precisely noon the next day, Amnael appeared, bearing the agreed-upon signs, and he too, desired Isis. Again, she refused her favor until he divulged to her the alchemical secrets. Amnael agreed, and thus Isis the Prophetess learned the secrets of alchemy. Once again, as in the more ancient Egyptian tale of *Isis and Re*, Isis becomes the possessor of secret divine knowledge.

The theme of divine knowledge revealed to human beings was one of the most common Hermetic themes.[29] Isis, whether as the Queen and Prophetess to whom the first of the Angels had revealed the alchemical secrets, or as Kore/Nature herself, was the keeper of these secrets, both Divine and Natural. It is no wonder that she consistently maintained an important position in the Hermetic tradition.

Isis in Christendom

Yet, once the Christian Empire gained power, the Hermetic tradition would be lost for a time—at least in the Latin West. The ascendancy of Christianity meant that all other religious philosophies had to go underground. The Hermetic texts disappeared from the West for centuries, but were preserved in Byzantium largely due to the popularity of alchemy and astrology there.[30] Magic, which was highly condemned and severely punished throughout the Christian world, became more and more occult. It became so veiled, in fact, that the original deities involved became mostly unrecognizable. While the intentions of most of the conjurations seem not to have been much better than the low, compulsive magic found in the worst of the magical papyri.

In the Mediæval magical grimoire, *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, we can see vestiges of the mighty son of Isis, Horus, in the fallen angel who is given in some texts as Haures and in others as Flauros. A scribal error in the second version of this "demon's" name has turned the H of Haures into an Fl. The sigil of Haures clearly is rendered from drawings of the Horus falcon. As in the ancient Egyptian depictions, his hawk wings are wide-spread. The Mediæval sigil shows the claws as two small crosses and his head as a larger cross which extends below the wings to form the hawk's tail. Haures is said to:

> *converse gladly of divinity and the creation of the world, as also of the fall of spirits, his own included. If desired, he will destroy and burn the enemies of the operator, nor will he suffer to be tempted, by spirits or otherwise.*[31]

Even in this extremely corrupt vestige of the ancient Horus myth, we can see some inkling of the true God. Since he learned of "divinity

and the creation of the world" from his mother, Isis, (as in the *Kore Kosmou*) he speaks of it gladly. His willingness to destroy the operator's enemies surely comes from Horus' traditional role as righteous and untemptable avenger of Osiris, destroyer of his father's enemies.

I have not seen evidence that Isis suffered the fate of Astarte, who became the demon Ashtaroth, in the grimoires. (If any readers have found such evidence, I would be very interested to hear about it.) It may be that Isis was able to maintain her status as a *daimon*, or good spirit, rather than a fallen spirit, or *demon*. As late as the fourteenth century, Christine de Pisan still praises Isis, writing that "Ysys" is a "planter" and identifying her with the "Blyssyd Virgyne Marie." Writes Pisan: "Ysys fait les plantes et tous les grains fructifier." (Isis fructifies the plants and all the grains.)[32]

Throughout the Dark and Middle Ages, devotion that had once belonged to Isis and the other Great Goddesses, was directed to the Virgin Mary. There are many of these survivals—from the Black Madonnas to identifications between a Pagan Goddess and the Christian Virgin such as that made by Christine de Pisan. We may be seeing evidence of another Isis-Mary identification in a 1474 painting of the Madonna and Child by Francesco del Cossa. The artist shows us, very clearly, that the Virgin has tied her robe with the sacred Knot of Isis. Obviously, she, too, protects her holy child and her worshippers from harm.

With the Italian Renaissance, came a period of rebirth for the Hermetic tradition. The rediscovery of the Pagan mysteries through classical art and *specifically* through the Hermetica not only contributed to the cultural renewal of the Renaissance but strongly influenced it. With the rediscovery of the Hermetica, we no longer need look for Isis in Mary. As a Hermetic Goddess, the Lady of Words of Power, Isis, regained her own potent name.

Not only was she reintroduced through the *Corpus Hermeticum*, but the re-discovery of Isiac artifacts, such as the famous Bembine Tablet of Isis, as well as a wave of European Egyptomania also contributed to a re-acknowledgment of Isis *as* Isis.

The *Corpus Hermeticum* returned to the West when Cosimo de Medici obtained copies of the texts from the East and commissioned the scholar/philosopher, Marsilio Ficino, to translate them. So intense was Cosimo's interest in the texts that he asked Ficino to postpone his translation of Plato to work on the Hermetica. This Ficino did, completing the texts just before Cosimo's death.

Yet these were *Pagan* texts. How was it that these Pagan texts could be even passably acceptable in the very Christian world of Renaissance Italy? The solution was in the form of a fortuitous mistake. Ficino mistakenly believed that the Hermetic texts were far more

ancient than they actually were. He believed that Hermetic philosophy was an ancient forerunner of Christianity rather than its contemporary. So when the Hermetic texts showed influence from Jewish or Christian myth, such as in the *Isis the Prophetess* text we've already discussed, this was understood not as the syncretism of a late age, but as the prophetic prefiguring of an early one. As such, it could be seen as predicting the "triumph of Christianity" and its obvious Paganism forgiven. Because of this mistake, and because of Ficino's reinterpretation of magic in a much lighter, brighter form than that of Mediæval magic, the figure of the Renaissance mage gained a new status. Ficino's "natural magic" moved out of the shadows of the Mediæval grimoires and into the light of philosophy[33] while his successor, Pico della Mirandola, added Qabalah to the Hermetic mix. Both innovations were very important for the development of the Hermetic tradition, especially as the "Magic of Hermes" is practiced today.

Of course, there was only so far that one could carry this devotion to magic—as Giordano Bruno learned. Signore Bruno, a former Dominican monk, was perhaps the first Neo-Pagan magician. After much spiritual searching, Bruno, influenced by the Hermetica, came to believe not that the ancient Egyptian religion foreshadowed the purer Christian one, but that Christianity had surpressed the superior and magical Egyptian religion.[34] With Bruno's Egyptian Hermetic focus, naturally Isis figured in his work. In his 1584 essay, *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast), Bruno discusses divine immanence and the magical theory of correspondences. Further, he defends and explains the high nature of the ancient Egyptian religion, quoting Isis as his authority. Here she explains to Momus, the devil's advocate of the Hermetica, that those who denigrate the magic of the Egyptian religion simply do not understand:

> *Let us not trouble you, Momus, said Isis, since Fate has ordained a vicissitude of darkness and light.*
>
> *But the worst of it is, said Momus, that they hold it for certain that they are in the light.*
>
> *And Isis replied that darkness would not be darkness to them, if they knew it.*[35]

Later, in the same essay, Isis instructs us once more on the virtues of the Egyptian religion, through Bruno's pen.

> *And to return to our purpose said Isis to Momus, the stupid and senseless idolaters had no reason to laugh at the magic and divine cult of the Egyptians, who in all things and in all effects, according to the proper reasons of each, contemplated the divinity; and knew how through the species which are in the womb of nature, to receive those benefits which they desired from her. For, as she gives fish to the sea and river, deserts to wild animals, metals to the mines, fruits to the trees, so they give certain lots, virtues, fortunes and impressions to certain parts of certain animals, beasts, and plants. Hence the divinity in the sea was called Neptune, in the sun, Apollo, in the earth Ceres, in the deserts, Diana, and diversely in all other species which, like diverse ideas, were diverse divinities in nature, all of which referred to one deity of deities and fountain of the ideas above nature.*[36]

It was just this sort of thing that was too much for the Catholic authorities to bear. Bruno found himself imprisoned by the Inquisition. Yet even in his cell, he continued his defense of Egyptianism. A fellow prisoner told Inquisitors that Bruno claimed that the Christian cross was actually the symbol that is shown upon the breast of the Goddess Isis—the famous protective Knot of Isis, which resembles the ankh, the hieroglyph for "life"—and that her symbol had been "stolen" by the Christians.[37]

Although Bruno retracted his "heresies" during the course of his imprisonment, he later withdrew his retractions. On February 17, 1600, Bruno was burned alive as a relapsed heretic.

This did not, however, deter other Egyptophiles who were perhaps more careful than our brash Bruno. One of their inspirations was a mysterious Isiac artifact, which had come to light the previous century: The Isiac Tablet or the Bembine Table of Isis.

The Isiac Tablet is a bronze tablet of approximately fifty inches in length and thirty inches in width. The Egyptian-style figures upon it are arranged in three registers and are inlaid with silver and a dark colored enamel. In the center of the tablet is an enthroned female figure, assumed to be Isis, wearing an elaborate crown with the horns and disk of Isis-Hathor. Upon the disk is a khepera beetle and lotus buds spring up from beside the disk. Numerous other Egyptianized figures surround the central figure. The iconography of the figures does not display the usual Egyptian symbolism, and the so-called hieroglyphs which border the design are unreadable. These things would tend to mark it as being of very late and probably non-Egyptian origin.

We are on somewhat shaky ground when trying to establish the history of the Isiac Tablet. For while many have mentioned its whereabouts, they often do not cite sources, so the Tablet's history may be somewhat legendary. Nonetheless, here it is as presented in W. Wynn Westcott's book, known to be the most complete on the subject.

The Isiac Tablet came into the hands of Cardinal Torquatus Bembo of Venice, an avid collector of antiquities, after the sacking of Rome by the army of Emperor Charles V of Germany in 1527. After Bembo's death, the Tablet went to the treasure house of the Dukes of Mantua who kept it there until 1630 when Mantua was sacked. From there it passed to Cardinal Pava who gave it to the Dukes of Savoy as a gift. They eventually presented it to the King of Sardinia who guarded it carefully in his Palace at Turin about 1730. Apparently, it was counted a great favor to be allowed to see it.[38] The Tablet is today lost.

Westcott notes that a guidebook to Northern Italy in his day (1887) stated that the Tablet was originally found on Mount Avertine in Rome on the site of a former Temple of Isis. Given the Tablet's non-Egyptian design and the incomprehensibility of its hieroglyphs, it is entirely possible that an artifact like this could have been made by Roman Isiacs during that late period of her worship when knowledge of the hieroglyphic writing had decayed.

A great deal of legend has been attached to the Isiac Tablet. Thomas Taylor tells us that the Isiac Tablet served as the altar upon which Plato received his initiation into the Greater Mysteries in the subterranean chambers of the Great Pyramid of Giza. Manly P. Hall deduces from Eliphas Levi's discussion of the Tablet that the figures on the Tablet represent the figures of the tarot. Hall also connects the Tablet with Egyptian Gnosticism and alchemy. He interprets the central figure of Isis as representing the Universal Mercury of alchemy. Thus, he again connects Isis with Hermes.[39]

Due to its very incomprehensibility, the Isiac Tablet has served as a symbolic surface onto which many have been able to project their esoteric interpretations. Perhaps the most famous of these projectionists was Athanasius Kircher, a Jesuit priest who "interpreted" the Tablet in his book, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* in 1654. The subjects of *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* were, according to its frontispiece, "Egyptian wisdom, Phoenician theology, Chaldean astrology, Hebrew cabbala, Persian magic, Pythagorean mathematics, Greek theosophy, Mythology, Arabian alchemy, Latin philology." It is a very Hermetic book, and as Kircher interprets it, the Isiac Tablet is a very Hermetic artifact.

Kircher was fascinated with Egypt, and determined from early on that he would, one day, decipher the meaning of the hieroglyphs. Because he knew that Hermes Trismegistos was their inventor, Kircher

was sure that they contained the deepest of divine secrets.[40] Since he did not have the phonetic clue that later allowed their decipherment; Kircher interpreted the hieroglyphs entirely symbolically. In *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, he interprets principally those found on the Isiac Tablet, which he considered to be the richest source of ancient Egyptian wisdom. Mixing Platonic, Orphic, and Chaldean philosophy, he interprets the Isiac Tablet as a map which details the workings of the Universe and the Divine Mind—in concepts familiar to us through the Hermetica. According to him, the figures in the top register represent the zodiacal signs, while others represent the four directions. The figure in the center, Isis, is the ΙΥΝΧ, the "polymorphous all-containing Universal Idea." (Iynx is a term from the Chaldean Oracles for the being which wields divine power in any given world.) Other figures represent the planets and the dualities.[41]

In *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, Kircher also discusses the deities Isis, Sarapis, and Typhon for he believes that in the myths of the ancients lie truths about divinity and Nature.[42] Isis is to him "Isis, the all-receptive and many-formed *daimon*; thousand-named Nature, Matter; High Mother of the Gods, this many-named Isis." A woodcut by Rosello accompanies the discussion of Isis and outlines her attributes as taken from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses.* Isis is said to be divine in both heavenly and earthly spheres; she is associated with vegetation, fertility, medicine, and the stars. She averts the evils of the Nile; she is all-nourishing. She rules divination and the flux and reflux powers of the moon.[43]

Kircher's interpretations still figure in the work of present day Hermetic groups; the modern Golden Dawn uses Rosello's woodcuts and Kircher's discussion of the deities from *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* as diagrams and explanations in grade ritual initiations from the Portal through Adeptus Exemptus.

Isis and "The Hermetic Art"

At the same time that the philosophical Hermetica were being reintroduced to the West, alchemical Hermetica were also flooding in. A passion for "the Hermetic Art" of alchemy, which would persist for many centuries, was born. Among the alchemists were true spiritual seekers who, in the grand tradition of Hermeticism, sought to transmute themselves; to become so purified that they achieved the mystic's goal of becoming one with God. This was the Great Work, and they sought the spiritual gold as fervently as other less spiritual seekers chased the physical gold they expected to make them rich.

Isis, as Hermetic philosopher and possessor of the true angelic alchemical secret was Mistress of their Art. As we follow her into the

alchemical world of Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe, Isis, the Lady of Many Names, appears to us under a variety of guises. She is the Virgin of the World who bears the alchemical child of the Sun and the Moon. As Kircher explains, she is Luna, the Moon and the puler of its powers. She is Nature, or Physis whose ways the alchemists strive to emulate. She is the alchemical Queen and Bride who weds the Solar King. She is the Anima Mundi, the Soul of the World, the spirit of life itself. She is Sophia, the Lady of wisdom both divine and natural. And she is the Lady Venus, the veiled Goddess of the Rosicrucians, who is revealed only to true initiates.

For alchemists, the myth of Isis and Osiris was a myth of the alchemical process. The theme of dismemberment and reassembly was a mythic statement of the alchemical motto: *solve et coagula*— dissolve and re-join; while the birth of the divine child from parents identified with the Moon and Sun, as Isis and Osiris had long been, could not have been more alchemical.

In one of the paintings of the *Splendor Solis*, one of the most well-known alchemical texts, we see a dark man with a sword standing over the body of a man he has just hacked to pieces. The text explains: "I have killed thee that thou mayest receive superabundant life..."[44] Though the writer does not specifically identify the figures as Typhon (Set) and Osiris, the same archetypal motif is in operation here. The murdered man, called "the good man" just as Osiris is called Agathodaimon, the Good God, has a shining, golden—Solar—head and has been killed so that he may be reborn, just as Osiris, the Sun at midnight, suffered dismemberment and was resurrected as Lord of the Underworld.

An alchemical illustration in the *Atalanta Fugiens* by Michael Maier, shows us, in the foreground, a king peering into a coffin, surprised to find his own body therein. In the background another scene is being played out. The hacked-to-pieces body of a crowned man lies on the ground. The murderer is hidden behind a wall; only his sword is shown to us. A female figure runs toward the body. The accompanying text says:

> *And he destroys me, yet he does not destroy my nature. And he is Saturn who separated me from all my limbs. But afterwards I go to my mother who gathers together all my divided and scattered limbs. I am the light of all things that are mine, causing the light to appear openly from within my father Saturn.*[45]

Again, the figures are not specifically called Isis, Osiris, and Typhon, yet again, the connection seems inevitable. Even the last

statement—that the King causes the light to appear from within Saturn, or Death—is appropriate for Osiris, whose Light shines in the Underworld.

Veiled Isis herself offered a sacred image for two important Hermetic themes: the unveiling of Nature/Venus and of the Nigredo, or black stage, of the alchemical work which comes before rebirth. As Nature, she contains the secrets of life, death, and transmutation. As Venus, she possessed the mysteries of love. And to the Hermeticists, both these Goddesses were veiled. Isis, in her mourning aspect, had long been considered to be veiled. Among the Hellenes she was known as the Black One, garbed in black, with her long black hair disheveled and veiling her face in mourning. Thus, Isis, the Black One could be the keeper of the secrets of the alchemical process and part of the process itself.

Isis in the Lodges

Another Isiac theme which was revived among esoteric groups, beginning in the 16th and 17th centuries, was *initiation* into the mysteries. Because she presided over death and rebirth in the Underworld, Isis had been strongly associated with mysteries from the earliest manifestation of her worship. One of the most powerful expressions of this eternal mystery theme comes to us from the Græco-Roman period of the Isis religion and is found in *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius, written in the second century C.E. In this story, the hero, Lucius, undergoes a series of Isiac initiations about which he can only tell his readers:

> *Hear then, but believe, for what I say is true. I have approached the confines of death and, treading the threshold of Proserpina, I was conveyed through all the Elements and returned; I have seen the sun flashing with brilliant white Light at midnight. I have drawn very near to the gods above and the gods below, and I have addressed them face to face. Behold, I have told you things about which, though you have heard them, it is inevitable that you must yet be ignorant.*[46]

These were the kinds of essential, mystical experiences sought by speculative Masons and the members of the other secret and semi-secret societies which began springing up in the 1700s. So in addition to Christian and Hebrew mythology, some Masons also looked to Egyptian myth, and particularly the Isis-Osiris myth, to inspire and inform the impressive rituals that were then being developed in their Lodges.

Among the proponents of Egyptian Masonry was the infamous Count Cagliostro whose personal interest was in the mysteries of Isis and Anubis. Cagliostro established a Temple of Isis in Paris and in 1785

he declared that women should also be allowed to be initiated into the Masonic mysteries on the precedent that women had been Priestesses in Egypt just as men had. While Cagliostro's name is often associated with charlatanism, Masonic chronicler A.E. Waite felt that he was at least serious when it came to his Egyptian Masonry.[47] His admission of women into the Masonic mysteries pre-dated the establishment of Co-Masonry, which admits both women and men, by nearly a hundred years.

In 1791, "Mozart's Masonic opera," as *The Magic Flute* is sometimes called, had its first performance. The action of the opera takes place in and around the Temple of Isis and incorporates the principles of the Masonic degrees into the storyline. The opera's main theme is initiation so that here again, we find the association of Isis, wisdom, and initiation. Not only is the Temple of Isis specifically called the Temple of Wisdom, but the love of and pursuit of wisdom is the high ideal to which the opera's hero, Tamino, the Egyptian Prince, aspires. As Tamino bravely endures the trials of his initiation within the Temple, light and wisdom overcome darkness and ignorance. Praises to Isis and Osiris are sung throughout.

The Masonic Rite of Memphis and the Antient (ancient) and Primitive Rite both considered Egypt as the birthplace of all that is sublime in Masonry. Further, they conceived that Masonry and the Hebrew tradition were linked due to the legendary Masonic initiation of Moses, who had also studied in Egypt. The Rite of Memphis initiated Sublime Sages of Isis and Pontiffs of Isis while the Antient and Primitive Rite offered a degree called Patriarch of Isis. In the degree initiation of Patriarch of Isis, the candidate was taken on a journey down the Nile, underwent symbolic death, gained glimpses of paradise, and finally had the mysteries of the degree symbols revealed to him. Among the mysteries that were revealed was that Isis is the symbol of "teeming Nature" and that the Moon is the divine Regeneratrix. Here then, we again find Isis in two of her most consistent roles: Lady of Nature and Savior Resurrectionist.

In a further degree of the Antient and Primitive Rite, the Patriarch of Memphis, the candidate enacts the Isis-Osiris myth, taking the part of Osiris. In this case, however, Osiris is revived not by Isis, but by the "Sublime Dai" who claims the right by virtue of his office.[48]

Virgo, Isis, Mighty Mother

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky did much to enhance Isis' already strong position as a Hermetic Goddess with the publication of her opus, *Isis Unveiled* in 1877. In her preface to the book, she states that:

> *Our work, then, is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the anciently universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology.*[49]

To this end, Blavatsky proposed that we step inside the Temple of Isis, the Temple of she who "is all that is, that was, that ever shall be"[50] and learn her secrets. Thus she makes Isis the keeper of Hermetic tradition and, indeed, Hermetic tradition itself. By revealing Isis, Blavatsky hoped to reveal Hermetic philosophy to the modern world.

With Isis positioned as the Lady of Hermeticism and even as Hermeticism itself, she comes into the sphere of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. So much so, that we may go so far as to say that Isis was—and is—the Goddess of the Golden Dawn.

According to the Order's self definition, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was from the beginning "a Hermetic Society whose members are taught the principles of Occult Science and the Magic of Hermes." The Mother Temple of the Order in London was established in 1888 and named for the Goddess Isis and the Muse of astronomy, Urania. This was an indication of the important part the Hermetic Goddess was to play in the Order. In fact, all three of the Order's founders, Mathers, Westcott and Woodman, had some familiarity with Isis outside the sphere of the Order.

Woodman and Westcott, as Masons and Rosicrucians, would have had at least some knowledge of Isis, probably connecting her with wisdom as she had been in some rites of Masonry. In addition, Westcott, readers will recall, was the author of *The Isiac Tablet or the Bembine Table of Isis*. MacGregor and Moina Mathers, on the other hand, had a very deep personal interest in Isis outside the Order. Through their "Isis Movement," which they promulgated in Paris at the turn of the century, they hoped to revive the worship of Isis. To this end, they privately, and eventually publicly, performed the "Rite of Isis," a ritual theater piece incorporating invocation, poetry, dance, and offerings to Isis in the form of flowers from the women in the audience and wheat from the men.

Given this, it is not surprising that we find Isis prominent within the Order as well. Throughout the grade materials and rituals of the Outer Order she is clearly in evidence most commonly as "the Isis of Nature." For example, in the Theoricus Grade Ritual, the female figure on the tarot card *The Universe* is said to wear the "Lunar Crescent of Isis" and is identified as "the Bride of the Apocalypse, the Qabalistic Queen of the Canticles, the Egyptian Isis, or the Great Feminine Kerubic Angel Sandalphon." In the Outer Order Temple, the two great visible Pillars, representing the Qabalistic Pillars of Mercy—and Severity, are

referred to Isis—the White Pillar of Mercy and her twin sister, Nephthys—the Black Pillar of Severity.

In the Second Order, her presence is even stronger. The primary ritual tool of the Adeptus Minor, the Lotus Wand, is dedicated to Isis. The twelve colored bands upon its shaft represent the twelve zodiacal signs and their influence in Nature, that is, in the preserve of Isis; while the lotus flower itself has both Sephirotic and elemental attributions. As the wand of the Adeptus Minor, whose Qabalistic sphere is Tiphereth at the center of the Tree of Life, it is a wand of the Middle Pillar; a balanced wand—the very essence of the work of the Order. In the Adeptus Minor Ritual, the Lotus Wand is the wand of the Third Adept, who corresponds to the office of Cancellarius, the sacred scribe of the Temple. Thus the wand dedicated to Isis is again connected with writing and knowledge—and through this with Thoth or Hermes. Further, in the important Second Order formula of the Analysis of the Key Word, Isis is invoked as "Virgo, Isis, Mighty Mother" and is part of the divine triad, Isis-Apophis-Osiris. The 7=4 Grade of Adeptus Exemptus, the highest grade of the Second Order, is attributed to Isis, as is the office of the Præmonstrator. Thus, in the Order, the role of instructor, Præmonstrator, again falls to our Hermetic teacher, Isis.

The Adepts of the Order often worked with the energy of Isis. A Flying Roll, dated 1892, details a Spirit Vision experience of the Adepts Sapientia Sapienti Dono Date and Fidelis with the tarot trump, *The Empress*. The experience produced a vision of Isis in which the Adepts understood her to give the following aretology:

> *I am the mighty Mother Isis; most powerful of all the world, I am she who fights not, but is always victorious, I am that Sleeping Beauty who men have sought, for all time; and the paths which lead to my castle are beset with dangers and illusions. Such as fail to find me sleep or may ever rush after the Fata Morgana leading astray all who feel that illusory influence. I am lifted up on high, and do draw men unto me, I am the world's desire, but few there be who find me. When my secret is told, it is the secret of the Holy Grail.*[51]

Later in the vision, Isis becomes "Lady Venus" and instructs the Adepts on the great principle of love, finally telling them that Christ is the heart of love, which is the heart of the Great Mother Isis. In this vision, then, Hermetic Isis again comes together with the Rosicrucian Lady Venus and with the Christos.

The influence of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn on modern theurgic groups has been immense. The Order is often,

rightly, credited with bringing together many strands of esoteric wisdom from divergent traditions and weaving from them a coherent system of spiritual development. It has not, however, received due credit for the important part it has played in helping initiate the modern return of the Goddess. The Golden Dawn honored the Goddess by insisting that women and men be admitted on a perfect equality—candidates for Adeptship still swear to this in their sacred oaths. And it was one of the first esoteric groups to make this stipulation. Among its members were suffragettes and "New Women," the liberated women of their day. The Order understood the balance of Goddess and God—and the unity beyond them. With the Order's emphasis on Isis, Binah the Supernal Mother, and other Goddesses, it allowed members to actually experience the Divine Feminine as well as the Divine Masculine. This is a soul-changing encounter; and the vision summarized above strongly illustrates that these Goddesses were not merely seen as allegorical abstractions, but as true Divine Beings. This genuine contact with Divine Feminine, with Goddess, is precisely the experience that so many women and men are both seeking, and finding, as the Goddess continues her return to us today.

Isis Invictrix

The Goddess Isis has been with us for thousands and thousands of years. She continues strongly in the common imagination even today. There are very few educated people who do not at least know the name of Isis. Whether we know her as Living Goddess, as the loyal and loving mother of mythology, as a Saturday morning superheroine who rights wrongs and protects the weak, or even as the name of a scientific journal or a computer program, we continue to understand Isis' ancient functions as protective Mother Goddess, Lady of magic and power, and keeper of knowledge and wisdom.

Today, as her temples are again being raised, we are realizing that Isis has been with us from the beginning and that she has remained by our side throughout the millennia. She has been waiting for us, living in the ancient esoteric philosophy, the companion of the alchemists, philosophers, and magicians who dared to lift her veil. Isis lives in the Hermetic wisdom tradition, as in our hearts. And she, as much as Hermes Trismegistos, is the expounder of the Hermetic mysteries.

> *But, said Isis, if you wish to ask any further question, my magnanimous son, ask on.*
>
> —*Hermes Trismegistos, in the Kore Kosmou*

Endnotes

[1] A.J. Festugiere, *La Revelation d'Hermes Trismegiste.* (Paris, 1950-4) vol. III, p 1. cited in Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition.* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul & Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 2.

[2] *Journal of Egyptian Archeology*, 54, p. 199 ff.

[3] Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes. A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind.* (Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 3.

[4] Feminine characters feature in alchemical treatises such as *Dialogue of the Philosophers and Cleopatra* and *The True Book of Sophe the Egyptian.*

[5] *Ibid.* p. 116.

[6] Photo may be found in R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), plate 71.

[7] For clarity's sake, let me state that, for the purposes of this article, I'll be using a broad definition of the terms "Hermetic" and "Hermeticism." In addition to the subjects specifically mentioned in the Hermetica, modern esotericists often use these terms to refer to a range of studies in the Western Esoteric Tradition—and so will I. We will, therefore, be examining Isis in the Hermetic texts, in the Hermetic world, and as part of our Hermetic heritage.

[8] Richard Reitzenstein, *Poimandres: Studien zur griechisch-aegyptischen und fruhchristlichen Literatur.* (Leipzig, 1904).

[9] Fowden, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii.

[10] Bryon Shafer, ed., *Religion in Ancient Egypt.* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991) p. 165.

[11] R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead.* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, revised edition, 1985), p. 155.

[12] R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts. Vol. I. Formulas 1-354.* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, Ltd., 1973), p. 186.

[13] *Ibid.* pp. 231.

[14] E.A. Wallis Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt.* (New York: Dover Publications reprinted from Oxford University Press edition, 1934), p. 202.

[15] Faulkner, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[16] The Turin papyrus, cited in J. Gwen Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride.* (University of Wales Press, 1970), p. 256.

[17] Griffiths, *Ibid.* p. 9.

[18] E.A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary in Two Volumes.* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978, republished from John Murray, London, 1920), vol. 1, pp. 79-80.

[19] Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p.8.

[20] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother, An Analysis of the Archetype.* (Princeton: the Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series XLVII, 1955), pp. 98-99.

[21] Vincent Tran Tam Tinh, *Essai sur le culte d'Isis a Pompei.* (Paris: E. de Baccard, 1964), p. 60.

[22] Walter Scott, *Hermetica: the Ancient Greek and Latin Writings Which Contain Religioius or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistos.* (Hermes House, Boulder, 1982), vol. 1, p. 465.

[23] James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 336.

[24] Cited in Witt, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[25] Among others, please see chapters in Witt for the chaste reputation of Isis worshippers.

[26] Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 264. Translation of formula by W.C. Grese.

[27] *Ibid.* p. 144. Translation of formula by W.C. Grese.

[28] *Ibid*, p. 226. Translation of formula by Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translations of Griffith and Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyrus*, recto, col. XIX/1-9. (For more on the magical papyri, please see my article Divination in the Græco-Egyptian Magical Papyri in the *Golden Dawn Journal, Book 1: Divination.)*

[29] Scott, *op. cit.* Vol. IV, p. xxxvi.

[30] Fowden, *op. cit.* p. 2.

[31] Arthur Edward Waite, *The Book of Black Magic and Ceremonial Magic.* (New York: Causeway Books, 1973), p. 216.

[32] Caxton's translation of *Les cent histoires de troye*, Paris 1499/1500. Noted in Witt, *op. cit.*, p. 324, note number 23.

[33] Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

[35] Bruno, *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, dial. 3 (*Dial. ital.*, pp. 777-8), cited in Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

[36] Ibid. (*Dial, ital.*, pp. 780-2), cited in Yates, *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

[37] Yates, *Ibid.*, p. 351.

[38] W. Wynn Westcott, *The Isiac Tablet or the Bembine Table of Isis.* (Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, 1976), pp. 2-3.

[39] Manly P. Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages.* (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1977), pp. LXII-LVIII.

[40] Joscelyn Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher, A Renaissance Man and the Quest for Lost Knowledge.* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1979), p. 56.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[42] Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, Vol. II, i, p. 40, cited in Godwin, *Ibid.*.

[43] Kircher, Vol. I, p. 189, cited in Godwin, *Ibid.*

[44] Text and painting shown in Johannes Fabricuius, *Alchemy.* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, revised edition, 1989), p. 100.

[45] *Ibid.* p. 183.

[46] Translation by Adam P. Forrest.

[47] A. E. Waite, *A New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry.* (New York: Weathervane Books, 1980), p. 91.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 268-274.

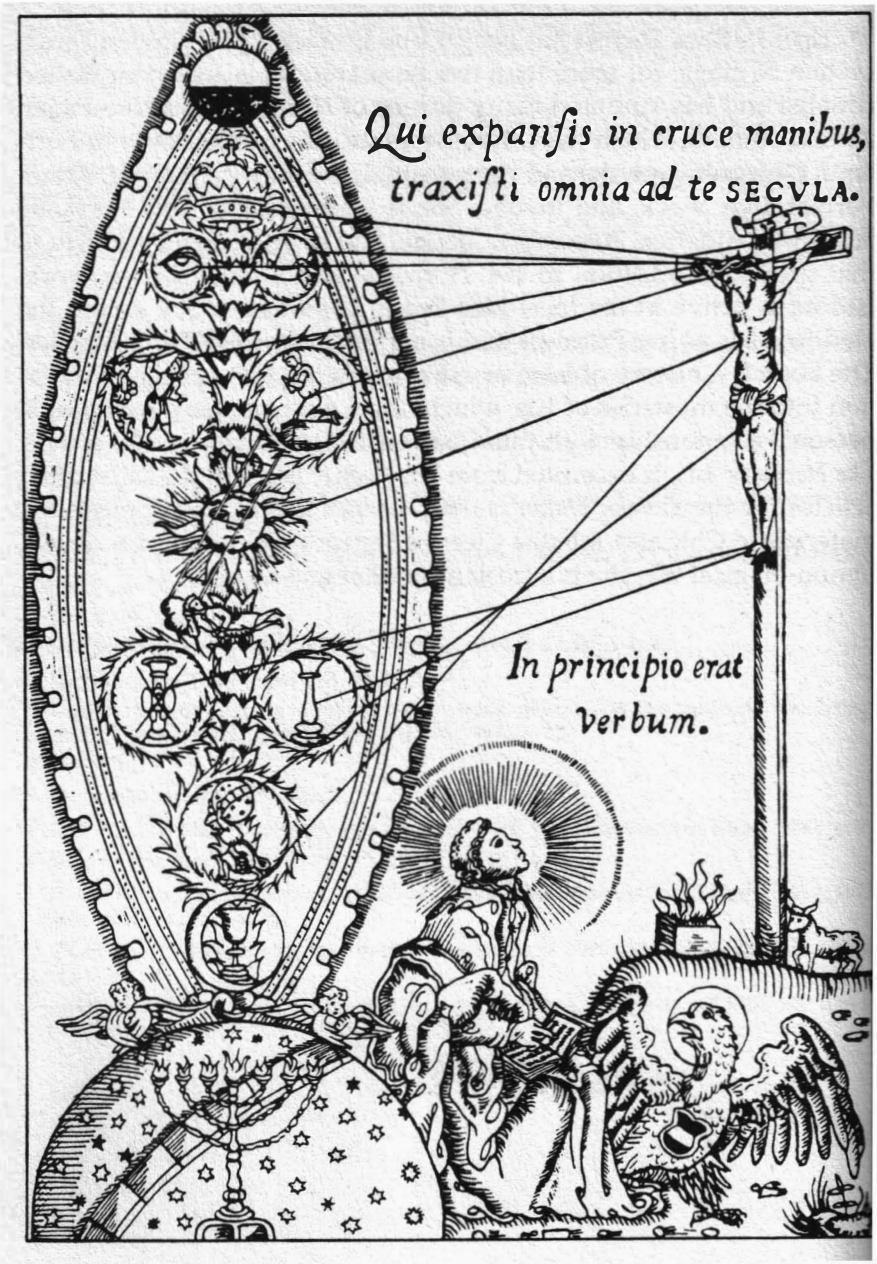
[49] H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled.* (Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1972, original edition 1877), p. vii

[50] This is the famous ancient inscription on the statue of Neith, identified with Isis, at Sais, Egypt.

[51] Flying Roll No. IV. *An Example of Mode of Attaining to Spirit Vision and What was seen by Two Adepti—SSDD and F on November 10th 1892.*

About the Author

Morgan Isidora Forrest has been a practitioner of the Golden Dawn system of magic for more than twelve years. She is an accomplished ritualist and has authored many dozens of Hermetic and Neo-Pagan rituals, some of which have become a tradition of their own in Portland, Oregon where she and her personal and magical partner, Adam Forrest, live, work, and invoke. She is co-founder of The Hermetic Society in America, Alexandria Lodge, and often presents lectures to that group. In addition to her Hermetic and Golden Dawn work, Isidora is active in the local Neo-Pagan community. She serves the Goddess Isis as her Priestess and is currently writing *The Book of Isis*. The book is a history of Isiac worship and a modern system of initiation into the mysteries of Isis, which offers methods for developing a personal relationship with this Goddess of many names. The article, *The Hermetic Isis*, is excerpted from *The Book of Isis*. Isidora has written articles for the *Golden Dawn Journal, Books I and II*, and contributed materials to Chic and Tabatha Cicero's *Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple*. In non-magical life, she is a freelance writer and an artist.



A Sixteenth Century Hermetic Drawing of the Tree of Life

Logos Revealed:
Hermetic and Kabbalistic Influences on the Renaissance Humanists[1]

Madonna Compton

And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. —Rev. 1.16

Although some who write about Hermeticism seem to identify it primarily with an inner "gnosis," I believe there are two distinct kinds of Hermeticism associated with the Judaeo-Christian dimension. One tends toward theism, which is a belief in a personal God or One who is actively concerned about the affairs of the human being; the other tends toward deism. The latter is more truly Gnostic in nature: God is perceived to be "alien." Although God is the "alpha" and "omega"—the beginning and end of existence—this Supreme Being plays no role in between. This God is not concerned with the governing of the universe or the affairs of the human heart.

A Hermeticism that is more Kabbalistic, on the other hand, is more theistic, in both Judaism and Christianity. Although there is an aspect of God which can never be known, called the Ain Soph, there is also a mediating principle who intervenes. To a Christian Hermeticist (at least in the periods and places we will be discussing) this presence was also God—the God made known in the Incarnation of Jesus. This is the God who suffers as humans suffer, who struggles as humans struggle, who loves as humans love. And it is the deep love both for the historical figure, Jesus, and the divine cosmic entity known as the Christ, that inspired so many of the Christian humanists of the Renaissance.

In the Christian Hermetic tradition, which is characterized by analogical thinking, there is a direct relationship between the mythological figure of Hermes, the reputed author of the ancient Egyptian Hermetic writings, and Christ, the physical incarnation of this wisdom, frequently referred to as the "Logos," or Word. This Logos principle is also characterized as Light. In the opening verse of John, it says that:

> *In the beginning was the Word (Logos)...(and) all things were made by him...(and) in him was Life and this Life was*

> *the Light of men...(this) Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*

A similar passage is found in the ancient text called the *Poimandres of Hermes Trismegistus*:

> *That Light is I...the First God, who was before the watery substance which appeared out of the darkness, and the Word which came forth from the Light is Son of God.*[2]

From its early development in Platonic and Pythagorean mysticism, the Christian Hermetic tradition has perceived this Logos as the ordering principle of the universe, the nexus of all relationship, and the ground of rationality and reason. It is frequently thought of as the spiritual sun in the cosmos, and is attributed to the sphere of Tiphareth on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. The function or emanation of this God-principle is sometimes called the "Mediating Intelligence." On the Tree, it is designated as the 6th sphere, associated with the sun and Light. It is interesting to note, in this regard, that the word "Light" is used six times in John's Prologue.

From the solar mysteries, dating from ancient pagan sources, evolved the idea of the "sun king" which was both a cosmic principle and an actual sun-being. Later this appropriation found a suitable expression in Christ, but even in pre-Christian Hermetic streams of thought—at least when analyzed from the point of view of mythic structures—this figure was destined to accomplish the magical-redemptive work of uniting the earth with its Source, or acting as a mediator between temporal time and space and the incomprehensible or infinite God. We will return to an examination of the function and meaning of this Mediating Intelligence—both psychologically and metaphysically—toward the end of this article.

For now let us briefly trace the roots of this stream of Hermeticism, focusing particularly on the Christian Hermeticists of the Renaissance, whose writings greatly impacted the development of the Hermetic and Kabbalistic tradition that later was to evolve into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

The Kabbalistic tradition as it evolved in Judaism began, in the Renaissance, to encounter a syncretic fusion with what has come to be called the "prisca theologia," or ancient theology. The principle philosophers associated with this movement were Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in the second half of the 15th century and Joannes Reuchlin (a disciple of Pico's), Christian Knorr Rosenroth and Henry More in the 16th and 17th centuries. The contribution of

many Christian philosophers and theologians of this period heralded the rebirth of classical humanism; that is, the ancient "pagan" and Hermetic classical texts enjoyed a new appreciation after suffering many centuries of near oblivion, or at least severe impoverishment. These three streams: Christianity, classical Platonism, and Jewish mysticism, coalesced into a rich harmony in the works of these classical Renaissance humanists. When the original Greek works of Plato found their way to the West, philosophers in the humanists' circle, particularly Ficino and Pico, devoted their lives to translating these texts and integrating the imaginative depth of spiritual beauty of this pre-Christian culture with Christianity. A center funded by the Cosimo de Medici for the development of this Platonic revival became the intellectual fountainhead of the day, under the direction of Ficino. With the rebirth of this classical heritage evolved a more pluralistic or "ecumenical" understanding of revelation, which was seen to be manifested in numerous religious traditions besides Christianity: in the body of ancient pagan revelations of Hermeticism which had known such wide circulation in the Greek world, in the Egyptian and Chaldean texts, in the corpus of works which evolved from the Neoplatonic philosophers, in the Jewish Kabbalah and in the Gnostic traditions.

Christianity, of course, was viewed as the crowning fulfillment of these revelations. But the mood was one of tolerance and religious syncretism coupled with deep scholarship and a much more favorable outlook on life in general. There was not the huge gulf which separated the human from the divine as was so prevalent in the Dark Ages. In the Neoplatonic vision of the Christian humanists, the pervading understanding was rather emanation theory: humans, animals, even plants, stones and stars were all perceived as emanating from the One. The classic archetypal figure representing the Soul of the World found expression in Sophia—the goddess of wisdom. Philosophers (lovers-of-wisdom) were her consorts.

The sun and the stars were endowed with mystical properties and the world became "re-enchanted" with this new vision in which mystery and magic lie hidden in all of nature. Through a deeper understanding of the human being's relationship with God and provocative play with the imaginative archetypal forms of God's creation, the opening for a new form of discourse had been made: Christian Kabbalah. We will investigate some of the writings of these philosophers in this area shortly.

Many scholars have noted that this magical and Hermetic revival eventually led to the experimental method of modern science, because it called for interaction with nature, rather than a broad philosophical discussion of nature. The Hermetic stream in which this

process was fully developed was, of course, alchemy, which was seen to tap the energies of nature through direct interaction—a real "hands on" kind of Hermetic art.

The Roman hierarchy seemed tolerant of much of this revival, with some exceptions. When Neoplatonic metaphysics spilled into magic, or when the planetary deities of the ancient Greek worldview were viewed as a polytheistic threat to the established doctrine, (instead of imaginative archetypal representations of the human psyche), the Church, of course, stepped in to reinstate structure and dogma. Ficino argued, however, that all of the earlier Hermetic writings—attributed to Zoroaster, Hermes, Pythagoras, and Plato—believed in an eternally transcendent God. The history of culture was an accumulation of traditions that was based on a common foundation with many disparate customs and artistic expressions. He saw furthermore that there was not a clear demarcation between philosophy and religion—the aim of both was contemplation of God and the search for truth was the eternal search for the Wisdom of God. In a text in the Hermetica called "A discourse of Mind (Nous) to Hermes," it says:

> *It is manifest that the maker is one; for soul is one, and life is one, and matter is one. And who is that maker? Who else can he be but God alone? You have agreed that the Kosmos is one, and that the Sun is one, and the Moon is one, and the Earth is one; and would you have it that God himself is but one among many? It would be absurd to suppose that there are many Gods. God also then is one.*[3]

Although Ficino made many contributions to the Renaissance culture, it was Pico Mirandola who, more than any other Catholic theologian before him, fashioned a theology which gave priority to esoteric wisdom, especially that of the Hebraic culture. Of the nine hundred theses Pico Mirandola wrote, more than one hundred were on Kabbalah, and some were subject to condemnation. Pico was undaunted in his persistence that there was an unbroken line of wisdom which belonged to the inheritance of Christianity. He saw in the Moses story a poetic but veiled esoteric wisdom which revealed only to those who were ready the most essential divine truths. The Kabbalah of Moses corresponded to the divine secrets hidden in the Orphic hymns and other ancient Hermetic lore, as well as to the mysteries revealed by the Logos made flesh in the Christ of the New Testament.

Some Christian Kabbalists made their way to the highest levels of the Church hierarchy, such as Cardinal Egidius of Vilerbo. Others studied the ancient texts but refrained from writing or making public

commentaries on such controversial material. Several of the later Kabbalists, of course, did not have to worry about papal authority because they wrote after the Reformation. Knorr Rosenroth was a German Lutheran who was perhaps most influential in compiling the Kabbalistic esoteric wisdom in his huge two-volume Latin opus, *Kabbala Denudata*. Later this was to be a cornerstone of the Golden Dawn tradition; its major parts being translated by its founders, S.L. MacGregor Mathers and Wynn Westcott, who translated a treatise on alchemy.

Knorr Rosenroth, like the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, with whom he corresponded and who also contributed passages to the *Kabbala Denudata*, felt that in the Jewish Kabbalah was concealed the necessary knowledge for a unified and universal religion. Pico felt that the differences between Christianity, Judaism, and paganism could finally be reconciled, using the keys of Kabbalistic exegesis. He wrote:

> *When I had procured for myself these (Kabbalistic) books, I...saw in them a religion (and here God is my witness) that was exceedingly Christian as well as Mosaic...and in those matters which pertain to philosophy, one may really hear Pythagoras and Plato, whose doctrines are so akin to our Christian faith that even Augustine gives thanks to God that the books of the Platonists fell into his hands.*[4]

A repeated theme during this time period was that there was some kind of historical connection between the Egyptian Hermes and Moses, a relationship now discounted by scholars (who date the Hermetica to the first century C.E. or later). The important point, however, is that these humanists saw many similarities in the philosophical world-views of the world's great teachers, an idea which shows the first stirrings of a true ecumenicism.

Many Jewish Kabbalists of the period, however, were not as interested in the ancient pagan and Hermetic writings as were their Christian contemporaries, or in the assimilation of Jewish Kabbalah to Christian Hermeticism. Abraham Yagel, a Jewish physician, Kabbalist, and naturalist was an exception. He claimed, in fact, that Plato had been a student of Jeremiah (which scholars, of course, now also deny) and had therefore been initiated into Jewish revelation. He also thought that Zoroaster, whom he called the father of all magicians, was Ham, the son of Noah. He quoted Apuleius and Pythagoras, Homer and Hermes.

Like many Christians who studied the Kabbalah and drew comparisons with esoteric wisdom of the past, his intent seemed to be finding common ground of revelation. He studied certain Christian philosophers, like Agrippa and Augustine, with great interest. Like the early

Church fathers, Yagel felt that Pythagoras and other great Hermeticists of the ancient past were true "believers" in the One God. Even though they may have never read the *Torah*, they had been favored with the discovery of God's wisdom independently. Yagel said, for example:

> *Although our tradition is correct...and one does not require a more correct and faithful testimony than this, nevertheless, listen to what these (ancient pagan) scholars have to say about the Creator.*[5]

Henry More said much the same thing in the *Kabbalah Denudata.* although using a slightly more pejorative tone:

> *It is clear that the 10 (Sephiroth) are the 10 of the Pythagoreans, and indeed they are fitting Repositories...(but) it is not really necessary to know anything concerning the Jewish Emanations, any more than to know the Pythagoreans...It is enough that in the words of the old Cabalists, the Christian religion is reinstated.*[6]

Knorr was an avid student of Jewish philosophy for much of his life even though he felt, like Yagel felt about Judaism, that his own Christian tradition held the final seeds of truth. But because scholars like Yagel, Pico, Knorr Rosenroth, and others were willing to explore alternative traditions and dialogue with those of different faiths, a new movement, which was very syncretic—what we would call today ecumenical—had been born. Syncretic is, in fact, not really an accurate description, because unlike much "new-age" syncretism (where everything is lumped together in some kind of philosophical "grab-bag"), this Renaissance period saw philosophers and theologians who were, indeed, seeking points of unity with other religious affiliations, but who never lost contact with *their own tradition.*

Let us investigate in more detail some of the Renaissance humanists and the development of their Hermetic philosophy before we return to an examination of a more modern understanding of the Christ principle on the Tree of Life. My focus, in keeping with the theme of this article, is the Renaissance understanding of the role of Jesus in the emerging Christian Kabbalistic paradigm. All Latin translations in the following discussion are my own unless otherwise noted, and are taken primarily from the first volume of *Kabbala Denudata*, as well as dissertations from the second volume which have not been previously translated by Mathers; from *De Verbo Mirifico* by Johannes Reuchlin; and from *Opera Omnia* by Pico Mirandola.

Pico Mirandola: The Perennial Philosophy and Christ's Divinity

Pico della Mirandola was a devout Christian, very brilliant, who had a burning energy which drove him to attend no less than four universities before the age of eighteen. He was disturbed when he first discovered the works of Plato and the ancient Hermeticists, for they, in essence, forced him to reevaluate his faith. Eventually, he came to believe that *all* human beings share a common intellect and therefore a perennial philosophy, a philosophical leap which even Ficino, his teacher, was not willing to make.

He was a particular champion of Origen—thought at the time to be a heretic—and once wrote that he:

> *...had neither written nor believed the heresies attributed to him, and if he did write them, he did not assert them dogmatically; and if he did assert them dogmatically, he did not commit a mortal sin, because he had erred in good faith; and if he did commit a mortal sin, he repented later; and if he could not go to confession, it was reasonable to believe that God had forgiven so holy a man; and even if the Church had condemned his doctrine, she had not, nor could she, condemn his soul.*[7]

One wonders whether this speaks about the fate of Origin's soul, as much as Pico's own dilemma, but this is the kind of carefully thought out polemic which characterized so much of Pico's style.

Pico was himself in danger of heresy for several of his theses on Kabbalah and Hermeticism, the most famous of which is probably: *"There is no science which makes us more certain of the divinity of Christ than magic and cabala."*[8] This is an eloquent paper, about fifteen pages long. In it Pico attempts to defend magic as a source of natural knowledge by which we may better understand the mystery of Christ's divinity. He makes it clear that this knowledge is not attained by the aspirant's own power, however, but by the grace of God.

Pico's theses were the first original Kabbalistic compositions. As the principle initiation of this new current of Christian thought, he presented Kabbalah as an ancient Jewish theology which foreshadowed the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, original sin (also a very Lurianic idea in the Jewish Kabbalah) and redemption.

Nonetheless, a commission appointed by Pope Innocent VIII found a number of theses heretical; whereupon, after much struggle, Pico fled to France. He was later cleared after a special appeal had gained

the pardon of the Pope. He then went to Florence where he continued his Kabbalistic studies. He is reputed to have once said, *"It is not intellectual error that makes a man a heretic, but rather malice and perversity of will."*[9]

There were a number of very controversial topics which Pico debated in which he clearly supported a conservative position. Although astrology, for instance, was a discipline that was gaining great popularity in the Renaissance circles, Pico himself took a negative view of astrology and wrote a disputation against it. Although he identified the spheres on the Tree with the planetary system in one theorem, in a later one he equated the Sephiroth with a more psychological scheme; much like the Greek gods and their present associations on the Tree are viewed as aspects of consciousness today. He dealt with the problem of polytheism in the classical world in much the same way, that is, by acknowledging the gods to be forces immanent in the world:

> *The names of the gods of which Orpheus sings are not those of gods and demons...but are the names of natural and divine powers apportioned to the world by the One God for the principal benefit of the human being, if he knew how to use them.*[10]

What he rejected in astrology was not that there were celestial spirits which penetrate and vivify everything, but rather the more mundane aspect of astrology which was seen to infringe upon human responsibility. It was the "bad" astrologers, Pico believed, who tended to subject human will entirely to the heavens, something which seemed to him exceedingly superstitious. To prove his point, he went back to the ancient Hermetic texts themselves: in the *Asclepius* and the *Pimander*—which he himself translated—he read that although the stars do affect man's body, they have no influence over his mind.

Pico, like the Jewish Kabbalists who influenced him, was concerned with the concepts of creation, redemption and the revelation hidden in the texts of the Bible. He was particularly influenced by the *Bahir*, a copy of which was found in his personal library. He felt that in revealed Scripture *"there are no letters in the entire Law which do not show forth the secrets of the Sephiroth."*[11]

To the practicing Kabbalist, the Bible contained revelations beyond its literal significance. This "super-revelation" had nothing to do with the meaning of the particular passage under consideration, but rather with the relationship of the Hebrew letters to *themselves*, to their arrangement in the text, even to their shape, size and decoration. These budding Christian Hermeticists adapted the stance that was typical of the Jewish Kabbalist, who was not, like the Talmudist, bound to the letter of the law; rather he seeks to learn the true, inner meaning of God's word.

The purpose of seventy-two of Pico's theses was to prove the Messiahship of Christ. He wrote that *"no Hebrew cabalist can deny"* that the interpretation of the name Jesus is *"God, the Son of God, and the wisdom of the Father through the Third Person of divinity."*[12] He also felt that the Tetragrammaton (IHVH), the "ineffable name" referred to the *"Son of God, made human by the work of the Holy Spirit."*[13]

Some classical examples of how the Tetragrammaton was examined, using the Kabbalistic hermeneutic of letter-number symbolism were fleshed out by Pico's student Johannes Reuchlin.

Johannes Reuchlin: The Sacred Name of Jesus

Johannes Reuchlin was a student of the philosophy of Pico; he also studied with a number of rabbis. Under Pico's influence, Reuchlin also became acquainted with Hermetic, Zoroastrian and Chaldean sources, and later became fascinated with the figures of Pythagoras and Plato as well. His work *De Arte Cabalistica* (which preceded Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata* by more than a century) was the first systematic description of Christian Kabbalah to be presented to the European public and was dedicated to Pope Leo X. It was written not as a series of dissertations, like his teacher and friend, Pico, but rather in a fictional dialogue form.

Although Reuchlin briefly mentions the *Zohar*, little traces of its influence can be detected in his work, which is much more Neoplatonic in nature. Reuchlin's Kabbalah was a more hybrid form than Rosenroth's would prove to be since—at least in *De Arte Cabalistica*—he presents Kabbalistic wisdom as the source of Pythagoreanism, and attempts to fuse these two philosophies. However, his earlier work, *De Verbo Mirifico*, (or "Concerning the Miraculous Word") is an attempt to reveal the miraculous powers of the divine Tetragrammaton when it is expanded to form the name of Jesus. This has become a classic adaptation in the Christian Hermetic traditions known as the Pentagrammaton. This Divine Name is formed from the insertion of the letter Shin (Sh) into the middle of the Sacred Name IHVH, thus forming IHShVH, or Jeshusha.

In his *De Verbo Mirifico*, he explains in detail how this form of the name Jesus evolved and its magical and esoteric implications for a Christian. Reuchlin's treatise is a discussion which analyzes the power of divine names both in relationship to the efficacy of occult virtues and also to the power of divine "pacts" or covenants between God and humans. I will examine his commentaries in more detail in a later work; for now we will only note a few examples.

Reuchlin felt that only in the time of the Messiah's reign—that is, in the dawning of the age of the Son—will the Tetragrammaton be wholly understood and the full occult power of Christ be realized:

> *When you understand all these things you will easily come to know that the most powerful Virtue of all anywhere has appeared, that you may also know the most efficacious operation of the Tri-lettered Name of our grandfathers; and the Four-lettered Name of our fathers, and the Five-lettered Name of the Son. That is: In nature, Shaddi; in the law, Adonai; and in love, Jeshusha. Now this is our Son of God, in whom we believe and whom we call the Mediator between God and men.*[14]

Here Reuchlin is using an analogical principle to suggest the relationship between the ages of humanity and the number of letters in the names of God. The first age is the age of the "grandfathers," characterized for Reuchlin by the period of the Old Testament prior to the advent of Moses and the *Torah* (the Law). It is associated with the name of Shaddi composed of the three letters Shin, Daleth and Yod (ShDI). The period of the "fathers," initiated by the Sinai event (Ex. 6:30) wherein God revealed to Moses the Sacred Name IHVH, is the second age. This divine name, the Tetragrammaton, is frequently used interchangeably with a more modest term, "Adonai" (ADNI), which also has four letters, and which simply means "Lord." The age characterized by the Pentagrammaton (IHShVH) is, of course, the age of the Son.

As the revelation of the Tetragrammaton was linked to the covenant of the Old Testament and foretold by the prophets, so when the Word took on flesh, it revealed the unknown Father through the Pentagrammaton with the addition of the sacred letter Shin: *"When the Word descended into flesh, then the letters passed into voice."*[15] He continues to explain that God is formless Spirit in the Old Testament and can only be expressed using four vowels, but with the Incarnation of that Spirit a consonant (Sh) is added, making it pronounceable. The Shin is the symbol of fire, the fire which God gives to earth in the form of the living Word. By an even more complicated exegesis, the Shin also represents the oil (in Hebrew, "semen") of the divine lamp which brings the world out of darkness by joining it to the mystical fire. This fire, in Reuchlin's own mystical ruminations, is revealed in the age of the Son.

The Son is also metaphorically known as the "stone," referred to several times in the Bible in various contexts, but invariably interpreted by Christian Kabbalists ever since Reuchlin to mean the alchemical philosopher's stone:

> *"And the stone which the builders rejected was made the chief cornerstone." For this was done by the Lord, or rather, it was* ***from*** *the Lord; and this is a most wondrous thing in our eyes...and also a darkness, an enigma and an oracle...For who has shown forth the Father, and also the Son, in the stone, which at (one) time in the Holy Scriptures of the Hebrews is put forth as ABN. Truly it is established thus: AB, in which is signified the Father, and BN, the Son, which when the three letters (and) the two syllables (are) connected are ABN, that is, together they make the word, "stone"...This is the mystery and a secret...*[16]

That is, *aba* (AB), the Hebrew word for "father" and *ben* (BN), the Hebrew word for "son" together form *aben* (ABN), the Hebrew word meaning "stone." To the Hermetic philosopher, this was the Stone of the Wise (Chokmah), which is also characterized by Unity (Kether). In the 118th Psalm (verse 21-22) the psalmist says, *"I will give thanks to you for you have answered me and been my savior. The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."* In Acts 4:11, Peter says that Jesus is this Stone (the foundation of the Church) and repeats the idea in the first Epistle, where he also empowers the disciples to become "living stones." (1 Pet. 2:5)

Mercury or Hermes is, in alchemical lore, connected to what is known as the Great Work, which is the work of creating the Philosopher's Stone. The function of the magical/mystical principle represented by the Philosopher's Stone was *synthesis*, the joining of the masculine/feminine principles, as in the Mercury figure; or joining above to below—God and humankind. The modern Hermeticist, Dr. Paul Foster Case wrote:

> *The real secret of this Stone is the real secret of the cross, which is the end and so the fulfillment of that whole dispensation that is represented symbolically by the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.*[17]

Reuchlin said in his *De Arte Cabalistica* that intellect fails when it attempts to penetrate to the mystery of the divine, and he turned away from the rationalistic philosophy of the period. For him, Kabbalistic mysticism begins where reason ends. Indeed, in his hands the secrets of Christian Hermeticism began to unravel in the mystical figure of Christ, he whose name, Luke tells us, *was called Jesus* before he was conceived in the womb. (Luke 1:31)

Henry More: The Son in the Kabbalistic Trinity

Henry More was a Platonist from Cambridge and his interpretation of the Kabbalah was colored more by Neoplatonism than was the work of Knorr Rosenroth, with whom he corresponded regularly. He supported Knorr when he was working on the *Kabbala Denudata*, which at times became a tedious and monumental task; and, in the text, Knorr included several of their letters, which were themselves treatises. Later, More was to abandon his interest in the Kabbalah, seeing it as more heretical to Christian doctrine than supportive of it.

In numerous places in his early writings, however, we can see the relationship he drew between the first three Sephiroth and the Trinity, (*"for it is clear how the first three numbers are the Three Persons or Hypotheses"*)[18] drawing heavily on his Platonic background in the process. In describing the second Sephira, Chokmah, he explains:

> *Certainly this Sephirah is known among the Hebrews as Wisdom...Likewise, it is called by the Pythagoreans Wisdom (that is, in the Greek). The Platonists call it the "Nous" and St. John calls it the "Logos," and many allude to the saying in the Chaldean Oracles, where it is also the Second Person (of the Trinity).*[19]

This way of perceiving Christ on the Tree was not original to More; in fact, numerous other Christian Platonists of the period identified the Three Persons of the Trinity with Platonic or Neoplatonic metaphysical principles, according to Renaissance scholar, D. P. Walker:

> *The Father is the One and the Good; the Son is Mind and Being. As Mind, he is the creating Jehovah, both containing the Ideas and identical with them...like the Platonic demiurge. He is Being, since He is Jehovah, who announced to Moses, "I Am that I Am"...or "I Am Being."*[20]

In the Neoplatonic Triad the grouping is One, Mind, and Soul. To More, the latter was, of course, the Holy Spirit:

> *The Third Person is called Binah, Understanding; and by the Pythagoreans, it is referred to as Prudence. But this Third Person occurred in the vision of Ezekiel under the name of Ruach (Soul).* [21]

But it is especially interesting how he develops the relationship between the first two Sephiroth. Although Kether is "Atik Yomin" (Ancient of Days), and the "Supreme Father and King of All," as well as the "True and the Good,"[22] in his Platonic interpretation it is the Son who is both the "Gate of Life" and also the "God of Hosts,"[23] a common Old Testament title of Jehovah.

There is, in fact, a sort of mystical fusion of the first two Persons in Chokmah:

> *But it is understood that the name Jehovah is the same as the Second Person, as the Being and Essence of the Second Hypostasis of the Platonists...and this King Jehovah has been united with the soul of the Messiah into one Person.*[24]

This is, in fact, the Christian Kabbalistic understanding of the revelation of Jesus: *"My Father and I are One."* Interestingly, in referring to Christ as the Messiah and the Second Person of the Trinity, he uses the Latin phrase "filia," which is translated as "daughter" rather than "son," perhaps in keeping with the Hebrew gender attributed to the word "Chokmah." He qualifies the usage however, by saying that *"it must be understood that there is no distinguishing between the sex in the Divine—this is a most certain thing."*[25] They are only metaphors used to describe certain *conditions* of the ineffable.

More's early Kabbalistic work demonstrates his own high hopes that Christianity could absorb Greek Hermeticism rather than Jewish influences. The more he studied the Jewish texts, in fact, the more uncomfortable he became with its philosophy, which he saw as grossly materialistic. He was highly critical of the Lurainic idea that God withdrew from himself to allow a place for the world. This seemed to imply that God was material and was dangerously close to pantheism:

> *How could it happen that he should withdraw himself from any point and leave a vast cavity in which is created space for the world's creation? This is the same as saying that the nature of God is crass and corporeal.*[26]

He was not as willing as his colleagues Frans Van Helmont and Knorr Rosenroth to admit that God could be one with the world, or that matter was spirit in a congealed state. In this he was clearly dualistic, as both his Platonic and Christian philosophy supported. If the world was not created by God out of matter which was distinct from his essence, then the world must somehow have emanated from God—a Neoplatonic idea he himself could not embrace. This, in

More's mind, would imply that God is divisible. And, as we have seen, he sought an integral Unity, even in his analysis of the Trinity—the Son is absolutely coessential with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, who is the life of the Son. In describing Binah, he says:

> *For in the writings of St. John, it says, "In him was life" which is Ruach HChIH, the Restored Soul, or Existent Soul, which beautifully corresponds to the Life in John, which to the Greeks is Zoe (life).*[27]

To More, this was the essential beauty of the second Person, the Messiah, *"for in Him was Life and this Life was the Light of men."* (John 1:4)

Knorr Rosenroth: The Word as the Prime Link to the Father

Christian Knorr von Rosenroth was a Protestant theosophist and son of a minister. It was said of him that he knew the Biblical scriptures by heart. During his travels through Western Europe, he became interested in the mysticism of Jacob Boehme. His mystical and Kabbalistic studies greatly influenced his religious poetry, some of the finest in German literature. During his studies with Jewish rabbis, he acquired the manuscripts of the famous Jewish Kabbalist, Isaac Luria, whom he translated into Latin. Although he was a close friend of the philosopher, Henry More, they differed on interpretation of Kabbalistic principles as applied to their Christian faith.

In his lifetime Knorr Rosenroth was reputed to be the most profound scholar of the Kabbalah. His *Kabbala Denudata* had an extremely widespread influence and gave non-Jewish readers an overview of the first Kabbalistic sources by Jewish authors, and these were accompanied by numerous explanations. He wrote several disquisitions in the *Kabbala Denudata*, along with Henry More and the Belgian mystic, Frans Mercurius van Helmont, which also appear in his *Kabbala Denudata*.

Knorr felt that the Kabbala was the original spring from which all subsequent philosophy evolved. He was convinced that his Kabbalistic version of Christianity was the solution to the religious problems of his age. He argued that it was in the best interests of Christians to become acquainted with Kabbalah and its terminology, because such a familiarity would lead to a more fruitful dialogue between Jews and Christians, and in this way certain prophetic passages in the New Testament would

be fulfilled (e.g., Romans 11: 26, "*And all Israel shall be saved*"; and John 10: 16, "*And there will be one fold and one shepherd.*") In Rosenroth's mind, there could be no hope of the millennium until this occurred. In particular, much of his correspondence with the philosopher-mystic, Frans van Helmont centered around millennial speculations.

His principal intention in publishing the *Kabbala Denudata* was not only to give the world a Latin translation of the most famous Kabbalistic text, the *Zohar*, (as well as other minor Kabbalistic and alchemical treatises), but to make commentaries linking it with his Christian faith. He was particularly devoted to the study of the *Zohar* because he felt that, unlike other Jewish writings, nothing in it condemned Christ.

His purpose was always to heal discord—particularly prevalent during the Reformation—by means of the light of the Kabbalah:

> *How often have I mourned over the wretched discord within the Church...(yet) I have hoped that a way may be found to bring back the divided Churches into concord ..In the Jewish writings of the Kabbala, I have found what remained of the most ancient and foreign Judaic philosophy...My greatest desire was that I may be allowed to enjoy the Sun and its greatest Light once all the hindrances and clouds of obstruction were eliminated...*[28]

One of the greatest stumbling blocks separating Christianity's reunion with Judaism, in the mind of both Rosenroth and More, was the Jewish resistance to the doctrine of the Trinity and, of course, their inability to understand the messiahship of Christ. They were convinced both of these truths were contained in the wisdom of the Kabbalah and foreshadowed by the ancient Hermetic philosophy as well.

Rosenroth thought the Jews simply called Christ by the name Adam Kadmon (the Primordial Man), in the same way the Neoplatonists called him the Logos. He saw the Trinity clearly delineated on the Tree, but in a strikingly different way than it was perceived by Henry More and others. Rather, he equated the first three Sephiroth with God the Father, the next six with Christ the Son (with Tiphareth as the central pivot), and the last Sephirah, Malkuth, with the Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit which animates all of matter, thus eliminating the problem of the split between spirit and body, which characterized other forms of Platonic philosophy. He felt rather that "*there is nothing in the world...which is not composed of a perfected life, a spiritualized nature.*"[29] It is by the spiritualizing influence of Tiphareth that the Holy Spirit is breathed out upon Malkuth, the earth.

In the traditional Kabbalistic exegesis, the central emanating Sephirah, Tiphareth, is connected to the letter Vav, one of the letters of the divine Tetragrammaton, IHVH. In various places in his Lexicon, Rosenroth fleshes out the relationship between this sphere on the Tree, which represents Christ the Son, and the Father principle. The Sephirah associated with the Father is Chokmah and there is a play on words in Proverbs 30:4, where it says, *"What is his name and what is his son's name?"* The word "what" in Hebrew is *Mah* (MH) and therefore a literal rendition of the text is: "*Mah* is his name and *mah* is his son's name," referring to the "mah" in Chok*mah*. He explains in the *Kabalah Denudata*:

> *For Chokmah is called Father and the Son is called Tiphareth. And indeed "mah" is in Chokmah, and in this way, Tiphareth is manifested in Malkuth: for it is said that the ultimate sign of Mah is in Malkuth, but it is not written MH, but MAH (which means centrum or 100) to which extent (she) contains the decade, of which there are 10 grades.*[30]

Here we see that Rosenroth is clearly laying the groundwork for what will be later understood in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the Rosicrucians, and other Hermetic lodges, as grades of initiation, which proceed from the bottom Sephirah, Malkuth, upward toward Kether, the Crown. He goes on to explain how this connection links Malkuth—the "lower" wisdom with Chokmah, the "upper" wisdom, via the letter Vav:

> *For if the Vav, Tiphareth, is taken up, the just are also gathered together (and) the Heh Final is no longer separated from the Vav (in the Divine Name)...When Scripture speaks about the **first** wisdom, at the same time, symbolically the **final** wisdom is involved—this is the grace of the Word—as when it is said in Proverbs 3:19: "In wisdom he founded the earth."*[31]

Through a typical technique of re-interpreting scriptural passages via the Kabbalistic hermeneutic, the text offers clues to the relationship between the restoration of earth (Malkuth) with the highest wisdom (Chokmah) via the Word or Logos principle, situated in Tiphareth. The final letter Heh of the Tetragrammaton, assigned to Malkuth (which had been cut off during the fall from Paradise) is thus rejoined to the divine name, restoring order and unity to the Godhead. This is a direct function of Christ as mediator, here represented by Vav, which as an archetypal letter means "nail" or "connecting link."

In the Jewish Kabbalah, the Heh final is the Shekinah, which is cut off from the rest of the divine name and is in exile. To the Christian Kabbalist this problem is solved via the Word, the link to the father, the ultimate Wisdom (Chokmah).

Our Present Heritage: The Logos on the Tree in Modern Qabalah

We have seen that the intelligence attributed to Tiphareth, the sun center on the Tree of Life is called the "Mediating Intelligence." We have also noted how the solar mysteries, archetypally, are associated with the Logos or the Word, which is sometimes identified in modern Jungian terms as the animus principle. In the Jewish tradition, this portion of the Tree is ascribed to Moses, who walked and talked with, and was the spokesperson for that divine emanation which identified itself simply as "I AM." This function of mediation, however, is generally shared with Joshua, whose name means "deliverer" and who was the actual vehicle for deliverance for the children of Israel by leading them into the promised land. The word, "Jesus," in Hebrew means "Jah liberates," and as we have seen, it is Christ who is the mediating principle for a Christian Qabalist.[32] For a pagan, this solar principle is fulfilled by Osiris or a number of other deities.[33]

When we associate the Logos with the solar deity archetypally the idea is one of fiery activity springing from the womb of creation, (which in Qabalah is represented by the sphere of Binah, the Mother) for the sole purpose of restoring creation to its rightful place. This is why Tiphareth is called the "Mystical Redeemer." Another frequent title given to the sphere of Tiphareth is, of course, the Son, which represents the Christ consciousness in each of us. In mystical language, the mind becomes what it contemplates: through the uniting of the microcosm and the macrocosm, the initiate not only "sees" the Light, but becomes one with the Light.

Now, Binah, the Mother is conceptualized Qabalistically as the Great Cosmic Sea, and through gematria—which to both the Renaissance and the modern Qabalist is the "game" of playing with letters and numbers to discover their hidden meaning—we can discern an intimate relationship between the Sephirah of Binah and that of Tiphareth. In Hebrew, the Son is known as Ben (BN), and it is contained in Binah (BINH). What hidden meaning can be discerned here?

When the Great Sea is perceived as something pertaining to our inner life, the life of the unconscious, and we learn to dive deep into it, we attain Christ consciousness by losing our sense of personal separateness: we enter into the understanding (Binah means "understanding") of the perfect unity of all. We also see this hidden identity of the Son (Ben) in the Mother (Binah) represented in the numerous mother-son mythologies worldwide. This Son, or animus principle, is also known in Qabalah as the ego, or, "God made manifest in the sphere of the Mind."

As the Mediating Intelligence, Tiphareth is placed in the center of the Tree. Its number is six. Geometrically this is characterized by two interlocking triangles ✡ thus joining above △ to below ▽. The first six Sephiroth, of which Tiphareth is the center, are sometimes together known as the Adam Kadman; that is, Adam, or generic humanity. The word "dam" in Hebrew means "blood" while the letter Aleph (A) Qabalistically signifies the "life-breath." "A-dam" therefore constitutes the meaning that the power of life pulsates in the blood of humanity.

The first six spheres, or emanations, of the Tree of Life constitute the archetypal kingdom which lies behind the kingdom of form and determines the manifestation of matter through the power of the mind we call imagination. Thus, Tiphareth represents the power of the God-energy which creates through mental imagery. In modern Hermetic philosophy, all causation is mental and all changes are primarily changes in mental imagery. The great Qabalistic work, the *Zohar*, says: *"The capacity to connect with the spirit of wisdom, to* ***imagine*** *in one's heart-mind—this is how God becomes known."* And again: *"God is known and grasped to the degree that one opens the gates of imagination."*[34] All human beings form pictures. To imagine in one's heart-mind, which is the Tiphareth or Christ-center in the midst of our being, is the avenue by which we, as generic A-dam, become like the solar deity at the heart of all creation.

Imagination is indicated in Genesis when it says we are created in the image and likeness of God. In the whole creative process, the indivisible "I AM" principle makes itself manifest through the Son-sun, Tiphareth, who brings the universal Self into full expression in his or her own personhood through the great power of imagery. This universal Self placed A-dam, the primal principle of humanity, in Eden, which in Hebrew means "pleasure" as well as "time" or "sensible duration." When we are expressing harmony with Divine Mind, bringing forth qualities of Ben (sonship), in divine order, we dwell in Eden; we are "keeping and dressing" the garden of time by creating images of love as we pass through it. Eden then becomes the spiritual body in which we dwell when we image thoughts which reflect the original divine ideas of the great "I AM," which in Qabalah is the

emanation called Kether, the Crown, to which is attributed number One. Kether, or pure space, reflects into Tiphareth, which acts as a transmitter and distributor of the primal spiritual energy.

This "I AM" principle exists in everything but it is our individual responsibility, as the archetypal A-dam, to awaken to our interconnectedness: to see, or image the rest of the world as cells in our own body. Our ability to keep and dress the Garden in this way is intimately related to knowing who and what we are. In the Bible, God told A-dam to give the creatures their names and thus to know them intimately through the power of identifying the universe and its creatures by giving to them their character. We do this through image-making. This is the function of the ego, Tiphareth, the sun-sphere.

This sun-heart sphere is not the same thing as the small ego; it is perfectly identified with Kether. Thus Jesus the Christ, who identified the "I AM" principle at one point in his teachings as the "Father," could say: "My father and I are one." When Kether looks into itself, it sees its own reflection, which is generic humanity, made in its own image. When the Crown of creation moves toward this reflection, it becomes the archetypal A-dam, that is us. Therefore, the image you make in your own consciousness is your power of the God-energy passing through you at this particular point in time.

To Paul Case, this true "ego," or Christ principle, seated in the hearts of all humans, is the meaning of the mystical Redeemer. The anointed or Messiah or Christ (which all mean the same thing) redeems us from our faulty perceptions. We participate in this redeeming aspect of Tiphareth by learning how to create images in harmony with beauty (another name given to this sphere on the Tree). This is the great mediating influence of Tiphareth, and also has to do with discrimination: redeeming our thinking, willing and feeling nature and taking up the role which the Divine has been growing us for.

What we hold in our consciousness becomes eventually what we act upon and what we see: "Actions speak louder than words." By bringing this full image-making power of love into action, we redeem not only our old illusions of separateness, but also that part of each individual who responds to us through this image-making power of love-propelling-itself-into action. False images of the self disappear as the Christ or ego nature nourishes the proper images. Our responsibility is to realize we are all the begotten of the God-energy, as we meditate on this sphere on the Tree.

Becoming aware of one's patterns, habits, emotions, etc., happens at a certain phase in the soul's evolution, and begins with utmost attention. When we are "lost in the story," we are "concentrated down" so to speak: immersed in cycles and patterns and not attentive

to the moment. Qabalah teaches that everything we experience on the physical plane is the flower of the Tree. The meaning of "sin" to a modern Qabalist is to fail to perceive correctly, which is a departure from the law of our being. Sin literally means "to miss the mark." So long as we abide in the conviction that God is the cause of our pain, we close our minds to the redeeming inflow of divine health, harmony, peace and wisdom. This does not mean, however, that just because one begins to think about health and harmony, one is immediately able to manifest this vision. There is a difference between "magical" or "wishful" thinking and continued, concentrated positive effort. We also gain awareness through reaping the repercussions of our immature actions.

As we begin to experience more and more that we are the center of expression for the divine "I AM," realizing our heart or Christ-consciousness nature, we become less and less aware of feelings of being a culprit, a victim of false interpretations. When one achieves this for oneself, one does it for the universe. This sphere on the Tree is represented by the sun archetype, which keeps the rest of the solar system in order by virtue of its brilliance. In alchemy, the sun represents the Great Work. Only when the spirit has been separated, clarified and purified can it be reunited with the body in a more conscious way.

Because the sun is the source of all life on our planet, it is easy to understand why many peoples—notably the Egyptians, Aztecs, and American Indians, have worshiped or praised the sun. The sun is the single most vital element of our universe. It supports us not only through its direct sunlight, but also indirectly through the use of fossil fuels which holds the sun's power absorbed many aeons ago, and through the plants/foods which we ingest.

Jung tells how the Pueblo Indians arise each morning at first light to praise the sun and help it rise. In a very literal sense, these people helped participate in the great mystery of resurrection. However, in the Judaic tradition, Moses inveighed against sun-worship, and the reason that Qabalah stresses the ineffable nature of God as distinct from, as well as identified with, the attributes or emanations on the Tree of Life (i.e., by postulating the unknowable force called the Ain Soph) is because it is a materialization of our understanding of the God-energy to take the manifestation (the sun, the golden calf, gold, etc.) for the "Real Thing." This is the meaning of 666, according to Dr. Case, for this kind of materialization is the root of separated ego-consciousness, since 666 is the number of a "man" in Revelation. It is the delusion of a materialist to think he has an autonomous ego, and to take the material world for the only real one. As Eliphas Levi says, *"In all things the vulgar mind habitually takes shadow for reality, turns its back on light and is reflected in the obscurity which it projects itself."*[35]

The great mystery of 666, of course, is that the very forces which bind us, when properly understood, can also act as a source of liberation. The point here is that, although the Hebrews sang many hymns praising God's movement in nature, we know that they distinguished themselves from the surrounding cultures which worshiped God in nature. So Qabalah sees in the sun image both an immanent presence, like many ancient cultures did, but also perceives that this is only a metaphor for a transcendent ineffable deity which can never be fully comprehended with the mind or through nature.

There is a subtle balance here because part of our responsibility as spiritual seekers is to drop the notion that matter is unspiritual. An atom is only a theory, a formula; all we can discover about it are its effects. No one has ever seen the minute particles which constitute matter, and indeed, these particles keep getting "smaller" as time goes on and we learn more about them. The principle idea to a Qabalist is that everything is really energy: spirit operating in matter. Dion Fortune has said, *"In Tiphareth, the Sun center, we have the spiritual manifesting in the natural, and we should give reverence to the Sun-god as representing the naturalization of spiritual processes."*[36]

If we visualize the Tree of Life as being located in our bodies, psychologically and physically, Tiphareth is located in the heart or breast, the central part of our being. In the breast are the lungs, which maintain that most intimate *mediating* relationship between the microcosm and macrocosm by determining the ceaseless tides of the breath. The heart determines the circulation of the blood (the "dam" in Hebrew) which the great alchemist Paracelsus calls the most powerful singular fluid. In certain alchemical and yogic exercises, one actually works with changing blood chemistry to produce a "regenerated" body. Many of the great saints, alchemists, and yogis were in perfect control of these functions of blood and breath, as evidenced by the vast literature on miracles during life or incorruptible bodies after death.

Finally, there is an association with breath and its ruler in the body, Tiphareth, which is connected to the Logos or Word. In modern Hermeticism, which Case and other Golden Dawn Adepts often called "occult philosophy," all activity, all motion, all energy, is the universe of consciousness in a continuous utterance of the Word of Life. As source of love, the Christ-consciousness is the activating principle which allows us to experience the joining of the above and the below, the mystical marriage often known as the "hierosgamos." This is the union which transforms both heaven and earth. As we experience the hierosgamos psychologically, uniting the opposite principles within us, we emerge with a new sense of wholeness, able to relate consciously and creatively to the universe as our lover.

Endnotes

[1] Parts of this article originally appeared in *Rainbow City Express*, Vol. 2, # 3, 1989, Berkeley, CA.

[2] This text is in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, edited and translated by Walter Scott. See his complete *Hermetica*: *The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924-36; reprint, Boston: Shambhala, 1985), 1, p. 117.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 215.

[4] Pico della Mirandola, "On the Dignity of Man" in *Opera Omnia* (Basil, 1557; reprint, Hildesheim: George Olms, 1969), 1, p. 330.

[5] Quoted in David Ruderman, *Kabbalah, Magic, and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 146.

[6] Henry More, "Cabalistic Catechism" in Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, ed., *Kabbala Denudata* (Sulzbach, 1677; reprint, Hildesheim: George Olms, 1974), pp. 275-276.

[7] Quoted in Vincent Cronin, *The Florentine Renaissance*, (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1967), p. 135.

[8] Pico, *Opera*, 1, p. 166.

[9] Quoted in Cronin, *Florentine*, p. 136.

[10] Pico, *Opera*, 1, p. 106.

[11] *Opera*, 1, p. 82.

[12] *Opera*, 1, p. 108.

[13] *Opera*, 1, p. 109.

[14] Johann Reuchlin, "On the Mirific Word" in Johannes Pistorius, ed., *Ars Cabalistica*, (Basel, 1587; reprint, Frankfurt: Minerva G.M.B.H., 1970), p. 977.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Mirific Word*, p. 953.

[17] The direct reference here is to the number 400, which is the sign of Tau, the cross, which has the same numeration, by gematria, as the phrase (in Hebrew), "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a Stone." See Paul Foster Case, *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order* (York Beach, ME.: Samuel Weiser, 1981), p. 41.

[18] Henry More, *Cabalistic Catechism*, p. 275.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] D.P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology*, (London: Duckworth, 1972), p. 38.

[21] *Cabalistic Catechism*, K.D.,1, p. 276.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 275.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

[26] More, "Questions and Considerations" In *Kabbala Denudata* 1, p. 65.

[27] *Cabalistic Catechism*, K.D., 1, p. 275.

[28] Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, "A Friendly Response," in *Kabbala Denudata* 1, pp. 75-76.

[29] K.D. p. 415.

[30] K.D. pp. 509-510.

[31] K.D. p. 345.

[32] The interpretations expressed in the last section of this article reflect the modern Qabalistic teachings in the Golden Dawn Tradition, especially that of Dr. Paul Foster Case and Dr. Ann Davis, to whom I am deeply grateful.

[33] The spelling of *Qabalah* has been changed here to reflect the current common spelling in the Golden Dawn, and its offshoots, rather than the form used by the Renaissance humanists.

[34] In D.C. Matt, (trans.) *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment* (N.Y. Paulist Press, 1983), p. 66.

[35] Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic* translated by A.E. Waite. (York Beach ME.,: Samuel Weiser, 1972), p. 72.

[36] Dion Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah*, (York Beach, ME.,: Samuel Weiser, 1984), p. 203.

About The Author

Madonna Compton is a member of a working Hermetic lodge on the West Coast and writer and teacher in the San Francisco Bay area. She is the founder of a school called Western Tradition Studies and is currently working on a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Religion. Her present focus is uncovering images of the Holy Spirit in the *Kabbala Denudata* of Christian Knorr von Rosenroth and the Renaissance Christian philosophers. She is the author of the book *Archetypes on the Tree of Life* and is presently finishing a book called *The Transcendent Feminine.*

Phidias's Statue of Pallas-Athena

God-Making

Donald Tyson

One of the most important processes of Hermetic magic is also one of the least understood. Explicit reference to god-making occurs in only two brief passages in the *Asclepius*. The practical details are sparse, but the philosophical audacity of the author is breathtaking. The ideas he expresses are directly contrary to the beliefs of enlightened Greek pagans and early Christians alike.

Hermes Trismegistus, speaking to his disciple Asclepius, reveals this profound secret:

> ***Trismegistus:*** *And now that the topic of men's kinship and association with the gods has been introduced, let me tell you, Asclepius, how great is the power and might of man. Even as the Master and Father, or, to call him by his highest name, even as God is the maker of the gods of heaven, so man is the fashioner of the gods who dwell in temples and are content to have men for their neighbors. Thus man not only receives the light of divine life, but gives it also; he not only makes his way upward to God, but he even fashions gods. Do you wonder at this, Asclepius? Or do you too doubt it, as many do?*
>
> ***Asclepius:*** *I am amazed, Trismegistus; but I gladly give assent to what you say, and deem man most highly blest, in that he has attained to such felicity.*
>
> ***Trismegistus:*** *Yes, you may well hold man to be a marvel; he surpasses all other creatures. As to the celestial gods, it is admitted by all men that they are manifestly generated from the purest part of matter, and that their astral forms are heads, as it were, and heads alone, in place of bodily frames. But the gods whose shapes are fashioned by mankind are made of both substances, that is, of the divine substance, which is purer and far nobler, and the substance which is lower than man, namely, the material of which they are wrought; and they are fashioned not in the shape of a head*

alone, but in the shape of a body with all its members. Mankind is ever mindful of its own parentage and the source whence it has sprung, and steadfastly persists in following God's example; and consequently, just as the Father and Master made the gods of heaven eternal, that they might resemble him who made them, even so do men also fashion their gods in the likeness of their own aspect.

Asclepius: Do you mean statues, Trismegistus?

Trismegistus: Yes, Asclepius. See how even you give way to doubt! I mean statues, but statues living and conscious, filled with the breath of life, and doing many mighty works; statues which have foreknowledge, and predict future events by the drawing of lots, and by prophetic inspiration, and by dreams, and in many other ways; statues which inflict diseases and heal them, dispensing sorrow and joy according to men's deserts.[1]

A little farther on in this dialogue Hermes is more explicit concerning the practical nature of god-making. In the course of discussing mankind, he says to Asclepius:

But afterwards, they invented the art of making gods out of some material substance suited for the purpose. And to this invention they added a supernatural force whereby the images might have power to work good or hurt, and combined it with the material substance; that is to say, being unable to make souls, they invoked the souls of daemons, and implanted them in the statues by means of certain holy and sacred rites. We have an instance in your grandfather, Asclepius, who was the first inventor of the art of healing, and to whom a temple has been dedicated in the Libyan mountain, near the shore of crocodiles. There lies the material man, that is, the body; but the rest of him,—or rather, the whole of him, if it is conscious life that constitutes a man's whole being,—has returned to heaven. And to this day he renders to the sick by his divine power all the aid which he used to render to them by his medicinal art. Again, there is my grandfather Hermes, whose name I bear. Has he not taken up his abode in his native city, which is named after him, and does he not help and safeguard all mortal men who come to him from every quarter? And Isis too, the wife of

> *Osiris,—do we not know how many boons she confers when she is gracious, and how many men she harms when she is angry? For terrestrial and material gods are easily provoked to anger, inasmuch as they are made and put together by men out of both kinds of substance. And hence it has come about that the sacred animals are recognized as such by the Egyptians, and that in the several cities of Egypt people worship the souls of the men to whom these animals have been consecrated as living statues; so that the cities are governed by the laws which these men made, and bear their names.*[2]

These provocative passages were widely known to ancient writers but were discounted by them as the folly of the Egyptians. The Christian Fathers were outraged at the presumption of Egyptian priests, who claimed to usurp the power of creation which the Christians deemed God's alone. The more sophisticated Greek philosophers merely regarded the practice of god-making as a popular delusion of the uneducated classes, and of barbarous peoples, to be used by crafty rulers to control their subjects.

The Christian view of god-making is well expressed by Saint Augustine, writing at the end of the 4th century. After quoting the first passage I have given above, he remarks:

> *For Hermes was one of those who (as the apostle says) "knowing God, glorified Him not as God, nor were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was full of darkness. When they professed themselves wise, they became fools, for they turned the glory of the incorruptible God into the similitude of the image of a corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and serpents" [Romans 1:21-3]. For this Hermes says much of God according to truth; but how blindness of heart draws him to affirm this, I know not, that these gods should be always subject whom man has made, and yet to bewail their abrogations to come. As if man could be more miserable any way, than in living a slave to his own handiwork: it being easier for him to put off all humanity in adoring these pieces he has made, than for them to put on deity by being made by him.*[3]

Augustine commits several errors of misinterpretation in his assessment of the statements of Trismegistus, which it may be useful to point out here, before we become too involved in an analysis of god-making itself. Hermes explicitly states that it is not God the

Father who is induced into the images created by men, but "gods who dwell in temples and are content to have men for their neighbors." In the second passage quoted from the *Asclepius*, Hermes is even more clear as to the nature of these earthly gods: "they invoked the souls of daemons, and implanted them in statues by means of certain holy and sacred rites." Daemons may be considered lesser deities, but are not God the Supreme "maker of the gods of heaven."

Augustine also errs in suggesting that the temple gods created by men will be their masters. It was a belief peculiar to the Egyptians that men could rule the gods through magic, particularly through the magic of names and words of power. Trismegistus expresses this view very clearly in the Hermetic books when he states:

> *For man is a being of divine nature; he is comparable, not to the other living creatures upon earth, but to the gods in heaven. Nay, if we are to speak the truth without fear, he who is indeed a man is even above the gods of heaven, or at any rate he equals them in power.*[4]

The enlightened Greeks took a slightly different view of god-making. Whereas the early Christian priests regarded it as sacrilegious arrogance, the Greek philosophers saw it as the foolish delusion of childlike minds. Dio Chrysostom writes around the end of the 1st century:

> *For just as young children, when they are parted from their father or mother, often in dreams stretch out their hands with strong desire and yearning towards the loved one who is far away, even so do men yearn towards the gods, loving them, as is but right, by reason of their goodness to us, and the kinship between god and man, and eager to meet them and hold converse with them in any way.*[5]

Maximus Tyrius, a Greek philosopher who lived during the 2nd century, voices the identical opinion:

> *And so the lawgivers, I think, dealt with their peoples as with a troop of children, and invented these images for mankind, as signs to direct them to the worship of the Divine.*[6]

This was the way most Greek philosophers regarded their own gods and goddesses and the temple statues fashioned to represent them. Belief that images could be petitioned to predict the future or cure disease was, in their eyes, a delusion of the ignorant laboring class.

Plotinus, who was born in Lycopolis in Upper Egypt in 205, took a different view. He understood the practice of god-making in a way only possible to a Greek born on the bank of the Nile. Egypt was his native country. There is no scorn or condescension in his tone when he writes:

> *I think, therefore, that those ancient sages, who sought to secure the presence of divine beings by the erection of shrines and statues, showed insight into the nature of the All; they perceived that, though this Soul is everywhere tractable, its presence will be secured all the more readily when an appropriate receptacle is elaborated, a place especially capable of receiving some portion or phase of it, something reproducing it, or representing it, and serving like a mirror to catch an image of it.*[7]

A similar understanding was shared by Hermeas in his *Scholia* on Plato's *Phaedrus.* Concerning the different types of mania, or divine inspiration, Hermeas writes:

> *But how are statues said to have enthusiastic energy? May we not say, that a statue being inanimate, does not itself energize about divinity, but the telestic art, purifying the matter of which the statue consists, and placing round it certain characters and symbols, in the first place renders it, through these means, animated, and causes it to receive a certain life from the world; and, in the next place, after this, it prepares the statue to be illuminated by a divine nature, through which it always delivers oracles, as long as it is properly adapted.*[8]

The telestic art is the art of the hierophants of the Egyptian mysteries by which they rendered "through certain symbols and arcane signatures" statues or images attractive to the gods.

To the Egyptian priests it was the Greek philosophers who wrote and reasoned like children. The Greeks must have seemed very simple-minded in their inability to make a distinction between God the Supreme Creator and the many lesser gods with names and forms, or in their difficulty in separating the celestial gods from the terrestrial gods. The Egyptians could scarcely bother to explain to the Greeks that when they worshipped a statue in a temple they were not worshipping the stone or metal of the image, or even the spiritual being localized or focused upon the image, but were deliberately manipulating a specific occult potential for their human ends. To render this manipulation easier the potential was given a name and shape harmonious with its nature

that rendered it easier to use and control. The Egyptians might easily have told their Greek critics that the god in a particular statue was only a sliver or fragment of the Soul of the World, the great terrestrial soul that animates and encompasses all created things, including both Greeks and Egyptians. But why bother? The Greeks were barbarians, a wild, upstart race with no history. They could not be expected to comprehend.

God-Making in the Renaissance

When Europeans began to rediscover the classics of Greece and Rome in the 16th century, the writings of Hermes Trismegistus caused a great sensation. Here was a pagan author, or authors, who expressed the most profound spiritual learning without the benefit of the teachings of Christ or his apostles. In 1515 Cornelius Agrippa delivered a series of lectures on the *Divine Pymander* at the University of Pavia. This met with enormous success and garnered him such great acclaim, the university conferred upon him degrees in divinity, law and medicine. He was acting only as the organ of expression for an entire new field of study that had sprung up among European scholars, the search for a truly efficacious theurgy, or god-magic, that would not explicitly defy the principles of Christianity.

One of the earliest exponents of this Christian (or at least not anti-Christian) magic was Marsilio Ficino (1433-99) who, in his *De Triplici Vita* [9] created his own system of natural magic based upon the *Asclepius* of Hermes, the Orphic hymns, the teachings of Plotinus, *On the Mysteries* by Iamblichus, the dialogues of Plato and their numerous commentaries by other authors, the fragment *De Sacrificiis et Magia* by Proclus and Porphyry's *De Abstinentia*, to name some of the more important pagan sources.

Natural magic, which dealt with the manipulation of the occult properties already present in the natural world, was generally considered less controversial than theurgy, or angel magic, which encroached upon the majesty of God in the eyes of the Catholic bishops. Goety, the magic dealing with infernal demons, was completely forbidden and punished by death.

Nonetheless, Ficino was very interested in the process of god-making. He quotes in the *Vita* the first passage from the *Asclepius* which I have given above, and also the passage from Plotinus that I quoted. Ficino believed that the Egyptian telestic art could be employed to draw down celestial and divine influences and render the human spirit receptive to them. Ficino's "human spirit" was what we would now term the astral body.[10] Through god-making he believed it would be possible to

attract and hold within a material body (living or otherwise) "*something vital from the soul of the world and the souls of the spheres and stars.*"[11]

Ficino knew he was treading dangerous ground in writing about god-making. He states for the benefit of the Church censors that the telestic art was abused by the Egyptians, who, he says, used it to draw demons into statues for the purpose of worship. He implies that it is acceptable to use demons for godly ends provided they are not worshipped, then hedges his bets by stating that, in any case, his system of astrological and musical magic cannot be used to draw a demon into an image.

Lodovico Lazarelli, who lived during the second half of the 15th century, was familiar with Ficino's translation of the *Asclepius* and *Pymander* and greatly approved of Ficino's work. It is not known with certainty whether he ever studied Ficino's *Vita*, but this seems more than likely since the subject of his own *Crater Hermetis* (written in or shortly before 1494) is god-making. The *Crater* takes the form of a didactic dialogue between Lazarelli, the teacher, and King Ferdinand of Aragon, the student.

Lazarelli explains to Ferdinand that just as God created the celestial angels who contain the archetypal patterns of all things, so can the pious and enlightened man create divine souls that are called gods of the Earth. These are "*pleased to live close to man and rejoice at his good fortune.*"[12] They also give prophetic dreams, aid good men and punish the wicked. Lazarelli, conscious of the Church censors no less than Ficino, states that these earthly gods are servants of God the Father and fulfill his rule on Earth.

It is very significant that Lazarelli quotes from a Kabbalistic text an allegory which he interprets to mean that a new man may be created from the mind of a wise man and brought to life by the occult dispersion of Hebrew letters through his limbs, because "*divine generation is accomplished by the mystic utterance of words which are made up of letters as elements.*"[13] As I will demonstrate, the technique of god-making was well known to the Hebrew Kabbalists, who perhaps received it through the Gnostics.

It has been suggested that the secret Lazarelli revealed to King Ferdinand was a form of mystical rebirth, but Walker believes it consisted of the conveyance from master to disciple of a personal guardian angel, or good daemon.[14] In his view Lazarelli was not summoning demons but manufacturing them based on separated fragments of the Holy Spirit. Lazarelli equated the Egyptian telestic attraction of demons into statues with the spiritual inspiration of the apostles by Jesus.

Unfortunately, Lazarelli does not set down his methods of god-making in print, but the process certainly involved the use of words of

power and the singing of hymns constructed along the same lines, magically, as those of Orpheus. *"These sounds themselves became the demon."*[15] Whether astrological times were observed is not stated, but very likely. Astrological images may also have been used, along with incense and candles.

No other occult philosopher of the Renaissance wrote so explicitly about god-making, but there are references to the practice in many places. The Abbot Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516), who was the magical master of Cornelius Agrippa, describes in the third book of his *Steganographia* how to construct talismans bearing the images of planetary angels which can convey messages from one man to another occultly and reveal secret things.

Trithemius evidently taught the young Agrippa this art. Agrippa mentions it in his *Occult Philosophy*, describing the technique and then admitting:

> *...and I myself know how to do it, and have often done it. The same also in time past did the Abbot Trithemius both know and do.*[16]

Agrippa was certainly familiar with all the fragments in classical and Renaissance writers that refer to god-making. He was a deep scholar of Ficino's natural magic, the Kabbalistic works of Reuchlin, and the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, and had received the manuscripts of Trithemius upon the death of the abbot. He makes explicit reference to the telestic art, saying:

> *...and Mercurius Trismegistus writes, that an image rightly made of certain proper things, appropriated to any one certain angel, will presently be animated by that angel.*[17]

Although he alludes to the practice in several places he does not go into detail, perhaps because he was himself unsure of the correct method, but more probably because he did not wish to arouse the anger of the Church or provide the Inquisition with weapons to use against him.

The contemporary of Agrippa, Paracelsus, treated of god-making from an alchemical perspective. He wrote that a homunculus (little man) might be generated from certain "spagyric" (hermetic) substances shut up in a glass vessel and placed in the gentle warmth of horse manure for forty days. At the end of this period something shaped like a man but transparent and lacking a body will stir inside the glass vessel. This spiritual creature must be fed on the "arcanum" of human blood for forty weeks while kept warm in the dunghill. A perfectly-shaped human

child, but smaller than normal, will emerge. The arcanum of human blood probably refers to the vital essence within the blood. Semen is almost certainly a component of the spagyric substances. Forty is an occult number of fulfillment in the Bible and the Kabbalah, composed of four (number of letters in Tetragrammaton) and ten (number of the Sephiroth).

Concerning the homunculus, Agrippa writes:

> *And there is an art wherewith by a hen sitting upon eggs may be generated a form like to a man, which I have seen and know how to make, which magicians say hath in it wonderful virtues, and this they call the true mandrake.*[18]

Agrippa and Paracelsus are writing about two different kinds of homunculus, but both are physical vessels infused by occult means with animating spirit. The physical vessels are created by men, and spirit invited to dwell in them by telestic arts, but spirit itself is not created by men—undifferentiated spirit is defined into lesser spirits by the man-made vessels. This places the making of the homunculus within the category of god-making.

The most famous story of god-making among the Kabbalists of the Renaissance is that of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague (1525-1609). In the year 1580 he is fabled to have constructed a life-sized man out of clay from the riverbank, then infused a spirit into this image by means of divine names of power which were transmitted to him in the form of a Kabbalistic cipher during a prophetic dream. This Golem possessed superhuman strength. No sword could kill him. He could pass through fire without being burnt, or walk across a raging river without being drowned. However, he was incapable of speech. Loew constructed him to act as a defender of the Jews of Prague during a time of persecution at the hands of the Jesuits. When this danger passed (in 1590), Loew reversed the steps of his creation and returned the Golem to clay.

The story of Loew and the Golem is the most famous tale of Jewish god-making, but not the only tale. In the Talmud a Kabbalist named Rava remarks *"if the Just wished to create a world, they could do so."* He proceeds to create a man who cannot speak, then returns him to dust. In the same place it is said that two rabbis, Hanina and Oshaya, would study the *Sepher Yetzirah* every Sabbath eve, then when they became hungry would create a three-year-old calf and eat it.[19]

It is clearly to this passage in the Babylonian Talmud that Lazarelli makes reference in his *Crater Hermetis*.[20] Lazarelli, picking up on the title *Sepher Yetzirah*, mistakenly inferred that the passage came from this text.

His error confused Walker, who wasted time searching through editions of *Sepher Yetzirah* for the passage.[21]

God-making should not be viewed as a magical secret of the Egyptian priests. True, the Egyptians carried the telestic art to its highest level of expression, but very similar techniques were used by numerous cultures both in the ancient and modern world. Since the purpose is ever the same—to attract and embody a portion of universal spirit within a physical form and symbolic identity (name), and then to communicate with that being and employ it to achieve desired ends—it is no wonder that the methods are similar also.

The Terrestrial Gods

Hermes Trismegistus distinguishes two classes of gods: celestial or astrological gods (*di caelestes*), and terrestrial or temple gods (*di terreni*).

The celestial gods are those that dwell in the Sun, Moon, planets and stars. The heavenly bodies are their forms. The gods themselves are invisible. Hermes says that they are made of the "purest part of matter," meaning spiritual fire, the quintessence, and their astral forms are "heads alone." He is referring to the motion of the heavenly bodies, which the ancients believed to describe crystalline spheres around the Earth. The sphere is similar in shape to the head, the location of the intellect, that power in man that best imitates the nature of the celestial gods. These heavenly gods are completely free from the yoke of physical passions.

The terrestrial gods are those that inhabit temple statues or sacred animals. Since they are composed both of divine substance and physical matter, they wear the human shape and have both a head, signifying intellect, and a body, signifying emotions and desires. Hermes says that just as God fashioned the gods of heaven in his image, making them eternal (circular in motion), so does man fashion the gods of Earth in his own image. For this reason, terrestrial gods are "easily provoked to anger" and are impelled by their human part to take an interest in human affairs, rewarding those they admire and punishing those who offend them. Hermes says: "they assist, like loving kinsmen, in the affairs of men."

The celestial gods rule dispassionately over universals; the terrestrial gods rule with an involved emotion over particular earthly events. Iamblichus refers to these same two classes of spirits as gods and daemons. He further breaks down the gods into visible and invisible.

Invisible, or intelligible, gods are those that inhabit the heavens unseen. They are joined with the visible gods of the stars and planets, and also with the visible gods of statues, in a continuous chain of divinity:

> *I say, therefore, that the visible statues of the Gods originate from divine intelligible paradigms, and are generated about them. But being thus generated, they are entirely established in them, and being also extended to, they possess an image which derives its completion from them. These images likewise fabricate another order; sublunary natures are in continuity with them, according to one union; and the divine intellectual forms, which are present with the visible bodies of the Gods, exist prior to them in a separate manner. But the unmingled and supercelestial intelligible paradigms of them, abide by themselves in unity, and are at once all things, according to the eternal transcendency of themselves.*[22]

Both the visible and invisible gods are concerned with general principles and do not act in particulars. This means that the Sun, Moon and planets rule their allotted parts of the heavens impartially, distributing the same influence to any man or woman who happens to come under their rays, whether godly or ungodly, good or evil. The daemons, on the other hand, because they are composed in part of material substance, act in an individual and sometimes capricious manner according to the action of their passions. Iamblichus says:

> *For both the visible and invisible Gods, indeed comprehend in themselves the whole government of whatever is contained in all heaven and the world, and in the total invisible powers in the universe. But those powers that are allotted a daemonical prefecture, distributing certain divisible portions of the world, govern these, and have themselves a partible form of essence and power. They are, likewise, in a certain respect, connascent with, and inseparable from, the subjects of their government. But the Gods, though they may ride in bodies, are entirely separated from them. The providential attention, therefore, to bodies, produces no diminution in those to whom body is subservient: for it is connectedly contained by a more excellent nature, is converted to it, and is not the cause of any impediment to it. But the adhering to a genesiurgic nature, and the being divided about it, necessarily give to daemons a more subordinate condition. In short, that which is divine is of a ruling nature, and presides over the different orders of beings; but that which is daemonical is of a ministrant nature, and receives whatever the Gods may announce, promptly employing manual operation, as it were, in things which the*

> *Gods intellectually perceive, wish, and command. The Gods, therefore, are liberated from the powers which verge to generation; but daemons are not entirely purified from these.*[23]

The philosophical language of Iamblichus appears difficult, but what he is saying is quite simple. The daemons, which Hermes calls the terrestrial gods, carry out in specific individual actions the overriding principles of the gods, which Hermes calls the celestial gods. The terrestrial gods, or daemons, can within the parameters of the ruling stars act according to their individual whims or intentions, but cannot violate the rule of the planets and stars. A daemon can reward an individual human it takes a liking toward, but cannot prevent that person from suffering under the hurtful influence of the heavens, if that is the individual's fate. By the same token, a daemon can punish a human its dislikes, but cannot hold back the good influences of the stars from that individual.

This provides one Hermetic explanation for the limitations of magic. The gods of the heavens are above the influence of magic— no one can alter the astrological pattern of their stars—but the lesser gods can be appealed to with worship, prayers and sacrifices, and even threatened with the power of barbarous names. These daemons can be induced through the art of theurgy or goety to aid the magician, but only up to a point. If their attempt to aid a human being interferes with the fate of that person, as defined by the astrological pattern of his or her birth chart, the daemons will be frustrated. If winning the lottery will disrupt your future that is written in the stars, no terrestrial god can be coerced or threatened into giving you the winning number, for example.

This explains the preoccupation of the Egyptians with the gods of Earth. They are less powerful than the gods of heaven, but they are open to human appeals and, within their power, may be induced to help or hurt. Most of the Egyptian gods seem to have been perceived as divine souls of once living human beings who, because of their greatness, were after their deaths elevated to the rank of god. Scott says:

> *The deus terrenus or temple-god is a deified human soul embodied in a statue, and operating on earth; and it is by the action of men that this combination of soul and body is brought into existence.*[24]

Elsewhere he writes:

> *A temple-god, like a man, consists of body and soul. His body is a statue carved by human hands; his soul is a daemon, or beatified human soul, incorporated in the statue by means of a prescribed ritual.*[25]

The Egyptians embodied these divine souls in temple statues, in living animals that were considered sacred symbols of the gods, and occasionally in the priests themselves by possession. Lazarelli, if Walker is correct in his surmise, suggests a fourth embodiment, as an aerial guardian angel or tutelary daemon attached to an individual man or woman. To this list of forms I might add two-dimensional images and talismans.

The statues of the temple gods were never seen by the general population of worshippers. They resided in an inner chamber of the temple accessible only to the priests. Within this sacred space there was a perfect miniature of a Nile boat with a cabin on the deck. The statue was kept inside this cabin. It was roughly two feet in height. On festival days the boat, with the statue of the god inside, was taken out of the temple and paraded through the streets, but the god itself was never openly displayed.

None of these cult images has survived. It is presumed that the Christians destroyed all of them.[26] Hermes says that they were human in shape with a head and a "body with all its members," but he does not say if the head was that of a human being or an animal. I tend to think the heads were often animal heads, since the Egyptians worshipped terrestrial gods in the forms of living beasts as well as statues. Scott says:

> *It appears to be implied...that the deity who resided in a temple was in some cases embodied in a statue, and in other cases, in a sacred animal.*[27]

It is obvious that the belief prevalent during the Middle Ages that witches kept familiar animals that served as the hosts for demons stems originally from the worship of terrestrial gods embodied in living beasts. The familiar cat of the European witch is only the Apis Bull of Egypt in miniature. It possessed the same nature and served much the same function; but whereas the cult animals of the Egyptians were appealed to by an entire town, the witch's familiar served an individual, or at most a small group. The familiar animal was a diminished form of the sacred beast not only in size but in function. It was considered (perhaps incorrectly) to be very much subservient to the will of the witch.

The Egyptian priests might control the gods through their telestic art, but the gods could command the kings. The oracles of the

gods, particularly those of Amon at Thebes and Meroe, served as instruments of government. In Ethiopia, which had very close ties with Egypt and a similar religious structure, the statue of a god was carried past a group of men who were candidates for the throne, and the god chose the one who would wear the crown. This was probably done when the priest who bore the god stopped in front of the lucky winner. The priests were sometimes oracular vessels for the gods. Thutmosis III was chosen king of Egypt in this manner in 1501 B.C. by the priests of Amon at Thebes.

So powerful was the authority of the gods, writes Diodorus, that an Ethiopian king could be compelled to commit suicide by the oracular motion of the statue in the hands of its priest. This practice came to an end around 260 B.C. when King Ergamenes was commanded to kill himself by a temple god. Instead, he had his soldiers massacre all the priests. By the time of the Ptolemies the temple gods had lost most of their political authority over the rulers of Egypt as well, although they were still consulted by individuals, high and low, about personal matters.

The methods of giving oracles were of three kinds, and are mentioned by Hermes: (1) *sorte*—by lots, (2) *vate*—by the speech or sounds of a possessed person, (3) *somniis*—by dreams. The oracles were presided over by the temple priests, who interpreted the lots, voiced the words of the god, or interpreted the dreams. Strabo relates that the priest of Amon in Libya, when Alexander the Great traveled to his temple to consult with the god, "'told Alexander *by word of mouth* that he was a son of Zeus.'"[28]

The other power of the temple gods mentioned by Hermes is the power to heal or cause disease. In ancient times plagues were common, their causes completely unknown but presumed to be the work of evil spirits, or the wrath of the gods. Scott offers the reasonable speculation that the sick were told by the priests that their illness was the result of the god's anger in order to induce the sufferer to appease the deity with offerings.[29] It is impossible to know if the priests were sincere in this diagnosis, or were seeking profit for their temples, or both.

A distinction must be made here between the actual temple gods and the many other statues of divine beings that adorned the temples and public places of Egypt. The temple gods were the actual residences of the deities and were never exposed to public view. These statues, Hermes reveals, were infused with a "supernatural force" by the priests to render them suitable habitats, then implanted with the "souls of daemons." The remarks of Hermeas, quoted above, imply that this was a two-stage process. Another statue might be fashioned of the same material, identical in size and appearance, yet it would not

be regarded as a temple god because the god did not reside within it. The telestic art transformed dead statues into living statues.

In view of the destruction of all the temple gods by the fanatical Christians, it is ironic that the primary survival of temple gods in the Western world exists within the structure of the Catholic Church. Many of the images of saints and apostles, and even images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, that reside in European churches and cathedrals, are temple gods in the strictest sense of the word. They represent divine souls, what Hermes would call daemons, of men and women who through their piety during life have been elevated to the rank of demigod. These souls have been ritually infused into the church statues by centuries of intense worship and belief from generations of the faithful. All of the necessary elements of the telestic art mentioned by Hermes exist within the opulent decor and ritual of the Church—music, hymns, precious stones, herbs, scents, sacrifices, prayers, and "oft-repeated worship."

I want to be quite clear in this matter. There is no significant difference between the cult temple gods of the ancient Egyptians and the prominent statues of saints in Christian cathedrals. Both are living statues, residences of divine souls, or daemons, which have been infused into the statues by the concentrated faith and repeated ritual worship of many individuals over a prolonged span of years. Both respond to human thoughts and desires. This is the reason statues in Catholic churches are so often reported to nod, change position, gesture, wink, shed tears, or bleed. It was these kinds of responses that signified to the Egyptian priests the presence of the terrestrial gods in their temple images. By interpreting these responses the priests were able to obtain oracles from the gods.

Because living statues represent a genuine phenomenon, it is possible to find many examples in different ages of history and among many diverse cultures. The gilded brazen heads of Baphomet, which according to Lewis Spence "represent the divinity of the gnostics, named *Mete*, or Wisdom,"[30] were one example of the many oracular brazen heads mentioned down through the centuries. Brewer in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* enumerates five: one made by Albertus Magnus; another by Friar Bacon; one in the possession of the Marquis de Villena of Spain; one made by Polander, a disciple of the Italian Escotillo; and a gigantic head kept in the castle of a giant named Ferragus of Portugal. It seems probable to me that these and similar legends represent a mythic survival of a form of god-making in use by European magicians during the Dark Ages and Middle Ages. It appears to have played a very prominent role in the ritual worship of the Templars.

Temple gods are by no means extinct, although not all of them reside in temples. The Statue of Liberty is one example of a living

statue in the modern world; another is the seated image of Abraham Lincoln. Whenever a statue becomes the focus of reverential awe, prayers, and sacrifices over the course of many years, it is inevitable that a spirit in harmony with the spiritual energies directed at that statue will enter into and abide within it. Men and women continue in our century to be elevated to the rank of demigod. Without doubt many of the images of Elvis Presley are living images, imbued by their worshippers with a resident daemon. The same might be said of images of James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Jim Morrison, and other human icons. The degree to which a statue of these individuals is brought to life depends upon the nature of the rites used to animate it, the strength of belief in the worshippers, and the duration of their adoration.

The Telestic Art

We can arrive at some understanding of what was actually involved in creating a living statue by studying the hints provided by Hermes Trismegistus in the *Asclepius*.

First the statue itself was fashioned, as Hermes says, "out of some material substance" (*mundi natura*). Scott interprets this to mean wood, stone or metal.[31] Quoting Erman's *Life In Ancient Egypt*, he suggests that these statues "'probably resembled the little bronze figures of which we possess such a number.'"[32] Because of the size of the sacred boats in which these cult statues were kept, we know they were not taller than about two feet. They resembled human beings, men or women, "in the shape of a body with all its members." This probably signifies that the sexual parts were accurately represented. It is possible (as in other cultures) that these living statues were dressed in miniature clothing to conceal their nakedness. If so, perhaps only the head, arms and feet were covered with gold leaf, the rest of the body lying concealed beneath the dress. We have no way of knowing if these figures were wholly human, or human figures with the heads of beasts sacred to the gods they embodied. Since so many of the common decorative statues were human bodies surmounted with animal heads, I am inclined to believe that the temple gods took the same form. Wood was probably used for the earliest temple gods, as it was in the temples of Greece, which were filled with little wooden figures called *daidala*, the function of which the Greeks had forgotten in the time of Pausanias (2nd century AD). Later these statues were probably crafted from semiprecious stone such as alabaster, and cast in bronze, silver, or gold.

On general magical principles, it is necessary that the statue resemble a human being in order to respond more readily to the needs and desires of human beings. It is necessary that the eyes of the image

be carefully crafted, since these acted as the channels of spiritual energy, both to infuse the soul of the daemon into the statue during the telestic rites, and to receive mental communications from the embodied god during oracular consultation. These eyes must seem to look directly into the eyes of the worshipper during worship, so as to create a link between god and worshipper.

On the method by which the souls of great men and women who have achieved the rank of demigods may be implanted in the statues, Hermes speaks of "holy and sacred rites." Some of the components of these rites he mentions are herbs, stones and scents (incense) which have in them "something divine." He goes on to speak of frequent sacrifices "offered to do them pleasure" accompanied by hymns, praises and "concord of sweet sounds that imitate heaven's harmony."

There is some ambiguity over whether the gods are forced against their will into the statues by the power of the telestic rites. The Egyptians were unique in their conviction that through their magic they could actually command their gods to do their bidding. However, once within the temple statue, the god was persuaded to remain "through long ages" in the companionship of men by "oft-repeated worship." The key word is "repeated." The repetition of rites directed to the living statue infused it with vitality and kept it from fading back into inert stone or metal.

To these elements of the telestic art mentioned by Hermes, Hermeas in his *Scholia* on Plato's *Phaedrus*, quoted above, adds "purifying the matter of which the statue consists" and "certain characters and symbols" placed around the statue. These elements may be codified in this manner:

1. Purification of the raw material of the statue
2. Accurate representation of the god
3. Associated symbols of the god
4. Magic circle
5. Occult characters (probably astrological)
6. Occult jewel (astrological association)
7. Occult herb
8. Occult incense
9. Hymn of invocation
10. Song of praise
11. Appropriate type of music (planetary association)

Each temple god of the Egyptians had its own traditional herb, stone, incense, hymn, and so on. These were based upon the link between the terrestrial god inside the statue and the celestial god that presided over it. Using this rule we can determine the most appropriate ritual elements for the telestic rite if we possess a complete understanding of the god we seek to infuse into a statue or other image. About the link between terrestrial and celestial gods, Proclus writes:

> *Now the ancients, having contemplated this mutual sympathy of things, applied for occult purposes, both celestial and terrene natures, by means of which, through a certain similitude, they deduced divine virtues into this inferior abode.*[33]

Elsewhere in the same essay Proclus writes:

> *Hence the authors of the ancient priesthood discovered from things apparent the worship of superior powers, while they mingled some things and purified others. They mingled many things indeed together, because they saw that some simple substances possessed a divine property (though not taken singly) sufficient to call down that particular power, of which they were participants. Hence, by the mingling of many things together, they attracted upon us a supernal influx; and by the composition of one thing from many, they produced an assimilation to that one which is above many; and composed statues from the mixture of various substances conspiring in sympathy and consent.*[34]

We are fortunate in knowing the various scents, plants, stones and musical modes assigned by the ancient Greeks to the planets. The Hymns of Orpheus were held to possess immense power of invocation. A particular incense was directed to be burned to the god at the head of each hymn. When inviting the Greek gods to dwell within living statues these hymns cannot be surpassed.

We also know the heavenly spheres linked to the musical modes—to the Moon, the hypodorian mode, to Mercury the hypophrygian, to Venus the hypolydian, to the Sun the dorian, to Mars the phrygian, to Jupiter the lydian, to Saturn the mixolydian, and to the sphere of the fixed stars, otherwise known as the zodiac, the mode of the hypomixolydian.

Similarly, the stones and metals associated with the planets and zodiac signs are well recognized from Roman times, as are the herbs of the planets. For example, ginger is sacred to the Sun by reason of its

fiery heat and golden color; gold is the solar metal because it is yellow and never corrupts or tarnishes.

All these ancient occult associations are to be found in my edition of the *Three Books Of Occult Philosophy* by Henry Cornelius Agrippa.[35] Agrippa went into great length detailing the associations of the planets and signs in natural magic, drawing upon many ancient sources.

Once it is determined which planet rules the particular spirit to be infused into a statue or other image, all of the occult associations of natural magic to that planet may be applied to the spirit. As Proclus points out, no individual substance can call down the soul of a daemon from heaven, but all of the substances and other ritual components acting together compound their strength and bring about the inspiration of spirit into the image. Do not make the simplistic mistake of assuming that the celestial gods are actually resident in the physical planets. The structure of traditional astrology merely provides a symbolic framework that differentiates and defines the various powers of the nonphysical beings the ancients knew as the gods of heaven.

A vital factor of the telestic art not stressed by Hermes and the Neoplatonists is the state of the person or persons engaged in god-making. This is actually far more important than the material part of the process. Without the correct state of mind no amount of incense, no occult herb, no sacred hymn, will have the least effect. In seeking to understand what internal condition must be sought after, it is useful to turn to the Eastern disciplines of yoga, tantra, and Tibetan Buddhism. Eastern occultism has always stressed the importance of the internal over the external in magical operations.

It is necessary that the body of the operator be purified along with the substance of the statue. This is done through ritual bathing, posture, breathing, meditation, prayer, fasting, and abstinence from sex, alcohol, and drugs. These practices produce a state of heightened awareness and receptivity to spiritual and astral influences. Controlled breathing is particularly stressed in kundalini yoga, where it is used to awaken an internal occult energy that confers upon the practitioner magical powers and perceptions.

From bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion, we learn the necessity of forming a strong emotional bond with the invoked god. This is usually a bond of love and reverence directed from the hearts of the worshippers into the living statue through the channel of the eyes along a ray of will. Love nourishes a living statue far more effectively than material sacrifices. If the statue is inhabited by an infernal demon, the emotions directed toward it are those of lust and rage. Loving emotions will attract and retain a loving, helpful god; hateful emotions will equally attract and hold a hateful, malicious devil.

As is true of Hindu worship, sacrifices should be made at the feet of the statue, or actually upon the statue. Hindu gods and goddesses are robed in rich clothing, and bathed in milk, honey, or blood. The loving offering given upon the altar of the heart of the worshipper is far more important that the actual physical sacrifice. It is useless to offer something that has little value to the person making the sacrifice, even if the object or substance is of great monetary value. It is the sense of loving conveyance of something precious that creates a bond between the worshipper and the god.

From Tibetan Buddhism we learn the importance of creative visualization. In their rites Buddhists fashion living images of the gods, not from material substances, but in their imaginations. These mental images are so real and concrete, they can actually be seen with the eye as clearly as a thing of wood or stone. Because they are mental creations, they are freely animated within the mind of the worshipper. The inertia of the physical vessel of a temple god means that its gestures, changes of expression, or movements are more difficult to see clearly. They are easiest to observe from the corner of the eye when the conscious attention is elsewhere. When the worshipper directs consciousness at them, the communications of the spirit are smothered beneath the materiality of the statue. Because the gods created by Buddhist priests are bodiless, their mental forms can move more freely. However, the creation of terrestrial gods within the mind is much more difficult than inducing the gods to dwell in material images.

It should be understood that the physical statue is a part of the observer's mind, and therefore the god inhabiting the statue can and will cause that statue to come alive and move. However, in order to animate its vessel in the eyes of its devotee, the god must overcome the focused point of consciousness awareness, which tends to convey a purely physical message from the senses to the brain. It can do this most easily when the point of consciousness is momentarily directed elsewhere. This is why, when the worshipper looks at the face of the statue, he or she may see at the corner of sight the finger of the statue twitch, or its breast rise and fall as if the statue were breathing. But the moment the conscious awareness is focused fully upon these movements, they cease.

In order to observe the motions of a living statue with the greatest effectiveness, it is necessary to cultivate an ability to split and abstract the mind. You must be able to watch a movement at the edge of your sight without actually shifting your eyes to look directly at it, or indeed, shifting your conscious attention to bear upon it. Once your sight or awareness focus upon the manifestation it will cease. I am speaking here about a person in a close to normal mental state—in

heightened or altered mental states, attention can be focused directly on the communications of the god without banishing them.

Principles

God-making is a genuine phenomenon, not merely a popular delusion or a religious myth. Although carried to its highest perfection among the priest class of Egypt, it was practiced in many ancient cultures, even by the Greeks who later disparaged the telestic art, and indeed it continues to be done in modern times all around the world—most effectively by those who have no idea that they are making gods through their religious devotions towards the statues or images of deities, saints, and heros.

While god-making is largely a spontaneous effect of prolonged and intense reverence toward the image of a spiritual being, it can be facilitated through rites and occult correspondences arrived at by trial and error in pagan religious systems such as those of the Egyptians and Greeks. Many of these correspondences between the heavens and the natural world have been preserved in occult works, notably Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*. The key features of the lost rites may be reconstructed from a study of the Egyptian magical texts, supplemented by related practices of the Kabbalists, yogis, tantrists, Tibetan Buddhists, and other religious and mystical societies both ancient and modern. Some techniques in Golden Dawn magic, such as the construction of telesmatic images, the invocation of the guardian angel, the use of the Enochian language for words of power, and the empowering of talismans, bear directly on these lost rites.

The substance of the statue which the god enters is not materially changed by the telestic art. Rather, it is the mind of the ritualist that is gradually conditioned until it is able to perceive the presence of the god, which uses the image of the physical statue that exists in the mind as its focus when communicating with the ritualist. The work of Tibetan Buddhists has shown that it is possible to achieve the same ends without a statue to act as a physical vessel for the god by relying solely on a concrete visualization of the form of the god. However, this requires a power of visualization that is far beyond the level achieved by most occultists, who will get much better results if they direct their hymns, devotions and sacrifices toward a material image. The statue or picture of the god is only an aid, but a very important and useful aid.

It is possible to define some of the general principles of the telestic art:

1. The theurgist must be purified in body and mind. Purity here signifies single-minded devotion to one purpose. This can be achieved

through ritual bathing, the use of ritual apparel devoted exclusively to theurgic work, prayers of dedication to the work in which the successful fulfillment of the work is described and invited, and abstinence in diet and other daily gratifications. As completely as possible, the theurgist must devote all physical and mental energies exclusively to the invocation of the god into the statue or other image.

2. Occult energy should be raised through the daily practice of visualization of the god, rhythmic controlled retention of the breath, prayers of invocation, and rituals designed to activate the elemental and planetary forces in harmony with the god. These preliminary rituals for raising power should be conducted within a magic circle drawn for this express purpose.

3. The physical image that is to serve the god as its residence should be as perfect and as costly in its construction as possible for those undertaking the work. In all things related to the god absolute devotion and reverence must be maintained, but this is particularly true of the god's physical vessel. Ideally, the theurgist will make the image of the god by hand.

4. The statue is purified ritually, then baptized in the name of the god using water, fire, or both. It is key that the name and identity of the god is formally given to the statue, which is in all matters henceforth treated as the god incarnate. The statue is not merely consecrated to the god, it *becomes* the god.

5. A regular set of daily rituals involving invocation, devotion, offering, communion and visualization must be performed before the statue. These daily observances should be done at the same time and in the same place, and will demand about two hours if done properly. The statue of the god should be housed in a small shrine, or set upon an altar. It is best to erect a magic circle around the ritual place before each daily ritual.

These rituals should be looked upon as the time each day when the theurgist visits with the god. The circle and shrine must be decorated with symbolic and natural forms that are in harmony with the nature of the god. The occult correspondences of precious stones, herbs, flowers, colors, incense, music, metals, foods, drinks and symbols can be determined by first discovering which of the seven traditional planets most closely harmonizes with the nature of the god, then using the natural correspondences of that planet. Of course, any symbolic object or herb or glyph particularly connected with the god will be prominently displayed.

6. The invocation summons the god to be present during the ritual and to heed the words and actions of the theurgist. In effect, it demands that the god pay attention and look out through the eyes of

the statue. It should involve words and names of power. If possible the secret or occult name of the god should be employed. Enochian is an effective language for this preliminary invocation. The presence of the god should be called for, respectfully, in the name of a superior power with authority over that god. Occult signatures of the secret name of the god, and of the name of the power that rules the god, may be inscribed upon the statue.

7. The preliminary devotion should include a hymn or song of praise to the god which describes the god's appearance, nature, achievements, and function. This may be chanted (verbally or mentally) or sung. Appropriate music may be played in the background. Appropriate incense should be burned. A candle or lamp should be lit during these daily devotions to signify the presence of the spiritual essence of the god.

8. After the hymn of praise, a small offering of flowers, herbs, or food should be made at the feet of the statue. It is most efficacious if this always takes the same form. The theurgist may wish to share this offering with the god. Cakes and ale can be used or something equally simple. The food and drink must be in harmony with the god's essential nature.

9. A period of communion follows during which the theurgist holds conversation with the god as if the god were a living, conscious being capable of understanding human speech. During this conversation the theurgist should strongly project emotions of love, respect and friendship from his or her right eye along a ray of will into the pupil of the left eye of the statue (that is, the eye of the statue on the right side, from the perspective of the theurgist.) This love should be imagined as an invisible radiance or fluid flowing from the eye of the theurgist into the eye of the statue and energizing the god. The most effective attitude to adopt during this conversation, which may be verbal or merely mental, is that of a lover wooing with words of praise and affection the heart of the beloved. The theurgist must strive to make his or her emotions as intense as possible, and these feelings of love must always be genuine.

10. During the period of communion it is useful for the theurgist to visualize him or herself in company with the god in an appropriate astral landscape or setting. The same setting should be used each day, and through repeated visualization made as real and detailed as possible. Thus the mind of the theurgist will be in two places simultaneously—sitting before the altar or shrine of the statue talking to the god, and mentally sitting or standing or walking with the fully visualized god in an astral environment in harmony with the god.

11. At the conclusion of the devotions it is appropriate to ask the god for guidance or help in a personal matter. When the god is able to give some aid recognized by the theurgist, it is necessary to make some personal sacrifice that is commensurate to the aid given. This may take the form of volunteer charity work done in honor of the god, or the offering of some valued personal possession to the god which entails its destruction by fire, air, water, or earth, or the saying of a certain number of devotional prayers of praise in honor of the god. A gift demands a gift.

12. The shrine of the god and its statue must be regularly cleaned and always treated with utmost respect. No person should look upon or touch the statue of the god except those who pay it their daily devotions.

It will not be possible to convince skeptics that material images can be, through telestic rites, made truly animated and aware. The reality of living statues must be personally experienced to be believed. The experience is unique and undeniable. We may struggle to define exactly what an incarnated god is, but once the presence of the god has been felt and seen and heard, its reality cannot be questioned. Skeptics should bear in mind that the Hermetic books describe a practice that was in use in Egypt for millennia. The ancient Egyptians were not fools in matters of religion and magic. It would be wise to maintain an open mind until the reality of living gods is experienced, at which point doubt is abolished.

Endnotes

[1] Scott, *Hermetica* [1924], (Shambhala, Boston, 1985), Volume I ("Asclepius" III, 23b-24a), pages 339, 341.

[2] *Ibid.*, (Section 37), pages 359, 361.

[3] Augustine, *City of God*, Book 8, Chapter 23; translated by John Healey [1610], (J. M. Dent and Sons, London, 1945, Volume I), pages 246-247.

[4] "Corpus Hermeticum," Book 10, Sec. 24-b; *Hermetica*, Vol. I, page 205.

[5] Orations, 12; quoted by Scott, *Hermetica*, Vol. III, page 152.

[6] Dissertations 2; quoted by Scot, *Hermetica*, Vol. III, pages 152-153.

[7] Plotinus, Ennead IV, Tractate 3, Chapter 11; translated by Stephen MacKenna [1924], *Plotinus: the Six Enneads*, (University of Chicago, 1952), page 148.

[8] Hermeas, *Scholia* on Plato's *Phaedrus*, quoted by Thomas Taylor in his translation [1821] of *On the Mysteries* by Iamblichus (Stuart and Watkins, London, 1968 [3rd edition]), page 353.

[9] Florence, 1489.

[10] See Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, (U. of Notre Dame Press, 1975), p. 39.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 41. Walker is quoting Ficino.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 68. Walker is quoting Lazarelli.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 68. Walker is quoting Lazarelli.

[14] See Walker, p. 70.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[16] *Three Books Of Occult Philosophy* [1533], (Llewellyn, Minnesota, 1993), p. 18.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[19] See Raphael Patai, *Gates To the Old City*, (Avon, New York, 1980), page 239.

[20] Walker, p. 68.

[21] See Walker, p. 68, footnote 5.

[22] *On the Mysteries*, Iamblichus, translated by Thomas Taylor [1821], (Stuart and Watkins, London, 1968), p. 72.

[23] *Ibid.*, pages 77-79.

[24] *Hermetica*, Vol. III, p. 221.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

[26] *Hermetica*, Vol. III, page 155.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Hermetica*, Vol. III, p. 158. Scott is quoting Strabo. The italics are Scott's.

[29] *Ibid.* p. 159.

[30] *An Encyclopaedia of Occultism*, (University Books, New York), p. 203.

[31] *Hermetica*, Vol. III, p. 222.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[33] "De Sacrificio et Magia," translated by Thomas Taylor, *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians*, (Stuart and Watkins, London, 1968), p. 344.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

[35] Llewellyn, Minnesota, 1993.

About the Author

Donald Tyson resides in Nova Scotia. For the last fifteen of his forty years he has made the study of magic in all its bewildering variety of forms his single occupation. His first introduction to the writings of Hermes Trismegistus was the *Divine Pymander*. The clarity of the spiritual teachings in this text entered his youthful mind like a flash of lightning and greatly facilitated his understanding of the principles of the Kabbalah when he later came to study it. In the course of editing the *Three Books Of Occult Philosophy* by that great Renaissance magician Cornelius Agrippa he made a detailed analysis of all the extant Hermetic texts and many of their commentaries. His latest work is *Tetragrammaton*, an in-depth examination of the magical structure of the Fourfold Name of God and its role in the inspired Enochian writings of John Dee.

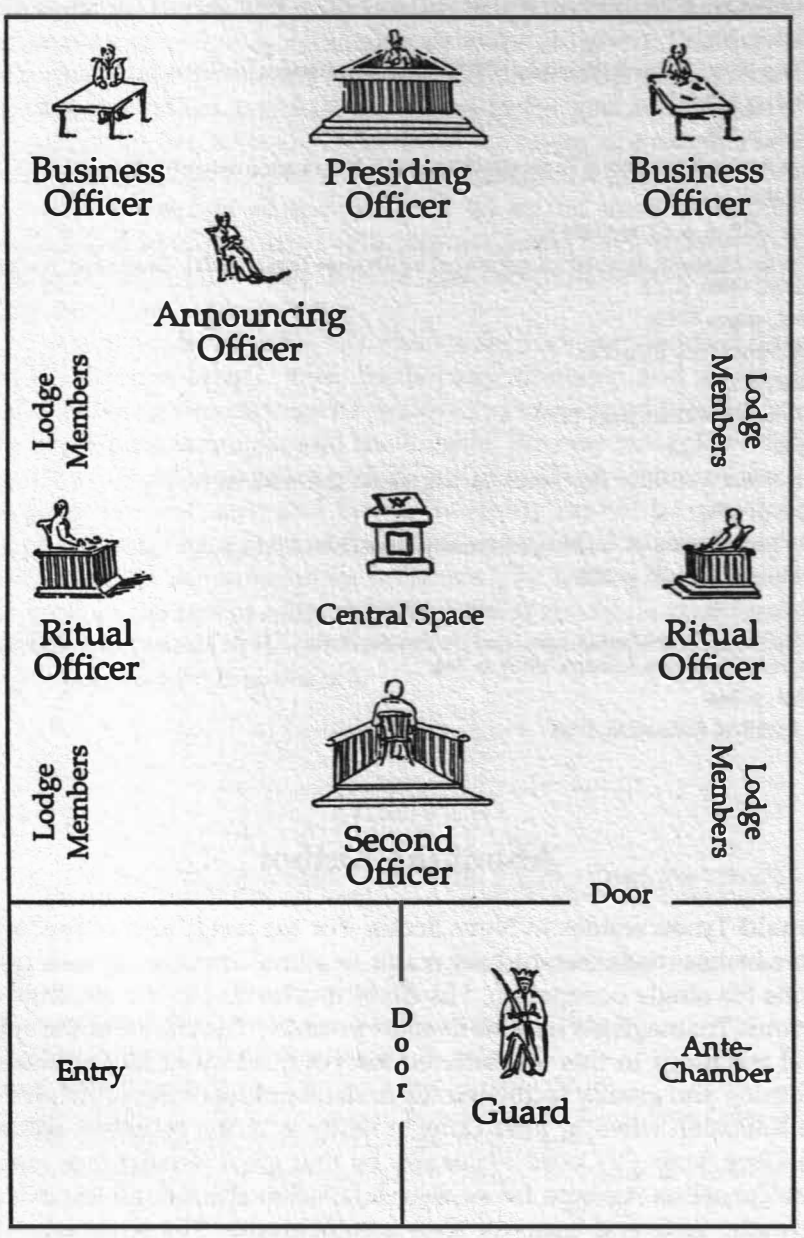


Diagram 1: The Lodge

The Hall of Thmaa

Sources of the Golden Dawn Lodge System

John Michael Greer

In the flurry of attention given in recent years to the magical system of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, certain elements of that system have received a great deal of notice, while others have not. Golden Dawn approaches to ritual magic, tarot symbolism and the Cabala, among other topics, have become all but standard in magical circles throughout the English-speaking world. At the same time, other elements have remained in obscurity.

One of these neglected elements, paradoxically, was the cornerstone of the entire system in its original context. The Golden Dawn, it's worth remembering, was not a "tradition" in the vague modern sense of that word; it was an organization, and an organization of a particular type. All the other elements of the Golden Dawn system were first brought in to serve specific roles within the Order's organizational structure, and reshaped—sometimes drastically—to fit that structure's needs.

As an organization, the Golden Dawn derived its structure from what this essay will call the traditional lodge system. Historians of this system, most of them Freemasons, have tended to see their subject as a Masonic affair first and foremost. This is an oversimplification, however. Freemasonry was, and is, only one of a remarkable diversity of organizations which have made use of the lodge system and contributed to its growth. For a period of more than a century—a period which included the entire lifespan of the original Golden Dawn, from its formation in 1887 to its disintegration in 1900-1903—the traditional lodge system served as a kind of organizational template, on which an astonishing array of societies, clubs, sects, fraternal orders, and business enterprises were based.

So, in its turn, was the Golden Dawn. Still, the development of the Order's system was as much a work of alchemy as anything taught in its knowledge lectures; the *prima materia* of its sources underwent a transmutation of astonishing scope on its way to becoming the Philosopher's

Stone of the completed system. The founders of the Golden Dawn borrowed the framework of their Order's structure from the traditional lodge system, but transformed that system from a means of organization into a tool of magic.

Sources of the Lodge System

The origins of the traditional lodge system are largely a matter for conjecture, despite the efforts of several generations of Masonic historians.[1] Equally uncertain, and more controversial, is the question of the role that occultism and magical secret societies played in those origins. Most of the early lodge organizations, magical or not, were secret to one degree or another, and left behind only the most fragmentary of traces. Before approximately 1700, any attempt at a coherent history is a matter of groping one's way in the mist.

It's fairly clear, though, that in England during the seventeenth century a number of organizations emerged which followed something not too far from the later lodge system. The most visible of these organizations, in hindsight, was Freemasonry; at the time, though, it was one of many social and charitable societies, and not particularly distinguishable among them. That period in English history has been called "an age of clubs." From these clubs, the earliest handful of fraternal orders emerged, among them the Freemasons, the Odd Fellows, and the United Order of Druids—organizations marked by regular lodge meetings with ceremonial openings and closings; by initiation ceremonies for new members; and by the use of grips, passwords, and secret signs for recognition.[2]

From the perspective of the modern magician, these may seem like sure signs of an esoteric tradition. In fact, they were common to a wide range of private social groups in that period. At the same time in history, though, the great resurgence in the Western magical tradition which began in the Renaissance (and may have sparked it in the first place)[3] gave rise to a multitude of secret societies which were devoted to magic, alchemy, and "heretical" religious beliefs. Most of these organizations were shadowy presences, attested by a few references in once-private documents or by Inquisition papers. The fiery Hermetic magus Giordano Bruno seems to have established circles of students at various places in Europe.[4] John Dee, creator or recipient of the Enochian system, may have done the same.[5] And the furor over the Rosicrucian manifestoes in the same century argues that, whatever might have been behind those mysterious documents, the idea of a secret society possessing magical secrets was familiar enough at the time to be believable to many people.[6]

Some of the papers of one such secret magical group have survived. This group, the *Society of Hermetick Adepti*, was founded in England sometime toward the middle of the seventeenth century. According to its constitution, it had three degrees of membership—Probationer, Son, and Father—with a prescribed curriculum of study and formal ceremonies of initiation. Members took an obligation of secrecy; the true name of the group itself was one of the matters to be kept secret. The Fathers met at the spring equinox each year in a secret conclave.[7] The similarities between this group and later magical groups, the Golden Dawn among them, are obvious.

Both of these currents, fraternal order and magical society, drew on the commonplace ideas of their time, and it's impossible to tell whether similarities between them come from this source or a closer connection. The spread of Freemasonry outside England in the eighteenth century, though, made the whole question a moot point. In the Europe of the time, ruled as it was by absolute monarchs and an oppressive Church, the relative freedom and religious toleration of English society made the very English institution of Freemasonry irresistibly appealing to liberals and radicals of all stripes. Among these were magicians, alchemists, and students of ancient lore, who saw in Masonic initiations an echo of the mystery cults of the classical world and a potent tool for magical work. In Europe and, to a lesser extent, in England as well, fraternal and magical traditions became the warp and weft of a single fabric. Even plain fraternal orders with purely social goals began to use names, symbols, and initiatory techniques of surprising depth. It is from this period that the expansion of Masonic grades—from three original grades to the astonishing total of ninety-nine in the nineteenth-century Rite of Memphis and Mizraim—can be traced. From this period, too, descend the core elements of the traditional lodge system used by the Golden Dawn.

Elements of the Lodge System

The diversity of eighteenth and nineteenth century fraternal and magical orders, real though it is, is founded on a set of common ideas and structures amounting to a kind of "standard kit."[8] The elements of this kit may be combined in different ways or used in different proportions, but they themselves vary only slightly from order to order. Thus (to name a very minor example) three knocks with a gavel will bring the members of nearly any fraternal lodge in existence to their feet, and one knock will seat them.

The fundamentals of this "kit" may become a little more clear if some definitions are provided. A lodge, in the present context, is a

group of people who come together to prepare and perform initiations. An initiation can be seen as a formal process for bringing about specific long-term changes in human consciousness. Every lodge, magical or not, has at least one initiation to offer, and most have more than one. People outside the surviving lodges tend to think of these initiations as nothing more than an overelaborate process of being admitted to lodge membership—a kind of formalized hazing that new members go through before getting access to what's really going on. In fact, the reverse is true. The initiation, centrally, is what's going on, and every other element of lodge organization and procedure is there primarily to support it.

This was true of all orders in the heyday of the lodge system, and is still true in those fraternal orders which haven't completely decayed into social clubs or insurance companies. Initiation is to the new initiate what consecration is to a talisman: something inert and unformed receives energy, shape, and direction. (The same transformation can also be brought about by individual work; self-initiation remains a valid concept, and a valid path.)

The methods of initiation differ. So, of course, do the models used to understand the process. One useful way of thinking about initiation, a way deriving from the Neoplatonic background of the Renaissance magical societies, posits two realms or worlds. One is the realm of matter, perceived by the ordinary senses. The other we may as well call the realm of meaning, perceived by that complex set of processes we usually call "the mind." (Some traditions see one or the other of these as primary, with the remaining one derived or even imaginary. For our present purposes, though, the distinction is a moot point.)

Ordinarily these two realms exist cheek by jowl in our awareness, with a sort of uneasy mapping of one onto the other serving as the one link between them. Under certain circumstances, though, the gap between them can be bridged or even annihilated for a time: matter and meaning fuse, so that physical objects take on cognitive depth and catalyze transformations at all levels of consciousness. Extreme physical or psychological states can do this, so can the effects of some drugs, and so can the technical devices of ceremonial magic. Some combination of these methods comes into most initiatory systems worldwide; in the traditional lodge system, by contrast—even in its magical forms—the first two rarely appear. If this needs any justification, it's that ceremonial magic can get the same results with less risk of long-term damage to physical or mental health.

This way of looking at the initiatory process is useful here because it highlights a critical feature of the traditional lodge system. Like Janus, the two-faced god of doorways and beginnings, a lodge looks two ways

at the same time. As the support system for this coalescence of the realms, it must be able to organize space, time, personnel, and the other requirements of initiation in terms of matter and meaning alike.

Patterns in Space and Time

In the traditional lodge system, the organization of space and time follows a set of patterns that will be familiar at once to the student of Golden Dawn ceremonies. Some of these patterns will seem needlessly ornate or formal to the modern magician—others will seem thoroughly boring. In practice, though, the system works well, and as often as not it is the apparently dull details which make for effective functioning.

The lodge system's use of space and time derives from the dual function of the lodge, as described a little earlier. This duality places some fairly specific requirements on the space to be used. A lodge room is typically used both for initiation ceremonies and for meetings of the members. As an initiatory space, it needs to be large enough to allow for easy movement, and for props, tableaus, or symbolic images to be set up and removed easily. It also needs enough physical and sensory isolation from the outside world to keep the experience of the initiation from being disturbed by unwanted noise or intrusion. As a meeting space, it needs to permit all of the members to see and speak to one another, while at the same time (since members typically rotate between different functions in a lodge setting) it can be used to help clarify the different responsibilities of lodge officers and members.

The interplay between these two concerns has produced a standard lodge architecture that can be found in practically every lodge-based organization in the Western world. The basic form is an open rectangular space with a door on one of the short sides and seats around the perimeter. An anteroom outside the door allows a guard to control access and prevent interruptions. Inside, the primary lodge officers sit on the short sides, while the bulk of the members sit on the long sides. The center of the space may contain objects of symbolic importance or it may be left empty. In either case it will be used for the most important symbolic actions. The basic design is that shown in Diagram 1.

These are the material aspects of the use of space in a lodge. What of the other side of the equation, the realm of meaning? Most often, this comes out of the core symbolism of the specific lodge. Such a symbolism is a critical element of the lodge system, but it is not a part of the "standard kit"—each order, magical or not, has one of its own, simple or complex. The use of the lower half of the Tree of Life as a map of the Neophyte Grade temple in the Golden Dawn is a good example. In most systems, these maps determine the placement of the

stations and movements of the initiatory process, as well as the location of the officers in ordinary meetings.

A few elements of this sort of mapping are common enough, though, that they very nearly have a place in the "standard kit" of lodge technique. The most important of these is symbolic polarity —the identification of the parts and officers of a lodge with a set of symbolic opposites such as light and darkness, fire and water, or the like. Most often the two short ends of the lodge room, and the lodge officers who sit there, form the major polarity in the lodge. A second may be set up between officers who sit on the two long sides. Alternatively the first polarity may be resolved by a third officer sitting on one of the long sides or elsewhere (like the Hegemon in the Golden Dawn's Neophyte Grade.) Or both of these can be done in the same lodge. (Again, the Golden Dawn's 0=0 lodge is an example.)

A related "standard kit" ingredient has to do with the line connecting the chief officer's station with the central space of the lodge. This serves as the primary path for what we may as well call "energy"—dramatic, psychological, or magical, depending on your choice of interpretive filter. In most lodge systems this line is not crossed except at specific points in ceremonial work, and movement along it happens only at the critical moments in the initiatory process.

The same needs that define the lodge's organization of space also shape its relationship to time. To carry out its work, a lodge must be able to define periods of time in which ritual consciousness is constructed, and if it offers more than one initiation it needs to have methods in place for moving smoothly from one level of ritual consciousness ("grade" or "degree" in lodge jargon) to another as well as from ordinary consciousness to any of these and back.

The usual method in these transitions is a simple ritual process given strength by regular practice. The ceremony used to open a lodge—to move from ordinary to ritual time—generally has four elements. First, the doors are closed, and those present show their right to be there; second, the lodge officers recite their duties; third, the powers governing the lodge symbolism are invoked; finally, the lodge is formally declared to be open. Each of these elements can be as simple or complex as the tastes of the founders may dictate.

A shorter ceremony, usually of two elements, closes a lodge. Banishings of the sort familiar to most magicians nowadays are all but unknown in lodge technique; instead, a second invocation designed to channel the energies of the ritual out into ordinary time is used. After this, the lodge is simply declared closed. A similar two-element ceremony moves the lodge from one grade to another. Here members

demonstrate their right to be present in the new grade, and the lodge is then declared to be open in that grade.

Organization and Officers

The carrying out of regular initiatory ceremonies requires a certain amount of organization of people, materials, and money. In the traditional lodge system, this is handled according to a system which most Americans will recognize at once. A set of officers, each with specified duties, is elected by the lodge membership for fixed terms by a secret ballot. Once elected, officers have powers and responsibilities set for them by the laws of their order. If they fail to carry out their duties, they may be removed by a vote of the lodge. In all matters, particularly those involving money, the lodge has final say within the limits of the laws. (It may come as no surprise that all but two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Freemasons.)

The titles of officers in different orders vary wildly. The functions of the offices, however, do not—these belong to the "standard kit." Whether a lodge is governed by a Worshipful Master, a Noble Grand, a Supreme Oracle, or a Chancellor Commander[9] (or, for that matter, a Greatly Honored Hierophant), that officer will sit at the end of the lodge room furthest from the door, preside over lodge meetings, and begin the opening ceremony with a single knock with a gavel or the equivalent. Similarly, whatever the name of the officer corresponding to the Golden Dawn Kerux, he or she will probably be instructed by the presiding officer to proclaim the lodge formally open or closed.

The usual set of lodge officers, then, includes a presiding officer (in the Golden Dawn, the Hierophant), a second officer who has primary charge of the door (the G.D. Hiereus), one or more business officers with secretarial and financial duties (the G.D. Cancellarius or, more broadly speaking, the Three Chiefs), an officer who makes announcements and leads movements in the lodge (the G.D. Kerux), and a guard between the inner and outer doors (the G.D. Sentinel). Additional officers (there are often several) are provided for as required by the initiation rites. (The G.D. Hegemon, Stolistes and Dadouchos fall into this category.) The presiding officer of the previous term (the G.D. Past Hierophant) often has a special place to sit and a role in the ritual. There is a certain amount of variation in where these officers sit, although the positions of the presiding and second officers are all but universal. The locations in Diagram 1 will serve as a general guide. As with the lodge space, the lodge officers will be linked to the governing symbolism of the lodge. The existence of such a link is an important part of the "standard kit"; however, the specifics are not, and will vary from order to order.

The Methods of Initiation

The process of initiation, then, is the primary purpose of the lodge system and the principal work of any functioning group using the traditional lodge system. While initiatory work can be done in any of a vast number of ways, the traditional initiations of the Western world tend to follow the same overall scheme and to use the same basic set of techniques. (It may be worth stressing here that these ceremonies are, in point of fact, the traditional initiation rituals of our own culture, and once served the same functions as the vision quests and rites of passage which many Westerners are currently borrowing [if that is the word] from other cultures. It's been remarked that if the existing fraternal orders were to be imported today from some distant continent, they could charge initiation fees in four figures and still be swamped with applications. This is a sad comment on our culture's inability to recognize its own resources.)

In bare outline, the candidate for initiation is placed in a receptive state by various simple non-invasive methods: sensory restrictions such as hoodwinks, combined with movement into an unfamiliar space, play an important role here, as do deliberate and carefully controlled shocks. These last must not be overdone. Surprise and mild fear heighten the initiatory experience, but extreme fear can easily destroy it. The cold touch of the Hiereus' sword on the candidate's neck in the 0=0 ceremony, and the rejection of the candidate for spiritual pride in the first part of the 5=6, are good examples of the technique in use.

While in the receptive state, the candidate is moved through a prepared space, in which he or she encounters a set of specific experiences designed to elicit particular emotional and mental reactions. These experiences are structured according to a particular symbolism; the nature of this symbolism varies from Order to Order and, in many cases, from degree to degree, but the "standard kit" requires that some such structure be part of the rite, to serve as a template upon which the experiences of the initiation are organized. The candidate is then given a set of symbolic and somatic triggers (the words, signs, grip, and so forth of the degree), which allow the state of consciousness created by these experiences to be reawakened more or less at will. The ceremony is brought to an end with the formal closing of the lodge and the transition out of ritual consciousness.

The triggers referred to above are, in some sense, the most interesting as well as the most important of the technical methods of the traditional lodge system. The various "secrets of the degrees," as they are often called, have generally been treated as though they were simply

security devices. In fact, they are central to the whole lodge system. When a lodge is formally opened in a given degree, all the members typically give the password, grip, and sign of that degree in the course of the opening ceremony. Just as a memento from some emotionally charged event in the past can awaken not only memories but states of emotion and awareness, these triggering devices serve to reawaken in the initiate the effects of the initiatory process. With practice and participation in the work of the lodge, the triggers become, in effect, "switches" by which specific states can be established and used in a lodge context.

The details of initiation vary enormously from order to order and from degree to degree. This is not simply a matter of variations in symbolism. Initiations have different purposes, not just different imagery. Given a grasp of the techniques of initiation, it would be possible to construct an initiatory ritual to foster any conceivable change, positive or negative, in those who undergo it. (This may well be one of the reasons for the intensity of the traditional secrecy surrounding such rites.) In most fraternal orders, the degree rituals aim principally at fostering one aspect or another of simple personal maturity, a commodity uncommon enough that the orders' work is well worth doing. In magical orders, of course, the possibilities for transformation are much greater.

The Golden Dawn Lodge System

By the time the Golden Dawn was founded in 1887, the full set of techniques described above had been in common use in fraternal and magical circles alike for more than a century. The fraternal orders themselves were at or near the peak of their power and influence throughout the English-speaking countries. At the same time, the magical arts were undergoing a renaissance on a scale not seen since the 1600s, and a great deal of forgotten material was being unearthed from old manuscripts and a handful of living traditions. The time was ripe for a synthesis.

A central figure in the emergence of that synthesis was the redoubtable Dr. William Wynn Westcott.[10] Cabalist, magician, Freemason and Rosicrucian, he stood at the interface between magical and fraternal traditions. His connections extended to esoteric groups all over Europe. He was an active member of *Quatuor Coronati Lodge*, the English association for Masonic historical research, and joined and (from 1892 on) headed the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (SRIA), a Masonic auxiliary order deeply involved in esoteric studies. It was around Westcott that the "Hermetic Students," an informal group including many future Golden Dawn Adepti, gathered in the early 1880s; and it was from Westcott that

the famous Cipher Manuscripts, the core of the Golden Dawn system and the much-debated Anna Sprengel correspondence, issued.

With the aid of Samuel Mathers, also a Mason, an SRIA member, and a brilliant if unstable magician, the rituals from the Cipher Manuscripts were revised, expanded, and made into the framework of the First Order of the complete Golden Dawn system. This First Order, it's worth noting, did not teach practical magic—it offered initiations, and provided instruction in what that age called "occult philosophy.": the basics of Cabala, tarot, astrology, and magical symbolism. In this, it was in line with many of the other magical orders at work in the same period, and not greatly different from the better grade of fraternal orders.

It was with the coming of the Second Order in 1891, founded on rituals and writings of Mathers' creation, that the Golden Dawn became something more than this. The Second Order (to give it its full name, the *Ordo Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis*, "Order of the Red Rose and Golden Cross") moved from occult philosophy to occult practice. Members were expected to study and master the extensive body of magical lore which today passes as the "Golden Dawn system," along with certain other disciplines (for instance, horary astrology), which have largely vanished from the curriculum of post-Golden Dawn groups.

This shift did not, however, involve a turning away from the elements of the traditional lodge system described above. On the contrary, lodge technique and lodge symbolism was at the core of the Second Order's curriculum; at the same time, these were transformed and expanded in ways no previous magical Order seems to have done. This process of transformation is critical to an understanding of the Golden Dawn's lodge technique.

Central to the Second Order teachings were the so-called "Z Manuscripts," a set of papers analyzing the Neophyte Ritual of the First Order.[11] These had to be mastered before the first sub-grade of the Second Order could be achieved. Their content, in terms of the traditional lodge system explored above, can only be described as revolutionary.

In the discussion of the traditional lodge system, earlier in this essay, it was suggested that a lodge should be seen as a Janus-faced entity looking toward the two realms of matter and meaning. In the Z manuscripts both these realms are dealt with. Thus, each part of the lodge structure and the ritual of the 0=0 initiation has a *practical* meaning in terms of the mechanics of lodge functioning, and a *symbolic* meaning in terms of the structure of lodge interpretation. But it also has a third meaning—a *magical* meaning in terms of the application of lodge practice to the disciplines of the magical arts. The two faces have

become three: Janus, to extend the metaphor, was replaced by Hecate, the goddess of crossroads and of sorcery.

A specific example may help to clarify the way this worked in practice. The following passage is from Manuscript Z-3, "The Symbolism of the Admission of the Candidate"—the numbers at the head of the paragraphs relate them to (1) practical, (2) symbolic, and (3) magical levels of meaning.

The Password

1. *Merely to guard the Secrets of the Order against any Members resigned or not working; hence changed each Equinox.*

2. *It is an affirmation of the different spiritual as well as the different physical constitutions of the candidates—that all natures cannot be the same without evil and injury resulting thereby—but that each nature should be brought to its own Kether—the best of its kind. This too, may be done in all things. It is the basis of Alchemy.*

3. *It should be pronounced as if attracting the Solar Force—the Light of Nature, during the six months following the Equinox at which it is issued, as a link with the Solar Force, between that and the Order. This password, therefore, may also be used in a magical ceremony as attracting the support of the Light of Nature acting on natural forces.*[12]

The first interpretation given here is a straightforward matter of fraternal practice, a means of telling those who belong to a given lodge from those who do not. The second one is an interpretation on a symbolic level, a little subtler than the sort commonly found in other fraternal or magical orders, but not different from them in kind. The third one is, so far as I know, unique to the Golden Dawn and some of its descendants—an application of the method to magical practice. An initiate of the Golden Dawn who wished to carry out a working to shape the forces of nature might use the password in this sense, as a way to bring the state of consciousness awakened by the Equinox ceremony into focus in the ritual he or she was working. Thus the collective work of the initiations and other group rituals of the Order became the foundation for the individual magical work of its members.

The same principle, used in a much broader manner, gives shape to the Neophyte Formula rituals presented in Manuscript Z-2. These are in many ways the crown jewels of the Golden Dawn system, complex

and effective rites for carrying out many of the major operations of practical magic. Each of them derives its structure, its symbolism, and its focus from the Neophyte initiation ritual; the Golden Dawn magician working one of them makes use not only of his or her own abilities but of the reactions of consciousness established by his or her own initiation, and strengthened by all the other 0=0 ceremonies in which he or she has taken part. In turn, the practice of the Z-2 rituals helps prepare the magician for participation in the initiatory work itself. Where older magical lodge systems had treated personal practice and lodge work as two distinct subjects, the Golden Dawn fused the two into a single structure that strengthened both. The Order's own rather florid terminology described the lodge in which the Neophyte ritual was performed as the "Hall of Thmaa" or the "Hall of the Dual Manifestation of Truth."But the manifestation of the lodge system's potentials which emerged from the Order's workings was not dual but triple.

The Symbolism of Initiation

The same fusion of fraternal and magical elements occurred at a deeper level of the Golden Dawn's magical system as well. As mentioned earlier, different groups using the traditional lodge system have made use of an enormous range of different systems of symbolism in their work. During the heyday of the fraternal orders in the late nineteenth century, lodges were organized around almost any symbolism one can imagine. For example, the publication of Lew Wallace's best-selling novel *Ben-Hur* in 1880 was followed by the birth of a fraternal order, the *Tribe of Ben-Hur*, which used the events of the novel as the basis for its scheme of degrees; candidates even took part in a mock chariot race during one ceremony.

The promoters who floated the Tribe of Ben-Hur had their eyes on nothing more profound than a share of the substantial fraternal life-insurance market. The founders of the Golden Dawn had deeper issues in mind, and whatever the origin of the Cipher Manuscripts they used as foundation, the rituals they developed show it. Unlike most fraternal initiations, and many magical ones, the Golden Dawn grades below Adeptus Minor were not structured around a single myth or legendary story; rather, they consist of a complex layering of images and ideas built on a framework which the Order's papers themselves rarely discuss.

The complexity of the Order's grade rituals has caused a good deal of confusion and misunderstanding among some scholars, who have tended to regard the rites as simply a hodgepodge of material thrown together for theatrical effect. Such an approach severely understates both

the level of structure within the grade rituals and the sophistication of the Golden Dawn's founders. It also fails to grasp the nature of an intellectual revolution which, during the years of the Golden Dawn's emergence, was shaking the foundations of Western society, and played a significant part in giving the Order's rituals and practices their shape.

This revolution was the rise of the first real comparative approaches to the study of religion and myth. The work of the anthropologist Sir James Frazer, whose monumental *The Golden Bough*, first published in 1890, showed that many elements of Christian belief could be found in the religions of ancient cultures and so-called "primitive" peoples worldwide. This book served as capstone to a movement among scholars which had been busy undermining the core notions of Western ethnocentrism since the beginning of the nineteenth century. To these researchers, all of the world's religions —Christianity, for the first time in modern history, included—could be studied together, as individual expressions of a common basic approach to the world.

Groups such as the *Theosophical Society* (founded in 1875) built on this foundation, suggesting that all faiths and mystical traditions were in fact fragments of a single, coherent system of spiritual science dating from the forgotten past.

In the context of the time, then, the profusion of sources and traditions which went into the Golden Dawn's rituals should not be seen as a kind of Fibber McGee's closet of old lore; rather, it was a careful attempt to combine what the Order's founders believed were equivalent elements from different but coordinate systems. Nor were these elements simply piled together around the basic lodge initiation pattern, or (as was done in other groups) encrusted on some mythic or legendary story. Instead, they were used to fill out the framework of an explicitly magical pattern of inner transformation.

The outline of this pattern can be traced, not coincidentally, in the work by Sir James Frazer mentioned above. The central thesis of *The Golden Bough* is that a single core myth, the myth of the so-called Dying God, is at the heart of many of the world's religions, legends, and folk customs. The Dying God is, in some sense, the god of vegetation. He represents the seed buried in the ground, the green plant dying with the coming of winter, and like the seed, he rises again from the earth in the resurrection of Spring. The Biblical legends of Jesus are among the many myths which follow elements of this pattern.

In nineteenth-century magical circles, however, this mythic pattern was read not as an allegory of vegetation so much as a map of the process of inner transformation. It was recognized, too, that there are two different Dying God formulae, not just one—a greater and a

Table 1

Degree	*Name*	*Symbol*	*Brotherhood Name*
1, 9	Magi	Equilateral Triangle	Luxianus Renaldus de Perfectis
2, 8	Magistri	Compass	Pedemontanus de Rebus
3, 7	Adepti Exempti	Hitakel (Hiddikel)	Ianus de Aure Campis
4, 6	Majores	Phrat (Phrath)	Sphaere Fontus a Sales
5, 5	Minores	Pison	Hodus Camlionis
6, 4	Philosophi	Gihon	Pharus Illuminans
7, 3	Practici	Wetharetz	Monoceros de Astris
8, 2	Theoretici	Maim	Porajus de Rejectis
9, 1	Juniores	Aesch	Periclinus de Faustis

lesser—both of which appear together in many mythologies. In the lesser formula, the Dying God descends into the Earth, and there is decapitated or dismembered. A sword and a shield or platter often appear in this formula's myths. In the greater formula, on the other hand, the Dying God is raised up above the earth to die (by hanging, crucifixion, or some similar method), and a spear and cup often appear in the myths. To the lesser formula belong the deaths of Orpheus and Dionysus, of Bran the Blessed, and of the many Primal Beings—Prajapati, Ymir, Tiamat—whose dismemberment provides the raw materials for the creation of the universe. To the greater formula belong Odin's self-sacrifice on the World-tree, among many others. In terms of "vegetation myth," the first formula is that of the seed "dying" in its germination under ground, reborn in the plant. The second is the plant dying at harvest above ground, reborn in the seed. In Christian mythology these two formulae are represented by John the Baptist and Jesus. In the Golden Dawn, they were referred to as the Formula of Osiris and that of Christ.[13]

Crucial to an understanding of the magical use of these myths is Flying Roll X, one of a series of documents circulated among Golden Dawn Adepts.[14] This paper, a copy of a lecture given by Mathers in 1893, is titled "Concerning the Symbolism of Self-Sacrifice and Crucifixion contained in the 5=6 Grade." A dense and rather difficult essay, it analyzes the altar diagrams from the grade rituals, and goes on through the Adeptus Minor ceremony in detail, drawing on Cabalistic, magical, and Egyptian sources—even, at one point, the Norse Elder Edda—in Mathers' inimitably murky style. Its main point, though, is clear. The characters of myth, in this interpretation, are to be understood as the different parts of the soul, as analyzed in Cabalistic writings; the events of myth are read in turn as guides to the technical processes of inner awakening, by which the ordinary awareness unites itself to the Lower Genius, the normally hidden powers of human consciousness, and then to the Higher Genius, the "Augoeides" or self-luminous divine presence in humanity.

The first phase of this process, equivalent to the lesser Dying God formula, requires the conscious self (in Cabalistic language, the Ruach) to descend into its own hidden places, to come to self-knowledge, and to cast out the "Evil Persona" or false self-image. This is experienced by consciousness as a dismemberment, since that false image is literally the only "self" the unawakened mind has ever known. The second phase, equivalent to the greater formula, requires the transformed Ruach to ascend to the Neshamah, the transcendent and immortal portion of the self, and to merge with that higher aspect so that every level of the self including the physical body is transformed utterly. In Mathers' words:

> *...if you can once get the great force of the Highest to send its ray clean down through the Neshamah into the mind, and thence, into your physical body, the Nephesh would be so transformed as to render you almost like a God walking on this Earth.*[15]

This pattern is central to the Golden Dawn's path of inner transformation. What is not often recognized is that it is also central to the Golden Dawn grade rituals themselves. The lesser formula, the Formula of Osiris, dominates the Neophyte Ritual—even the symbolic decapitation is present in the touch of the Hiereus' sword on the back of the candidate's neck at the end of the obligation. The Z Manuscripts themselves make it clear that this symbolism is intended:

> *When the Candidate stands before the Altar before the Obligation...rarely in his life has he been nearer death, seeing that he is, as it were, disintegrated into his component parts.*[16]

The grades from Zelator through Philosophus continue the symbolism of the Osiris Formula. These elemental grades represent, in a sense, the scattering of the symbolic body of the initiate, or more technically the differentiation of the aspects of consciousness, so that the senses of Malkuth, the intuition of Yesod, the intellect of Hod, and the emotions of Netzach can be known and experienced clearly for the first time. These aspects, in turn, are gathered up again in the Portal grade:

> *The Candidate in the Portal by a single circumambulation for each, recalls his past Grades and, at the end of the first point regards their symbols upon the Altar as parts of his body, and contemplates them as coming together in one place—the unity of his person.*[17]

These symbols then are cast into a brazier as the candidate's self-sacrifice on the Altar of Spirit. This forms the transition from the lesser to the greater formula of the Dying God, while the remainder of the Portal Ritual, and above all the Adeptus Minor grade, carry out the symbolism of that formula. It is for this reason that the candidate in the 5=6 is symbolically crucified, enters into the Pastos, and comes forth from it bearing the emblems of the Chief Adept—who, here as elsewhere in the Order's ceremonies, is a representation of the candidate's own Higher Genius.

The Golden Dawn's development of rituals around this map of the process of inner transformation is remarkable enough. What is extraordinary is that, here again, those rituals were not simply symbolic expressions of the map, but were meant to be used as the foundations of practical work with it. The transformations of the Neophyte Ritual were repeated and reinforced in the Z-2 ceremonies, allowing the core aspects of the Osiris Formula to be put to use in individual practice. The consecration and use of the elemental weapons extended the work of the elemental grades into the personal sphere, while Golden Dawn Adepts were urged to make use of the Vault structure itself for individual work.[18] Once again, the Order took a relatively ordinary matter of fraternal practice and reshaped it into a potent tool for magical transformation.

The Grades and the Path

This same tendency to merge lodge technique from traditional sources with magical symbolism and practice pervaded the Golden Dawn's lodge system. Its results, however, were not always as constructive as the examples already given might suggest. Sometimes, the fusion of fraternal and magical elements produced unexpected problems. One good example of this is the symbolic organization of the Golden Dawn's grade system.

The organization of grades or degrees within groups using the traditional lodge system tends to vary widely. Some orders are a hodgepodge of different initiations thrown together more or less at random, while others take a more orderly approach. These patterns of organization need not have anything in particular to do with the inner symbolism of the rituals. (There are orders whose initiatory systems seem chaotic at first glance, but which arrange disparate rituals into a symbolically valid sequence.) Instead, it can be a matter of classification and, often, of linking ritual symbolism to the overall symbols and teachings of the order. The Golden Dawn falls into the more orderly group. Its grade organization is based, like so many of the details of the Order's working, on the Cabalistic Tree of Life, with one grade assigned to each of the ten Sephiroth of the Tree. This pattern overlays the deeper initiatory structure discussed earlier and, to a great extent, reinforces it. The formulae used in the Adeptus Minor grade, for example, correspond well to Tiphareth, the 5=6 Grade's Sephirothic attribution.

It's worth noting that this system was developed out of a grade structure apparently used by German Rosicrucian or pseudo-Rosicrucian lodges in the eighteenth century. First published in 1781, it lists

nine grades instead of ten, but these grades may seem quite familiar to students of the Golden Dawn system.[19]

Despite the obvious borrowings from this system in the Golden Dawn's own grade structure, though, the underlying patterns of the two have little in common. While there are certainly Cabalistic references in the Rosicrucian system, the direct mapping of grades to Sephiroth that governs the Golden Dawn structure is absent. Thus the Rosicrucian system seems to have provided the Golden Dawn's founders with a series of titles and symbols, and little more—the governing pattern was the Order's own creation.

The construction of the full Golden Dawn grade structure, then, represented the same sort of innovation in lodge systems as the other examples already explored: the transformation of an existing element of the traditional system to serve the needs of magical work. In place of an arbitrary sequence of levels and initiations, the Golden Dawn's founders set out to establish one which would mirror the Cabala's map of levels of being and of the stages of spiritual and magical growth. It was a logical result of the same process which produced so much of value in the Order's system.

It was also, in practical terms, a source of serious problems, and one which played a major role in the troubles which overtook the Order. The core of the problem, as Israel Regardie pointed out many years ago,[20] was that the assignment of the grades to the Sephiroth could have practical meaning only if the grade initiations actually conferred the powers and transformative experiences of the Sephiroth to which they were assigned—and this they could not always be relied upon to do.

The methods of initiation used in the traditional lodge system are capable of fostering changes in awareness, but they cannot force these. It sometimes happens that a candidate goes through an initiation ritual without any reaction deeper than puzzlement and boredom. In some cases, this is a function of individual differences; a given set of experiences and symbols cannot be counted on to have exactly the same effect on everyone who experiences it. In other cases, unfortunately, it is a function of incompetence or inattention on the part of the initiators. Israel Regardie has written with some feeling about his own initiation into the Adeptus Minor grade, in which important parts of the ceremony were read out as though they were grocery lists.[21]

In addition, even when the initiation has been properly performed and had its intended effect, the reactions and triggers placed in the initiate's mind will lose effectiveness like any other stimulus unless they are strengthened and reinforced through repetition and regular practice. The word "initiation," it should be remembered, literally means "beginning," and even the most effective initiation is only the

beginning of a process that must be carried out through further effort and time. This is true even in fraternal contexts. It is far more true in the case of a magical order.

This point was not lost on all the Golden Dawn's members, by any means, and several papers issued to Golden Dawn initiates stress the necessity for personal work. In practice, unfortunately, this principle too often received little more than lip service. Part of the problem stemmed from the fact that the grades of the Outer Order were normally taken within a matter of months, with no more required for passage from one to the next than the memorization of a few scraps of magical symbolism. This led far too many members to believe, and act, as though the mere process of undergoing a ritual initiation was enough to confer exalted levels of spiritual development. The result, unavoidably, was that the grades of the Order were treated as mere honorific titles, and the hard work of magical training and discipline was too often neglected or discarded. The later decline of the Order, in which requirements for advancement were progressively cut and manuscripts pulled from circulation, seems to have taken its shape largely from this factor.

The problems caused by the Golden Dawn grade structure were by no means impossible to solve. A stronger emphasis on personal practice and training, a better grasp of the limitations of the initiatory process, and a single "knowledge lecture" drawing a clear distinction between the grades as reflections of (and first steps toward) Sephirothic states of consciousness and those states themselves, might have done much. At the same time, the troubles that did arise are evidence that the Golden Dawn's core strategy of infusing the traditional lodge system with magical meaning was not without its potential pitfalls.

The Government of the Order

The risks inherent in the Order's strategy had a larger role, and a far more disastrous one, in the political and organizational troubles which shattered the Golden Dawn in the years 1900-1903. These troubles arose when the system of government which had been adopted by the Order proved unable to deal with a crisis among the top leadership. Previous accounts of the crisis have tended to stress the role of personalities in the Order's breakup. While these certainly had their part to play, much of what happened was a direct consequence of the way the Order's founders had adapted the governmental structures of the traditional lodge system to suit the needs of magical symbolism.

Hundreds of years of experience with human fallibility had led traditional orders to develop a flexible and carefully defined system of lodge governance, with the same sort of checks and balances American

school children once studied in civics class. Typically, the officers in a lodge are elected for terms of six months to a year by the lodge membership, and rotate through the offices so that no one person gains a stranglehold on any one position. Financial matters are assigned to one or more business officers, but lodge funds cannot be spent without a vote of the lodge itself. This same pattern repeats itself at the level of the "Grand Lodge," the regional or overall organization. Each lodge usually has a voting representative at the Grand Lodge level, and Grand Lodge officers are elected and serve under the same constraints. (In an Order with many organizational levels, some have as many as four, with local, county, state, and national lodges. Each one relates to the next in the same fashion.)

Substantial elements of this system were built into the Golden Dawn's structure. For example, the regular rotation of Temple officers at six-month intervals was an important part of the function of the Equinox ceremony. On the other hand, the system of checks and balances which protect members and lodges from abuses on the part of the leadership was almost entirely absent. Temple officers were not elected but appointed by the Chiefs of the Order, who also held the power to change or suspend the Order's bylaws at will. The only recourse given to members who disagreed with an action of the Chiefs was the right to appeal to the Chiefs themselves![22] The entire system was designed as an autocracy, and once the control of that system passed into the hands of someone willing to abuse it—as happened when Samuel Mathers took sole control of the Order in 1897—the only way members had to resist such abuses was open revolt.

Why did the Golden Dawn's original Chiefs—experienced Freemasons all—break with the traditional lodge structure in this way? Simple issues of personal power may well have played a role; the founders of the Order were human, and had their share of human faults. However, there were at least two additional factors involved, factors which derived from the Order's magical concerns. One of these was the danger that the magical teachings of the Golden Dawn might be distorted in a more democratic system. The other was a central image of the magical symbolism of the time, which, in keeping with the Golden Dawn strategy already explored, was brought into this part of the traditional lodge system to adapt it to magical use.

The risk of losing control of the Order's teachings was a real one, as the later history of the Golden Dawn and its successor groups proved. Westcott and Mathers were both skilled and knowledgeable magicians, but the other early members of the Order varied widely in the extent of their magical training. A structure in which all Order members could have a say in determining the Order's curriculum

could easily have produced precisely the sort of watered-down version of the teachings as many of the later lodges in fact ended up adopting. An authoritarian structure, in which all teachings were handed down by the Order's rulers and were not subject to tampering, offered one way to avoid this risk.

Another important influence, though, was the idea (then immensely popular in magical circles) that a body of "Secret Chiefs" or "Masters," unknown beings either human or once-human but in any case possessed of vast powers and the wisdom of the ages, were the true source of all magical knowledge and of all true initiation. This notion is often tied to Theosophical ideas about Mahatmas, but it actually goes much further back in Western magical thought. It appears in a range of eighteenth-century writings, and it had been used in several previous magically oriented orders, most notably the *Gold-und Rosenkreuz* in Germany a century before.[23] It was a logical part of the magical tradition for the Golden Dawn to borrow—as well as a highly useful one.

It's hard to tell just how deeply committed the founders of the Golden Dawn themselves were to the idea of the Secret Chiefs. On the one hand, neither Westcott nor Mathers seem to have been averse to a certain amount of fraud, and the "Anna Sprengel letters," on which the Order based its claims, were almost certainly forgeries perpetrated by Westcott.[24] On the other hand, Golden Dawn papers contain detailed instructions on methods of communicating clairvoyantly with the Secret Chiefs,[25] and it seems somewhat unlikely that these instructions would have been issued by the Order's founders if those gentlemen did not expect messages to be received.

Whatever their actual opinions, though, the Order's founders behaved as if they believed in the Secret Chiefs, and they made the presence of these beings central to the governmental structure of the Order. The authority of the visible Chiefs of the Order derived, explicitly, from the shadowy figures of the invisible Chiefs behind them. In this way, the Order's founders were able to legitimize the Order itself in the eyes of the magical community of their time, drawing on current mythologies in much the same way that kings of ancient times legitimized their rule by claiming descent from the gods. Nor should this be seen as nothing more than a cynical tactic of control. Mythologies of origin have played an important part in many lodge organizations, where they help to construct patterns of expectation and emotional response which can be critical to the success of initiatory work. The attempts of present-day Wiccans to construct a pedigree for their faith by reaching back into the mists of a mythologized prehistory derive from many of the same needs.

At the same time, the use of the Secret Chiefs as an element of the Order's system of governance was a disaster on a practical level, because it gave the top level of the leadership powers which could not be limited without disrupting the entire system of the Order. Mathers' dictatorial rule over the Golden Dawn in its last years rested entirely on his own claim to be acting under the command of the Secret Chiefs, from whom the Order's rituals, teachings, and right to initiate derived.[26] Within the Order's system, there was no way his authority to be challenged or limited, and no provision for establishing an alternative leadership in his place—barring new instructions from the Secret Chiefs. These did, in a sense, arrive in the end. The foundation of the major Golden Dawn successor groups, such as R. W. Felkin's Stella Matutina and Dion Fortune's Fraternity of the Inner Light, followed on the emergence of new leaders who identified their own clairvoyant contacts with the Secret Chiefs of the Order. Meanwhile, the Order floundered through a series of political crises and schisms brought on, at least in part, by the fact that the existing structure could not legitimize any leadership but that of the Secret Chiefs—or those willing to claim to speak for them.

Conclusion: The Legacy of the Golden Dawn

The Golden Dawn's transformation of the traditional lodge system, revolutionary as it was, thus was not without its risks. The Order managed to create, apparently for the first time in the history of the Western Esoteric Tradition, a fusion of collective and individual magical work in which the structure of the traditional lodge system blended seamlessly with the processes of personal spiritual transformation, and through which nearly every part of the wildly diverse legacy of Western magic was brought into a system workable on individual and group levels. Such a fusion, though, could and did create problems of its own, and in the case of the original Golden Dawn those problems played a significant role in wrecking the Order itself.

It was perhaps inevitable that the first group to attempt this kind of fusion would run into unexpected difficulties. The early stages of any kind of evolution are rarely smooth going. More important, at least from the perspective of the present, is the fact that the Golden Dawn's rites and teachings did not perish with the Order itself, and have become one of the central elements in the current renaissance of the magical arts. The Order's achievements have thus become the common property of magicians everywhere, just as its failures represent a lesson from which all students of the magical arts have something to learn.

Endnotes

[1] Hamill, J., *The Craft: A History Of English Freemasonry* (Crucible, 1986) is a competent overview of the subject.

[2] Schmidt, A. J., *Fraternal Organizations* (Greenwood, 1990) gives details on these organizations and most other fraternal orders.

[3] See Yates, F., *Giordano Bruno And The Hermetic Tradition* (U. Chicago Press, 1979).

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Heisler, R., "John Dee and the Secret Societies," *Hermetic Journal*, 1992, pp. 12-24.

[6] Yates, F., *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

[7] Heisler, R., "Introduction to the Hermetic Adepti," *Hermetic Journal 35*. (Spring 1987), pp. 34-41.

[8] In discussing the basic techniques of fraternal initiation I am placed in the awkward position of having to satisfy the demands of scholarship and of my obligations of initiation at the same time. As a member of several fraternal lodges I have been given ritual texts and other documents which are not publicly available, and I have also obtained—chiefly from used-book dealers—a number of rituals of orders, most of them extinct, of which I am not a member. In fairness to the orders involved I have chosen not to give specific examples or citations from these materials. I should add that the interpretation of the lodge system given here, and particularly of the signs, grips and words used in degrees, is not taken from fraternal sources but is my own.

[9] These are the presiding officers of, respectively, a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, a Lodge of Odd Fellows, a Camp of Royal Neighbors, and a Castle of Knights of Pythias, all currently active American fraternal orders.

[10] There seems to be no biography as yet of this major Golden Dawn figure. Gilbert, R.A., *The Magical Mason* (Aquarian, 1983) gives a brief biographical note and some otherwise rare Westcott essays.

[11] These are given in Regardie, I. *The Golden Dawn*, (Llewellyn, 1971), Vol. 3, pp. 81-192.

[12] *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 148.

[13] See, for instance, *ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 125.

[14] Those Flying Rolls not included in Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, including Flying Roll X, may be found in Mathers, S.L.M., et al., *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic, And Alchemy*, (Destiny, 1987); Flying Roll X is on pp. 131-140.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[16] Regardie, *Golden Dawn*, Vol. 3, p. 135.

[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 185.

[18] *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 287-289.

[19] The original source for these is "Magister Pianco" (i.e., Baron Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen), *Der Rosenkreutzer in Seiner Blosse* ("The Rosicrucian In His Nakedness"), an expose published in 1781. They were reprinted in tabular form in Kenneth MacKenzie's *Royal Cyclopedia Of Freemasonry*, and borrowed intact by the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia as the basis for its own grade system; this last was almost certainly the source from which the Golden Dawn borrowed. Manly Hall reprinted the table in his useful *Codex Rosae Crucis* (Philosophical Research Society, 1971), p. 13.

[20] In *My Rosicrucian Adventure*, (repr. as *What You Should Know About The Golden Dawn*, Falcon, 1985). See especially p. 100.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 94-98.

[22] The original bylaws of the Golden Dawn, as well as several later versions, are given in Gilbert, R.A., *The Golden Dawn Companion*, (Aquarian, 1986), pp. 43-72.

[23] See McIntosh, C., *The Rosicrucians* (Crucible, 1987), especially pp. 82-94.

[24] This is the conclusion of Ellic Howe's waspish but well-researched *The Magicians Of The Golden Dawn*, (Aquarian, 1985).

[25] Quoted in Mathers et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 14-19.

[26] See Mathers' manifesto of 1896, reprinted in Regardie, *What You Should Know About The Golden Dawn*, pp. 181-186.

About the Author

John Michael Greer first encountered the Western esoteric tradition in 1975 and has been involved in it as student, practitioner, and teacher ever since. He has worked at a wide range of professions, and presently divides his efforts between his magical work and a variety of writing projects. He is also an active member of several fraternal lodges. He lives in Seattle.

The Pillar of Osiris

Adam Forrest

The Ritual of the Pillar of Osiris is dedicated to Francis Israel Regardie, who so valued the addition of new work to the ritual corpus of the Golden Dawn and encouraged my own first efforts in that direction, and to Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, Cecelia Thomas, and the Re-Membering of Osiris.

Introduction to the ritual: *The Pillar of Osiris* is a Hermetic ritual employing the formulæ and techniques of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in the Outer and the Order of the Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold in the Inner, designed for working by six Adepts and at least four other Initiates, though more participants contribute to the potency of the operation.

Like many Golden Dawn rituals, *The Pillar of Osiris* is a mystery ritual, that is, a ritual in narrative, dramatic form with an initiatory component. Also like other G.·.D.·. rituals, the *Pillar* is syncretic, synthesizing formulæ and invocations from a variety of sources.[1]

Most Golden Dawn rituals employ Egyptian Godforms as the invisible Powers behind the Offices. *The Pillar of Osiris* is unusual in that the mystery drama itself is largely Egyptian, therefore the Egyptian Gods are not only the Powers behind the formulæ of the ritual, they are actually the protagonists of the ritual drama itself.

The ritual is based on the Egyptian myth of the quest of Isis for Osiris Slain. The story as a whole survives only in late renditions by Greek writers, of which the most complete is that of the 1st-2nd century C.E. Delphic priest Ploutarchos. Some parts of the story, particularly the episode of the Immortalization of the Prince, are clearly based on the Eleusinian myth of Dêmêtêr (as portrayed in the "Homeric" *Hymn to Dêmêtêr*). It is likely that this is not a confusion on the part of Ploutarchos or his source, but that he is accurately representing the mythology of the Hellenistic Isis. When the intentionally syncretic Græco-Egyptian cult of Sarapis and Isis was conceived and promulgated by Ptolemaios I, founder of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, he enlisted as his expert religious consultants Manethôn of Sebennytos, a famous Egyptian priest, and Timotheus, a Greek representative of the Eleusinian mysteries; given the initial similarity between the wandering of the Goddess in search of her

lost loved one in the mythologies of the Isis-Osiris cult and the Dêmêtêr-Persephonê cult, a synthetic Isiac-Demetrian myth would seem the almost inevitable result of such a collaboration.

It is the episode of the semi-deification of Prince Manerôs or Phoenix by Isis, and the cognate story of Prince Dêmophôn (or Triptolemos) and Dêmêtêr, which provides the specifically initiatory element in *The Pillar of Osiris.* This enhanced emphasis on the Prince, and the ritual interpretation of his initiation as his adoption as son of the God and Goddess is inspired by another Greek version of the Quest of Isis and a brief Greek papyrus text.

There is a version of the myth which tells that Isis went to Byblos seeking her son, rather than her husband. Pseudo-Apollodoros opens Book II of his *Library* with an account of the lineages of Inachos and Bêlos, early in which he tells the story of Iô. He records that after her long wanderings fleeing the persecution of a jealous Hêra, Iô came to Egypt, where she changed from bovine back to her human form, and gave birth to her and Zeus's son, Epaphos.[2] Prompted by Hêra, the Kourêtes kidnapped the infant. Zeus slew the Kourêtes for their affront, and Iô set out wandering again, this time to find her stolen child. Her quest led her to Syria, where she found Epaphos being reared by the wife of the Phonician King of Byblos. Zeus being more interested in making love with beautiful women and siring heroic offspring than entering into long-term relationships, Iô then returned to Egypt with her son, where she married the King. According to Apollodoros, Iô then dedicated a statue to Dêmêtêr, "called Isis by the Egyptians, as they also called Iô herself." Epaphos succeeded Iô's husband as King of Egypt, married Memphis, daughter of Neilos (the Nile), who bore Libya, who herself bore twin sons, the Phonician King Agênôr and the Egyptian King Bêlos (i.e., Baal). Finally, Bêlos had a son named Aigyptos (Egypt).

The papyrus text which also inspired the Phoenix initiation is a seven-line Greek hymn in hexameter verse preserved in the Philinna Papyri under the name of *The Hymn of the Syrian Woman of Gadara* recording an otherwise unknown initiatory event in the story of Hôros the Child. The Hymn opens:

> *The Child of the most majestic Goddess was set*
> *Aflame as an Initiate...*

and ends:

> *...Seven dark-eyed Virgins with dark vessels*
> *drew water and quenched the restless fire.*

Note the resemblance to the myth of the Greek Saviour God (especially in the Orphic movement) Dionysos, who was plucked from his burning Mother, the Goddess Semele,[3] and immersed in the River Ismênos. There was a late rôle for Dionysos as a sacred child of Dêmêtêr through his assimilation with the Child-God Iakchos at Eleusis. Also, in the Late Antique period, Dionysos was thought of as a dying and reborn God of the mysteries, according to the testimony of Ploutarchos.

Græco-Egyptian Voces Magicæ, or Barbarous Names

The Hebrew Divine Names are employed in *The Pillar of Osiris*, as they are in all Order rituals, but in keeping with the Græco-Egyptian form of the ritual, the Græco-Egyptian *Nomina Barbara* from the 7=4 are employed in lieu of the corresponding Enochian Names.

The Barbarous Names, like the form of the myth itself employed in the ritual, are from the late periods of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, when the Egyptian and Greek, and to a lesser extent, Roman, Persian, Syrian, Jewish, and—in the Roman period—Christian religious and magical cultures were intermingling in the cosmopolitan Egypt of Alexandria. The Names derive from the Magical papyri and amulets and Gnostic codices surviving from Græco-Roman Egypt.

Working the Ritual

Within the context of the Order, the CHIEF ADEPT should ideally be of the Grade of Adeptus Exemptus, the SECOND ADEPT should be an Adeptus Major, the ADEPTI TERTIUS, QUARTUS, and QUINTUS should be at least Zelatores Adepti Minores, and the ASSOCIATE ADEPT should be a Neophytus Adeptus Minor. The PYROPHOROS should be at least a Philosophus, the HYDROPHOROS a Practicus, the AEROPHOROS a Theoricus, and the GEOPHOROS a Zelator.

The Middle Pillar of Osiris is a tall banner or panel of gold fabric of the same height as the two Pillars of the Temple, and broad enough to conceal the Adeptus Primus. The fabric Middle Pillar must be rigged to be able to be raised and lowered as needed by the Officers or an assistant.

The Pillar of Osiris is unusual for a Golden Dawn ritual, in that it is devised to accomodate a large number of ritualists; it has been worked with up to sixty participants. Recruit four volunteers (two men and two women) to serve as the Kings and Queens of the Elements. After separating out the Chief Officers and the Kings and Queens, divide the remaining participants into four groups—the Hosts of the Sylphs, Salamanders, Undines, and Gnomes. Recruit one volunteer from each Elemental Host to serve as the last to receive the Repast and state "It is finished."

Arrangement of the Hall

The Ritual Hall is laid out in Pentagram arrangement, with Spirit apex towards the East. Altars are at five Vertices of Pentagram, with appropriate Elemental Implement at each. On the Spirit Altar are five Roses, five Lamps, five Chalices (one with only one serving in it), five Patens (one with only one Cake), and five Censers. A White Over-Robe and Lecanomantic Vessel are placed at the Spirit Altar.

Five Thrones are in the West, one on Dais in East at Middle Pillar Station.

The Pastos, or at least Pastos Lid, stands vertically in the East on the Dais behind the Station of Adeptus Primus.

An Ankh is placed at each of the Five Thrones in the West. A Black Over-Robe and Veil are at the middle Throne in West.

At White Pillar: Lamp and Crook. At Black Pillar: Chalice of Lustral Water and Scourge. At Middle Pillar Station: Djed Sceptre. Gold Pillar is not yet raised.

Upon entering, the Elemental Hosts are seated near the Elemental arm of the Pentagram corresponding to their Element.

Officers

ADEPTUS PRIMUS. White robe. White and gold nemyss. Role: *Osiris Onnophris*. Godform: *Ousiri*. ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲣⲓ

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS. Black over-robe, white robe. Black and gold nemyss. Role: *Isis*. Godform: *Ese*. ⲏⲥⲉ

ADEPTUS TERTIUS. White robe. Role: *Thôth*. Godform: *Thôouth*. ⲑⲱⲟⲩⲑ

ADEPTUS QUARTUS. White robe. Roles: *Nephthys, Queen Astartê*. Godform: *Nebethô*. ⲛⲉⲃⲑⲱ

ADEPTUS QUINTUS. White robe. Roles: *Anoubis, King Melkathros*. Godform: *Anoup*. ⲁⲛⲟⲩⲡ

ASSOCIATE ADEPT. Black robe. White over-robe available. Roles: *Prince Maneros, Prince Phoenix*. Godform: *Hôôrsiêse*. ⲫⲱⲣⲥⲓⲏⲥⲉ

AEROPHOROS. Black robe, yellow tabard. Role: *Paralda/Iôie Êô Aya*, King of the Air Elementals. Godform: *Ahathôôr*. ⲁⲫⲁⲑⲱⲣ

PYROPHOROS. Black robe, red tabard. Role: *Djin/Aphthalya*, King of the Fire Elementals. Godform: *Tharpesh*. ⲑⲁⲣⲡⲉϣ

GEOPHOROS. Black robe, white tabard. Role: *Ghob/Perêphia*, Queen of the Earth Elementals. Godform: *Hap Ouêr*. ⲫⲁⲡ ⲟⲩⲏⲣ

HYDROPHOROS. Black robe, blue tabard. Role: *Nichsa/Iôêdes*, Queen of the Water Elementals. Godform: *Thoum Moou*. ⲑⲟⲩⲙ ⲙⲟⲟⲩ

THE PILLAR OF OSIRIS

The Opening of the Hall

ADEPTUS PRIMUS knocks 1. All rise. Adeptus Primus elevates Sceptre.

ALL ADEPTI: HEKAS, HEKAS ESTE BEBELOI.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS traces Flaming Sword towards the West.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: Far, far from this Sacred Place be the profane. My Brother and Sister Magicians, join with me in word and will to open this Working of the Magic of Light.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS gives Sign of the Enterer towards the West, and remains in Sign.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: Let the Names of the Officers in this Working, together with the nature of their Offices be proclaimed, that the Powers whose Images they are may be re-awakened in the Spheres of the Officers and awakened in the Spheres of those present, for by Names and Images are all Powers awakened and re-awakened.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS gives the Sign of Silence. All are seated.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: Associate Adept, what is the nature of the Office which you hold for this Working?

ASSOCIATE ADEPT: (rises and remains standing). I serve as the Image of Manerôs, son of Astartê and Melkathros, and Prince of Gebal, the City in the East, where the Sun rises.

In the Opening and Closing of the Hall, I serve as the Officer of Elemental Earth.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: My Brother and Sister Officers, what are the names and natures of the Offices which you hold for this Working?

ADEPTUS QUINTUS: (rises and remains standing). I am Adeptus Quintus, the Fifth Adept. I serve as the Image of Anoubis, the Opener of the Ways. He whose Mystic Names

are Anoubis Psirinth, Barbaritha, Namazar, Sonktai, and Barouchambrê.

And I shall serve also as the Image of Melkathros, King of Gebal, the City in the East, where the Sun rises.[4]

In the Opening and Closing of the Hall, I serve as the Officer of Elemental Air.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS: (rises and remains standing). I am Adeptus Quartus, the Fourth Adept. I serve as the Image of Nephthys, the Dark Lady. She whose Mystic Names are Nephthys Neboutosoualêth, Aktiôphis, Phorbai, Aza, and Tenthênôr.

And I shall serve also as the Image of Astartê, Queen of Gebal, the City in the East, where the Sun rises.[4]

In the Opening and Closing of the Hall, I serve as the Officer of Elemental Water.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: (rises and remains standing). I am Adeptus Tertius, the Third Adept. I serve as the Image of Thôth, the Lord of Truth. He whose Mystic Names are Thôth Osomai, Thôth Alabakhabel, Thôth Thanasima, and Thôth Orthômenkhroôn, and Whose True Name, written in hieroglyphs in His sacred City of Hermopolis, is Osergariach Nomaphi.

In the Opening and Closing of the Hall, I serve as the Officer of Elemental Fire.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: (rises and remains standing). I am Adeptus Secundus, the Second Adept. I serve as the Image of Isis, Goddess of the Quest and its Completion, Discoverer of the Hidden Light. She whose Mystic Names are Isis Tharêsibath, Isis Ouêri, Isis Batharthar, Isis Athernebouni, and Isis Sothis.

In the Opening and Closing of the Hall, I serve as the Officer of Yesod and the Quintessence which unites the Four Elements into One under the Presidency of Spirit.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: (rises and remains standing). I am Adeptus Primus, the Chief Adept. I serve as the Image of Osiris,

the Justified One. He whose Mystic Names are Osiris Ousenarath, Ousir Setementh, Osarapi, Osiris Ouzathi, Osiris Chômasi, Osiris Arbiôthi, and Osiris Onnophris.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS knocks 1.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: Let the Five Elements be called, that the Powers of the Elements may assist us in our Rite.

FIVE OFFICERS go to their Pentagram Stations.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: (holding Fire Implement aloft, circumambulates sunwise to the South). When, after all the phantoms are banished, thou shalt see that holy and formless Fire, that Fire which darts and flashes through the hidden depths of the Universe. (Arriving in the South:) Hear thou the Voice of Fire!

In the Name of KYPHE (tracing Invoking Pentagram of Fire towards the South), and of ELOHIM (tracing Kerubic Sigil of Fire within the Pentagram), Spirits of Fire, Adore your Creator!

ADEPTUS TERTIUS stands in the Sign of the Philosophus until ADEPTUS SECUNDUS finishes Sign of the Rending of the Veil.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS: (holding Water Implement aloft, circumambulates sunwise to the West). First the Priestess who governeth the works of Fire must sprinkle with the lustral Water of the loud-resounding sea. (Arriving in the West:) Hear thou the Voice of Water!

In the Name of PARAKOUNÊTH (tracing Invoking Pentagram of Water towards the West), and of EL (tracing Kerubic Sigil of Water within the Pentagram), Spirits of Water, Adore your Creator!

ADEPTUS QUARTUS stands in the Sign of the Practicus until ADEPTUS SECUNDUS finishes Sign of the Rending of the Veil.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: (holding Air Implement aloft, circumambulates sunwise to the East). Such a Fire existeth, extending through the rushings of Air, or even a Fire formless whence

cometh the Image of a Voice, or even a flashing Light, abounding, revolving, whirling forth, crying aloud. (Arriving in the East:) Hear thou the Voice of Air!

In the Name of PSENABÔTH (tracing Invoking Pentagram of Air towards the West), and of YOD HEH VAV HEH (tracing Kerubic Sigil of Air within the Pentagram), Spirits of Air, Adore your Creator!

ADEPTUS TERTIUS stands in the Sign of the Theoricus until ADEPTUS SECUNDUS finishes Sign of the Rending of the Veil.

ASSOCIATE ADEPT: (holding Earth Implement aloft, circumambulates sunwise to the North). For the Creator worked the All with Her own hands so that the World-Body might be fully completed, and the World might be visible and not seem ethereal. (Arriving in the North:) Hear thou the Voice of Earth!

In the Name of THÔZOPITHÊ (tracing Invoking Pentagram of Earth towards the North), and of ADONAI (tracing Kerubic Sigil of Earth within the Pentagram), Spirits of Earth, Adore your Creator!

ASSOCIATE ADEPT stands in the Sign of the Zelator until ADEPTUS SECUNDUS finishes Sign of the Rending of the Veil.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: (holding Spirit Implement aloft, circumambulates Altar sunwise). There is a Fifth in the Middle, another Channel of Light, where the Life-bearing Light descends as far as the Material Channels. (Arriving in the back at the West of the Altar facing East:) Hear thou the Voice of Spirit!

In the Name of AGRAMMACHAMEREI (tracing Invoking Pentagram of Spirit Active above Altar towards the East), and of EHEIEH (tracing Wheel Sigil of Spirit within the Pentagram), Spirits of the Quintessence, Adore your Creator!

In the Name of BARBÊLÔ (tracing Invoking Pentagram of Spirit Passive above Altar towards the East), and of AGLA (tracing Wheel Sigil of Spirit within the Pentagram), Spirits of the Five Elements, Adore your Creator!

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS gives the Sign of the Rending of the Veil, and then stands in the resulting Sign of the Cross. FOUR OTHER OFFICERS remain in their Grade Signs until ADEPTUS SECUNDUS ceases Sign of the Cross.

> *ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: (still standing in Sign of the Cross). In the Name and by the Letters of the Mystic Pentagrammaton, which binds together the Four Elements into One under the presidency of Spirit, I invoke Ye, Ye Divine Forces of the Spirit of Life!*
>
> *INOUTHÔ AKROUROBORE ACHTHÔNÔN, ZANZEMIA ATHÊZOPHÔIM THÊNÔR TABARAÔTH, LAILAM. ABLANATHANALBA.*
>
> *I invoke Ye, Ye Gods and Angels of the Celestial Spheres, Whose dwelling is in the Invisible. Ye are the Guardians of the Gates of the Universe; be Ye also the Watchers over our Mystic Rite. Keep far removed the evil. Strengthen and inspire the Magicians assembled here that we may preserve unsullied this Abode of the Mysteries of the Eternal Gods. Let this Place be pure and holy so that we may enter in and become partakers of the Secrets of the Divine Light.*

THE FIVE OFFICERS cease their Grade Signs. ALL perform the Qabalistic Cross.

> *ALL: ATAH MALKUTH VEGEVURAH VEGEDULAH LEOLAM. AMEN.*

ADEPTUS PRIMUS stands between Pillars facing West. ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS go to the East and stand before their respective Pillars (Isis before White, Nephthys before Black).

ADEPTUS PRIMUS faces East, and with the Djed Sceptre, traces invoking Hexagrams of Tiphereth.

> *ADEPTUS PRIMUS: YOD HEH VAV HEH ELOAH VADAATH. ARARITA. RESH. SEMESILAM. AEEIOUO. IOTA.*

ADEPTUS PRIMUS traces invoking Triangle within Hexagram.

> *ADEPTUS PRIMUS: IAO.*

ADEPTUS PRIMUS turns once more to face West. ADEPTUS SECUNDUS gives him the Crook. ADEPTUS QUARTUS gives him the Scourge. ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS raise the Golden Middle Pillar in front of ADEPTUS PRIMUS, concealing him.

Then the FIVE OFFICERS return to the Thrones in the West.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: I declare this Working of the Magic of Light open in the Name of the Ruler of the Universe, who works in Silence and whom naught but Silence can express.

ASSOCIATE ADEPT knocks ז.
ADEPTUS QUINTUS knocks ז.
ADEPTUS QUARTUS knocks ז.
ADEPTUS TERTIUS knocks ז.
ADEPTUS SECUNDUS knocks ז.
ADEPTUS PRIMUS knocks מ מ ז.

First Point: The Wanderings of Isis

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS knocks ז. ADEPTUS TERTIUS rises.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: The First Point: The Wanderings of Isis.

It came to pass that through the Power of Typhon the Destroyer and Death the Transformer, Osiris passed from the world of humankind, and He was sorely missed, and none knew where He was to be found. So the Lady Isis determined in Her heart that She would find the Hidden God.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS stands and assumes the black Over-Robe and Veil.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: And She put on the semblance of a mortal woman, and went before Thôth, the Lord of Truth.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: O Lord of Truth, I will go forth in the wide world to seek the Truth concerning the Hidden God, who is Osiris, my Beloved.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: Then Nephthys, Thy Sister, will accompany Thee, and You may follow Your Guide, Anubis the Opener of the Ways, who will lead You through the Elements in Quest for Osiris.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Let Me enter the Path of Air; peradventure there shall I find Osiris.[5]

ADEPTUS QUINTUS leads, followed by ADEPTUS SECUNDUS, then ADEPTUS QUARTUS. The AEROPHOROS steps forward, barring ADEPTUS SECUNDUS.

AEROPHOROS: Thou canst not pass by me, saith the Guardian of Air, unless thou canst tell me my Name.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Yôie Êô Aya is thy Name, and also Paralda art thou called, King of the Spirits of Elemental Air.

AEROPHOROS: Thou hast known me, Lady, so speak that we may know how the Sylphs of the Air may serve Thee.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: I seek Osiris the Living Soul of Air, Him who breathest the Breath of his Beloved Isis. Is my Beloved Brother to be found in the realm of the Sylphs? Is Osiris in the embrace of the Air?

AEROPHOROS: Nay, Goddess; for many a year did Pharaoh Osiris breathe the sweet Air, but no more. Return Thou whence Thou came.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS make the Sign of Mourning.

SYLPHS: Return Thou whence Thou came; He is not to be found in the realms of Air.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS cease the Sign of Mourning.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: May the blessings of IAO be upon You.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS, ADEPTUS SECUNDUS, ADEPTUS QUARTUS, and ADEPTUS TERTIUS return to the West.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Let me enter the Path of Fire; peradventure there shall I find Osiris.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS leads, followed by ADEPTUS SECUNDUS. The PYROPHOROS steps forward, barring Adeptus Secundus.

PYROPHOROS: Thou canst not pass by me, saith the Guardian of Fire, unless thou canst tell me my Name.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Aphthalya is thy Name, and also Djin art thou called, King of the Spirits of Elemental Fire.

PYROPHOROS: Thou hast known me, Lady, so speak that we may know how the Salamanders of the Fire may serve Thee.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: I seek Osiris the Living Soul of Fire, Him whose Heart is Hidden Fire. Is my Beloved Brother to be found in the realm of the Salamanders? Is Osiris in the embrace of the Fire?

PYROPHOROS: Nay, Goddess; for many a year did Pharaoh Osiris warm Himself before the Fires of the Palace, but no more. Return Thou whence Thou came.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS make the Sign of Mourning.

SALAMANDERS: Return Thou whence Thou came; He is not to be found in the realms of Fire.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS cease the Sign of Mourning.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: May the blessings of IAO be upon You.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS, ADEPTUS SECUNDUS, ADEPTUS QUARTUS, and ADEPTUS TERTIUS return to the West.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Let me enter the Path of Earth; peradventure there shall I find Osiris.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS: leads, followed by Adeptus Secundus. The Geophoros steps forward, barring Adeptus Secundus.

GEOPHOROS: Thou canst not pass by me, saith the Guardian of Earth, unless thou canst tell me my Name.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Perêphia is thy Name, and also Ghob art thou called, Queen of the Spirits of Elemental Earth.

GEOPHOROS: Thou hast known me, Lady, so speak that we may know how the Gnomes of the Earth may serve Thee.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: I seek Osiris the Living Soul of Earth, Him who taught the Races of Humankind to till the Land. Is my Beloved Brother to be found in the realm of the Gnomes? Is Osiris in the embrace of the Earth?

GEOPHOROS: Nay, Goddess; for many a year did Pharaoh Osiris tread the broad Earth, but no more. Return Thou whence Thou came.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS make the Sign of Mourning.

GNOMES: Return Thou whence Thou came; He is not to be found in the realms of Earth.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS cease the Sign of Mourning.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: May the blessings of IAO be upon You.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS, ADEPTUS SECUNDUS, ADEPTUS QUARTUS, and ADEPTUS TERTIUS return to the West.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Let Me enter the Path of Water; peradventure there shall I find Osiris.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS leads, followed by ADEPTUS SECUNDUS. The HYDROPHOROS steps forward, barring ADEPTUS SECUNDUS.

HYDROPHOROS: Thou canst not pass by me, saith the Guardian of Water, unless thou canst tell me my Name.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Iôêdes is thy Name, and also Nichsa art thou called, Queen of the Spirits of Elemental Water.

HYDROPHOROS: Thou hast known me, Lady, so speak that we may know how the Undines of the Water may serve Thee.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: I seek Osiris the Living Soul of Water, Him who causes the Sacred Inundation to Rise. Is my Beloved Brother to be found in the realm of the Undines? Is Osiris in the embrace of the Waters?

HYDROPHOROS: Nay, Goddess; for many a year did Pharaoh Osiris drink the cool Waters, but no more. And though He lay in the bosom of the Waters, He is there no more.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Osiris was in the bosom of the Waters?

HYDROPHOROS: Yes, Goddess. Locked in a beautiful Ark or Pastos, Pharaoh Osiris was given to the Great River by His brother and Thine, the Red God, Typhon. For three days and three nights Osiris lay under the waters of the River until the current carried Him out to the Great Green Sea, and thence He left the embrace of the Waters, and passed on into the East. He is in the Waters no more. Return Thou whence Thou came.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS make the Sign of Mourning.

UNDINES: Return Thou whence Thou came; He is not to be found in the realms of Water.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS cease the Sign of Mourning.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: May the blessings of IAO be upon You.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS, ADEPTUS SECUNDUS, ADEPTUS QUARTUS and ADEPTUS TERTIUS return to the West.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Thôth, Lord of Truth, Mightiest of Magicians, Father of the Mysteries, my beloved Brother is not in the Air, the Fire, the Water, or the Earth. This riddle I cannot solve, this Mystery does not reveal itself to my heart, so I will go forth into the Mystic East to seek the Truth concerning Osiris.

ALL are seated.

Second Point: The Phoenix of Osiris

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS knocks 1. ADEPTUS TERTIUS rises.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: The Second Point: The Phoenix of Osiris.

It came to pass that Isis and the Gods in Her company sought for the Concealed God through many lands, until

they came at last to Syria, and to Gebal, the City in the East where the Sun rises.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS rises at her Throne.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: The rulers of Gebal were King Melkathros and Queen Astartê, and their son was Prince Maneros.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS, ADEPTUS QUARTUS, and ASSOCIATE ADEPT rise and go to the East. All three stand facing West, ADEPTUS QUINTUS before the White Pillar, Adeptus Quartus before the Black Pillar, and ASSOCIATE ADEPT before the Middle Pillar.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: The daughters of the royal court saw Isis in the city, and were struck with Her beauty and grace, Her knowledge and wisdom. And when Melkathros and Astartê were told of this godlike stranger who had arrived in their city, they called Her to their court.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS goes to the Spirit Altar.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS: Lady, word has reached our ears of your beauty and grace, and that thou art Mistress of all Arts.

ADEPTUS QUINTAS: And word has reached our ears of your knowledge and wisdom, and that thou art Mistress of all Sciences.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS: Let our son be as your son, that you may nurture him in all the arts and sciences, that he may become a Man righteous and true, who shall be glad in his heart, and who shall rejoice in a full life.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS: Let our son be as your son, that you may nurture him in all the arts and sciences, that he may become a King righteous and true, who shall make his people glad in their hearts, and who shall cause his people to rejoice in full lives.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: It shall be as you will it. Let your son be as my son, and I shall nurture and strengthen him with such Light as is mine.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS extends her hands, and ASSOCIATE ADEPT comes forward and takes them. ADEPTUS QUINTUS goes from White Pillar to stand by South wall of Hall, and ADEPTUS QUARTUS goes from Black Pillar to stand at North wall.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS leads ASSOCIATE ADEPT clockwise during the following speech of ADEPTUS TERTIUS. At each of the Four Arms (Water, Fire, Earth, Air), ADEPTUS SECUNDUS places the Elemental Implement in the hand of ASSOCIATE ADEPT, and he traces a Cross towards that Angle.

> *ADEPTUS TERTIUS: And Isis took Maneros to Her heart, and She taught him in the arts and sciences, and in all the ways of the four Elements, and he grew in grace and beauty, in knowledge and wisdom. But the Prince was not satisfied, and was restless in his heart, for though he loved the Four Elements, he was drawn to seek the Light of the Spirit, and he knew not where to find it.*

After the Air Angle, ADEPTUS SECUNDUS remains at the Angle and ASSOCIATE ADEPT goes to the centre.

> *ADEPTUS TERTIUS: All night in his chamber Maneros poured out his prayers and supplications to the Gods, beseeching them that they might send him an Omen, a Sign to guide him in his Quest for the Light.*

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS goes to the East before the Middle Pillar.

> *ADEPTUS TERTIUS: And as Maneros finished his prayers before the Gods, behold the Morning Star rose in the Heaven to the East, and Maneros saw it and rejoiced and said:*
>
> *ASSOCIATE ADEPT: The Gods have heard my voice, for this Star is a Messenger, and the Herald of the Light of the great Day.*

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS removes Black Over-Robe and Veil.

> *ADEPTUS TERTIUS: And behold, the heaven split apart at the Morning Star, and an ineffable Light appeared.*

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS advances to the East side of the Spirit Altar.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Behold, thy prayer hath moved me to reveal myself to thee.

For I am the Goddess of the Quest and Its Completion. She who is the Natural Mother of All Things, Mistress and Ruler of All the Elements, the First Progeny of the Ages, Chief of the Powers Divine, First among Those that dwell in Heaven. I am both One Alone and She who is Manifest in all the Gods and Goddesses. At my Will the planets of the heavens revolve, the winds of the seas blow, and the grain of the fields springs forth.

My Name is adored throughout all the world in divers manners and by variable customs. For I am She who is known by Many Names.

Among the Phrygians, that most ancient race, I am called Mother of the Gods. The people of Athens, sprung from their own soil, call me Kekropian Athene. The sailors of Cyprus, girt by the sea, call me foam-born Aphrodite, and the arrow-bearing hunters of Crete name me Dictynna. The inhabitants of Sicily, speaking their three languages, call me Persephonê. The Hierophants of Eleusis, their ancient Goddess Dêmêtêr. Others call me Hera and warlike Artemis. Some call me Hekatê or Fate. But those Ethiopians who dwell in Meroë and are enlightened by the rays of the Dawn, and the priests of Egypt, who are foremost in the perennial doctrines, and who worship me with my ancient ceremonies, it is they who call me by my True Name: Queen Isis.

Take courage, Maneros, for I have heard thy prayer, and behold, from this day thou shalt be made and formed anew, and reborn, and thou shalt eat the bread of life and drink the cup of immortality, and be anointed with the ointment of incorruptibility.

For I am Isis, the Goddess of the Quest and its Completion, and I too seek a Hidden Light. I seek the Light of my Beloved Osiris, and my bright love and my dark mourning together blind my Mystic Vision. It is the Work of those who would rise to the Knowledge of the Light to offer their lives in service. Therefore when I raise thee above the Elements as a God, thou

mayest begin thy Work of service, for thou shalt see and skry for me the Hidden Place where I may find Osiris.

The Rebirth of the Phoenix

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Before thee is the Altar of Spirit. If thou art willing, in service and in sacrifice, to offer the purified powers of thy self, draw nigh.

ASSOCIATE ADEPT advances to stand west of Spirit Altar facing East. Adeptus Secundus comes sunwise about the Altar to stand close behind ASSOCIATE ADEPT, also facing East.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Freely and of full purpose and with understanding, dost thou offer thyself upon the Altar of the Spirit?

ASSOCIATE ADEPT: I do.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Then know, O Aspirant, that within thy heart is prepared a pure oblation, a perfect sacrifice. Read in thine own heart the pass-phrase that shall admit thee to these Mysteries.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS extends the arms of ASSOCIATE ADEPT in the Sign of the Cross.

ASSOCIATE ADEPT: I desire to know in order to serve.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Thou hast the pass-phrase. Know therefore that the Soul of Osiris has from ancient days been called the Bennu, or the Phoenix, and know also that from the first beginings of Humankind, the God has concealed that Phoenix in every human heart. There is within you the image of that immortal bird which comes to the threshold of mortality, and then sacrificing the perfected Elements of its own being in the Transforming Fire of Spirit, it brings itself to Rebirth.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS traces a Fire Triangle upon ASSOCIATE ADEPT with the Lamp.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: But Queen Astartê, passing by the chamber, beheld Isis baptizing her son in the Fires, and

fearing his loss, she baptized him in the Waters, that he should not be born away.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS comes from the North, and traces a Water Triangle upon ASSOCIATE ADEPT with the Cup.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: You have prevented me from making your son a God. And it is just and right that you have done so, for in my divine love for him, I would have transgressed against your human love. I would have stolen him away from you to the realms of the Gods.

Rather now, if thou will, he shall be the child of two mothers. You shall be his outer mother, and I shall be his Inner Mother. He shall be the Child of Heaven and of Earth. He shall be the Adept, the Initiate of the Mysteries who shall in his own self connect that which is below with that which is above, the Terrestrial with the Celestial, the Human with the Divine.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS traces a Cross upon ASOCIATE ADEPT with the Lamp.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS: Let it be so.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS traces a Cross upon ASSOCIATE ADEPT with the Cup. ADEPTUS SECUNDUS circumambulates ASSOCIATE ADEPT three times during the following speech, circulating the energy through his Sphere.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Thou art the Child, Noute Ankh, the Living God, Onnophre, the Beautiful One. Hôros Harpokratês Harsiêsi Harsamôsi Harendôthes, Alkib Ai Dagennouth Raracharai Abraiaôth Iaô.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS vibrates the thirty-six-letter Name into the top of the head of ASSOCIATE ADEPT.

I know Thee for Who Thou art in Thy Most Secret Name of thirty-six letters: (vibrating:) ACHAIPHÔTHÔTH-IAÔ-AÔI-ÔIA-AIÔ-IÔA-ÔAI-THÔTHÔPHIACHA.[6]

ASSOCIATE ADEPT: I am merged in the God; I am become He. I am the Image of the Child, Noute Ankh, the Living God, the One who sits upon the Lotus and enlightens the whole World.

Him whose Mystic Names are Hôros Harpokratês Alkib Harsamôsi Iaô Ai Dagennouth Raracharai Abraiaôth.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS clothe ASSOCIATE ADEPT in the White Over-Robe.

The Finding of Osiris

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: I reveal to thee one of the great Truths of the Mysteries: If thou wouldst see God, thou must become as God.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS leads ASSOCIATE ADEPT sunwise about the Altar to the East, with ADEPTUS QUARTUS following. ADEPTUS SECUNDUS stands before the White Pillar, ASSOCIATE ADEPT before the Middle Pillar, and ADEPTUS QUARTUS before the Black Pillar, ASSOCIATE ADEPT remaining all the while in the Sign of the Cross.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS comes to the Spirit Altar and gets the Lecanomantic[7] Vessel, and brings it sunwise about the Altar. ADEPTUS TERTIUS kneels before ASSOCIATE ADEPT, and holds the Vessel so that ASSOCIATE ADEPT may see into it.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Now I ask thee, in the spirit of service and sacrifice, to see with new eyes, illumined with the Light of the Phoenix which burns in thy heart, and let these pure and limpid waters serve as the Mirror of Truth.

Answer me this riddle: My beloved Brother is not in the Air, the Fire, the Water, or the Earth. Where then may He be?

ASSOCIATE ADEPT: While the Wheel revolves, the Hub is still. Seek ever then the Centre; look from without to Within. He is not among the Four Elements, for He has passed into the Fifth Element of Spirit, which unites the Four into One. I see reflected in the Mirror of Truth the Middle Pillar which stands behind us. It is there that the answer lies.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS: And the beautiful Pillar spoke to them and said: "The Holy Body of Osiris was washed up on the shore, where I was the seed of an Erica Tree. Illumined with the beauty of the God, I grew in a single sunrise to full growth, embracing with my living wood the Ark, the Pastos, which

held the God. Thus He passed into Spirit, that is, into a living thing. Then King Melkathros coming by, beheld my beauty, and I was hewn and borne hither to serve as a Middle Pillar for the Royal Palace. And Osiris still dwells within me."[8]

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Let the Divine Light descend.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS (kneels and vibrates): I.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS (kneels and vibrates): A.

ASSOCIATE ADEPT (kneels and vibrates): O.

The gold Middle Pillar is lowered, revealing ADEPTUS PRIMUS with Crook, Scourge, and Djed standing in the Sign of Osiris Risen.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those that believe in me, though they were dead, yet shall they live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. I am the First and I am the Last. I am He that liveth and was dead and, behold, I am alive forevermore, and hold the Keys of the Underworld and of Death.

I have passed through the Gates of Darkness unto Light. I am the Sun in His Rising. I am Osiris Onnophris, the Justified One. There is no part of me that is not of the Gods. I am the Preparer of the Way, the Rescuer unto the Light.

Bring before me the one whom Thou hast named my Son this day.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS and ADEPTUS QUARTUS rise, and raise ASSOCIATE ADEPT to his feet, supporting his arms in the Sign of the Cross. ADEPTUS TERTIUS returns the Vessel to the Altar, and goes to stand by the North wall.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: From this day forward, your name shall be Prince Maneros no longer, but Prince Phoenix, in token that the glory of the Bennu-Phoenix, the Soul of Osiris, has been born in your heart. And on the day when you shall take the throne as rightful King, this land shall be known as Phoenicia. And you shall have children, Kadmos and Europê, who shall bear these Mysteries of Egypt and Phoenicia to Greece and Crete to be joined with the Mysteries celebrated there. And the

Western Mystery Tradition will grow strong from this sharing of the Light, and will preserve the Mysteries for thousands of years, that the Light may be kindled in the hearts of Initiates at the Dawning of Aeons yet unborn.

These are the words of the Oracle of Osiris Onnophris, which ye have received from the Place of Balanced Power, from the Mouth of Osir Mêekheru, He whose Voice is Truth.

Adeptus Secundus and *Adeptus Quartus* fold the arms of *Associate Adept* in the Sign of Osiris Risen, and bring him sunwise to the West of the Altar, still facing West.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: *Behold Him, Ye Gods, this Godlike Spirit whom Osiris hath made into His Son, whom Isis hath made into Her Child, to whom is given the praise due unto the Gods. Come, behold Him who hath come forth in peace, having been Justifed.*

ADEPTUS TERTIUS and ADEPTUS QUINTUS join the others West of the Altar.

The Repast of the Phoenix

ALL turn East to face ADEPTUS PRIMUS.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: *I give ye a Sacramental Mystery, that the Phoenix Fire may be brought to life in the hearts of all who are prepared to receive it.*

For Osiris Onnophris, who is found perfect before the Gods, hath said: These are the Elements of my Body, perfected through suffering, glorified through trial. For the scent of the dying Rose is as the repressed sigh of my suffering. And the flame-red Fire as the energy of mine undaunted will. And the Cup of Honey Wine is the pouring out of the blood of my heart, sacrificed unto regeneration, unto the newer life. And the bread cakes are as the foundations of my Body, which I destroy in order that they may be renewed.

For I am Osiris Triumphant, even Osiris Onnophris, the Justified. I am He who is clothed with the Body of flesh, yet in whom is the Spirit of the Great Gods. I am the Lord of Life, triumphant over death; those who partake with me shall arise

with me. I am the Manifestor in Matter of Those whose Abode is in the Invisible. I am purified. I stand upon the Universe, and I am its Reconciler with the Eternal Gods. I am the Perfector of Matter, and without me the Universe is not.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS then takes the Elements as Hierophant from West of Spirit Altar. ADEPTUS PRIMUS does not hand them to her; he stands in the Sign of Osiris Slain as she takes them herself.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: I invite you to inhale with me the Perfume of this Rose as a Symbol of Air. To feel with me the warmth of this sacred Fire. To eat with me these Cakes of bread as types of Earth. And finally (makes cross towards East with Cup) to drink with me this Wine, consecrated Emblem of Elemental Water.

Adeptus Secundus then comes East of the Spirit Altar, and administers the Repast in silence to ADEPTUS TERTIUS, ADEPTUS QUARTUS, ADEPTUS QUINTUS, and ASSOCIATE ADEPT.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Do Ye Four as the Lord Osiris hath said, and in this Sanctuary of the Light which embraces and transcends all times and places, bear this Repast of the Mystery of the Phonix forth, and share the Light with those Magicians who stand at the golden Dawn of a new millenium and a New Age.

Anubis then takes four of the five Roses from the Spirit Altar, placing one at each of the four Elemental Altars. Thoth follows behind Anubis, taking four of the five Lamps to the four Elemental Altars. Phoenix follows, taking the remaining Cakes to the Altars. Finally, Nephthys brings the four filled Chalices to the four Elemental Altars. Then, the Four return to the Spirit Altar, and each brings a Spirit Censer to his or her Elemental Altar.

The four Elemental Kings/Queens receive first from the Four. Then they administer to next four, etc. Four people (designated in advance) are last. Together the last four invert Chalices and say:

It is finished.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: May the Sacramental Mystery of which ye have partaken sustain and nurture you in your Quest for

the Quintessence, the Lapis Philosophorum, True Wisdom, Perfect Happiness, the Summum Bonum.

ALL sit.

Closing of the Hall

Adeptus Primus knocks 1.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: My Brother and Sister Magicians, join with me in word and will to close this Working of the Magic of Light.

ALL rise and face East.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS (orant): Not unto us, but unto Thy Name be the glory, who hath allowed us to penetrate thus far into the Sanctuary of Thy sacred Mysteries.

ALL: Amen.

Adeptus Primus, facing East, makes Banishing Hexagrams of Tiphereth, then traces Banishing Triangle within Hexagram.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS (tracing Triangle): IAO.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS faces West. FIVE OFFICERS come to their Pentagram Stations.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: In the Power of the Tetragrammaton, in the Might of the Pentagrammaton, and by the Word Eth, Spirits of the Five Elements, adore your Creator.

Pause in silent Adoration.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS: Depart ye in peace unto your Habitations.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS (tracing Banishing Fire Pentagram): YOD. (Stands in Philosophus Sign until Adeptus Secundus finishes Sign of Closing of the Veil.)

ADEPTUS QUARTUS (tracing Banishing Water Pentagram): HEH. (Stands in Practicus Sign until Adeptus Secundus finishes Sign of Closing of the Veil.)

ADEPTUS QUINTUS (tracing Banishing Air Pentagram): VAV. (Stands in Theoricus Sign until Adeptus Secundus finishes Sign of Closing of the Veil.)

ASSOCIATE ADEPT (tracing Banishing Earth Pentagram): HEH. (Stands in Zelator Sign until Adeptus Secundus finishes Sign of Closing of the Veil.)

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS (tracing two forms of Banishing Spirit Pentagram): SHIN. (Gives Sign of Closing of the Veil.)

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS (as ALL FIVE OFFICERS trace Sign of Rose Cross towards their Elements). May the blessings of Yeheshuah be upon you. Be there peace between us and you, and be ye ready to come when ye are called!

SIX OFFICERS return to their Thrones in the West. They stand in the Sign of the Cross.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS (tracing Triangle): IAO.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS (tracing Calvary Cross): Yeheshuah.

SIX OFFICERS (together): Such are the Words.

ALL cease standing in the Sign of the Cross.

ASSOCIATE ADEPT knocks ו.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS knocks ו.

ADEPTUS QUARTUS knocks ו.

ADEPTUS TERTIUS knocks ו.

ADEPTUS SECUNDUS knocks ו.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS knocks ש ש ו.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS elevates Sceptre.

SIX OFFICERS (together): Tetelestai.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS: The Formula is complete. I declare this working of the Magic of Light closed in the Name of the Ruler of the Universe, who works in Silence and whom naught but Silence can express.

Continue forward each upon the Path of Light as thou hast begun, and may Great Isis be thy support and aid.

ADEPTUS PRIMUS knocks ٩.

ADEPTUS QUINTUS goes to Door, and supervises exit. ALL exit in this order: GEOPHOROS leading GNOMES, AEROPHOROS leading SYLPHS, HYDROPHOROS leading UNDINES, PYROPHOROS leading SALAMANDERS, ASSOCIATE ADEPT, ADEPTUS QUINTUS, ADEPTUS QUARTUS, ADEPTUS TERTIUS, ADEPTUS SECUNDUS, ADEPTUS PRIMUS.

Endnotes

[1] Syncretic Ritual. For the textual detectives among the readers, let me note that there are significant quotations adapted from various Order rituals, several Greek and Coptic Magical papyri, *Joseph and Asenath*, and the aretalogy of the Isis epiphany in the *Metamorphoses* (aka *The Golden Ass*) of Apuleius.

[2] Epaphos. The name Epaphos is apparently, like Apis, a Græcized form of the Egyptian Hapi. The character of Epaphos appears to be a peculiar merging of Osiris and Hôros.

[3] The Fiery Birth. The snatching of the infant God from his burning Mother's womb occurred at Thebes, the Greek city founded by Kadmos, the father of Semelê and the son of our ritual's Prince Phoenix. Also, note that this same fiery birth story was told of another major Greek Saviour, Asklêpios.

[4] Melkathros and Astartê. Greek mythology records several versions of the names of the king and queen of Gebal (the Phoenician name of the city the Greeks called Byblos); those selected for this ritual are those which are the most mythologically potent. Astartê is of course the great Semitic Goddess known as *Ishtar*, *Ashtar*, and *Ashtoreth*; Melkathros is *Melqart*, the "King of the City," the Royal God honoured especially at the great Phonician seaports of Tzur (Tyre) and Gebal (Byblos). Melqart, interestingly, found his way into the Greek mythic tradition at least twice: as King Melkathros of Byblos and again as *Melikertês*, the sacrificed child (and, like Dionysos, grandson of the Phoenician Kadmos) who became the God Palaimon, later identified with the Roman God of Seaports, Portunus.

[5] The Elemental Encounters. The order of the Elemental encounters in the Wanderings of Isis is the order of the Elemental Repast (Air, Fire, Earth, Water).

[6] The Great Secret Name of Hôros. The most interesting of the Barbarous Names in the ritual is this Great Secret Name of Hôros utilized at the climax of the Initiation. The Name consists of thirty-six letters, one for each Decan (10^{o} arc) of the Zodiac. Sort of a half-sized Græco-Egyptian equivalent of the Qabalistic *Shem haMephorash*, the seventy-two-letter

Divine Name which has a letter for each Quinance (5° arc) of the Zodiac. The Hôros Name comes from one of the Magical Papyri (*PGM iv*), where the scribe records an imperfect form of the Name. He knows there is something wrong with it, so at the end of the text, he gives two other versions of the Name he has collected, both of which are also wrong in other ways. But the Name is easily corrected through the application of the Naming Formulæ of the Ptolemaic period: The first nine letters and the last nine letters are a palindrome of *Achaiphôthôth*. The middle eighteen letters are meant to be the six possible permutations of the Trigrammaton Iaê, which can also be arranged to produce the whole Name as a perfect thirty-six-letter palindrome:

ΑΧΑΙΦΩΘΩΘΑΙΗΙΗΑΗΑΙΙΑΗΑΗΙΗΙΑΘΩΘΩΦΙΑΧΑ.

For *The Pillar of Osiris*, the pivotal Inner Order Trigrammaton *Iaô* has been restored in place of *Iaê*, thus:

ΑΧΑΙΦΩΘΩΘΑΙΩΙΩΑΩΑΙΙΑΩΑΩΙΩΙΑΘΩΘΩΦΙΑΧΑ.

[7] Lecanomancy (from Gk. *lekanomanteia*): "Bowl Divination." A Demotic Magical Papyrus with a lecanomantic divinatory ritual specifies that it is the form of Divination which Isis used when searching for Osiris.

The use of an "innocent child" (interpreted here as a newly reborn Initiate in the God-form of Hôros the Child of Tiphereth) as a skryer can be found from Late Antique Egypt (the Papyri) through the Middle Ages (Abramelin) to the twentieth century (Hockley and the Fratres Lucis).

[8] The Pillar of Osiris. Like Jesus on the Cross, like Christian Rosenkreuz in the Pastos, like Adam Qadmon on the Tree of Life, like Prometheus on the Stone, Osiris in the Erica Tree as the Middle Pillar of the Palace is a personification of the Mystery of Tiphereth.

The Pillar is a uniquely appropriate symbol for our use in this ritual. It is believed that the pillar was a creation of Egyptian sacred architecture, which the Phonicians adopted along with many other characteristics of Egyptian religion and religious architecture, and combined them with their native traditions to create a new form of Temple. Their pattern consisted of a three-part Temple, with an Outer Court, a Sanctuary, and a Holy of Holies. The Outer Court had two Pillars flanking the entrance to the Sanctuary (no doubt based on the great Egyptian Pylons). This Phoenician pattern clearly influenced the Hebrews when they designed their Tabernacle and later the Temple of Solomon. This influence is acknowledged by the tradition in the *Tanakh* (the Old Testament) that Hiram King of Tyre (more properly Churam King of Tzur) sent Phonician artisans, including the Master Architect Hiram (known in the Masonic Tradition as Hiram Abiff), to aid Solomon in the creation of the Israeli Temple.

About The Author

Adam Forrest has been a practicing Magician since the age of sixteen, and a practitioner of the Golden Dawn system of Rosicrucian Magic for twenty years. He has contributed material to Francis Israel Regardie's *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic* (1984), and to Chic and Sandra Tabatha Cicero's *Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple* (1992) and *The Golden Dawn Journal I: Divination* (1994). He and his wife and partner Isidora Forrest direct the lecture and ritual program of the Hermetic Society. Adam is also a professional illustrator and graphic designer.

Hermes Thoth

Invocation of Hermes Trismegistus and the Vision of the Poimandres

Two Ritual Pathworkings

Oz

The possession of Knowledge, unless accompanied by a manifestation and expression in Action, is like the hoarding of precious metals—a vain and foolish thing. Knowledge, like Wealth, is intended for Use. The Law of Use is Universal, and he who violates it suffers by reason of his conflict with natural forces.

—The Kybalion[1]

Many super-heroes of times past rose to the level of virtual divine beings by bringing to earth qualities that outshone a common mortal's abilities. The Greeks handled explanations for this situation with their usual charming mythical efficiency. They tell legends of unique humans who attracted the attention of the gods, and by beauty, strength, or courage won for themselves a place of immortality in Olympus. Many a goddess earned her place by "sleeping in the right places," and many gods by defeating particularly annoying monsters. Other cultures as well speak of great leaders who first lived on earth as humans, then attained a status far beyond that of ordinary mortals. Such a one was Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent of the Aztecs, who began as a great priest and political leader. Some even say that "Quetzalcoatl" was a title rather than a name, since the deeds attributed to him defy explanation except as the accumulated feats of successive priest-kings. Pele, the fiery goddess of Polynesia, is the source of more legends in Hawaii than any other local deity. Some say that originally she was a mortal woman of outstanding ambition, strength, and challenging fieriness, and that her spirit grew into that of the goddess who lives today in the erupting volcano. Merlin, Mary, Jesus, and Kuan Yin are all beings of divinity who once lived as humans.

Hermes Trismegistus belongs to this elite group. We believe that he was a once a mortal being, yet he also enjoys the status of god-hood. Who was he? History cannot tell us. He is indeed so far removed in time that we have few if any remaining colorful legends about his life and exploits. What lives on are his writings and teachings, and these in and of themselves stand as evidence of an inspiring source whose voice is

still being heard after thousands of years. Some writers equate Hermes Trismegistus with the Egyptian god Thoth, ruler of thought and writing. Other sources attribute him as the god Hermes, the Greek messenger of the gods. As with the great priest-kings of other cultures, his name may be a title that combines into one legend the legacies of more than one leader. The writings attributed to him are possibly the works of a number of his students, or of many priests and teachers who all wrote under his name.

Hermes Trismegistus, the "thrice-greatest intelligencer," was called "Mercurius ter Maximus," for having perfect and exact knowledge of all things contained in the world. As well as a great spiritual teacher and author, he was king of Egypt.[2] Turnebus, in 1554, described Hermes as an Egyptian who existed before Moses, and who traveled the world over as a teacher carrying wisdom of the Divinity.[3] His identification with the Egyptian god Thoth, Tahuti or Tut,[4] links him to the deity who brought knowledge of writing and all manner of learning into the world. Hermes Trismegistus said of himself that he was the son of Saturn, who according to historians lived in the time of Sarug, Abraham's great-grandfather.[5] There is argument as to whether this Hermes lived before or after Moses. P. B. Randolph points out that Moses was learned in the arts of Egypt, such as writing, a skill Hermes Trismegistus reputedly initiated into this world.[6]

Writing was apparently his forte. Some believe that Hermes was Enoch, to whom was delivered the tablets of the ancient secret language of the Angels, which we know as Enochian.[7] Iamblichus said that Hermes wrote twenty-two thousand books, bringing medicine, chemistry, law, art, astrology, music, rhetoric, magic, philosophy, geography, mathematics, geometry, anatomy, and oratory into the awareness of the mortal world.[8] It is possible that many renowned ancient students and teachers were directly or indirectly influenced by the original Hermetic teachings and writings. Besides Moses, Pythagoras and Plato traveled to Memphis and Thebes to learn the Egyptian mysteries, perhaps the very mysteries expounded in the original books of Hermes.[9]

Francis Barrett said of the thrice-great Hermes, *"...if God ever appeared in man, he appeared in him, as is evident both from his books and his Pymander..."*[10] Whether he was once an incarnate mortal or whether he is a divine composite legend, we cannot be certain. To the modern magickian, however, the spirit of Hermes Trismegistus lives on as source and teacher. To him are attributed the roots of most Western mystery traditions. *"There are now in the world several secret schools privileged to initiate candidates into the Mysteries, but in nearly every instance they lighted their altar fires from the flaming torch of Hermes."*[11] The most widely studied genre of Western occult mysteries is today called Hermetic Magick,

entitled in honor of its most ancient and original source. There is a legend that Hermes himself penned the mysteries that eventually became today's Masonic rites. These mysteries contain the archetypal essences for most Western initiatory systems including that of the Golden Dawn and contemporary Wicca.

Some of the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus have survived, in various forms, remaining preserved to this day. Whether this demigod literally penned these works himself does not seem to matter nearly so much as their content. They remain as a source of metaphysical inspiration. Their deep beauty, their enigmatic and perceptive descriptions radiate even now, centuries after they were first authored, copied, and studied. Incredibly, we can find both value and validity for our own complex times in these ancient allegories as they address the topics of life, death, and all that lies beyond the ordinary senses. The two most famous works of Hermes that still influence students of the mysteries are the *Emerald Tablet* and the *Divine Pymander.*[12]

The history of how these documents came to be in our hands today imitates the nature of the mysteries that are their subjects. Clement of Alexandria wrote in his *Stromata* that there were forty-two original books of Hermes. These were said to be "indispensably necessary." Thirty-six of them contained the whole of philosophy. Six were medical books, and others included the books of the singers, astrologers and scribes. These books disappeared during the burning of the libraries of Alexandria, that tragic act of censorship in which so many of the important texts of the ancient world were lost. The Romans apparently realized that these writings must be destroyed in order to bring Egypt under subjugation. Today we can only imagine what ideas were once preserved there, since they were targeted for political elimination.[13] As far as the scholars know, only a few of the writings of Hermes survived beyond this time. An extract of the *Corpus Hermeticum* occurs in one surviving papyrus of the third century A.D.[14] *The Corpus Hermeticum* is a more recent name given to seventeen, or perhaps nineteen, documents that appear in ten different manuscripts dating from the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[15] "Hermes Trismegistus Poimandres," also called the *Pymander*, is the title of the first document.[16]

The *Pymander* of Hermes Trismegistus is one of the earliest of the Hermetic writings now extant. This document was remodeled during the first centuries of the Christian era, and has been incorrectly translated since. Despite this, the work still contains many of the original concepts of the Hermetic cultus. *The Vision of the Poimandres* is the second of the fragments of the *Pymander*, and it describes the method by which the divine wisdom was first revealed to Hermes. This vision is the most

famous of all the Hermetic fragments, and is said to be an allegory of the unfoldment of the human soul.[17] The narrative contains many ideas and images that can be of inestimable value to a progressing student of the Hermetic mysteries. In *The Vision of the Poimandres,* Hermes Trismegistus describes a trance into which he falls. Thereupon he encounters Poimandres, a great being who describes itself as "The Great Mind." This entity proceeds to answer the questions of Hermes as he inquires about the origins of all things, and the progress of the human soul.

In adapting this vision for the use of the student of today, I have referred to three sources. *Divine Pymander by Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus,* edited by Paschal Beverly Randolph and published in 1871, contains one version of Hermes' vision. This edition was reprinted from a translation by Dr. Everard that appeared in print in 1650. Everard took this first English translation from an Arabic version.[18] The Randolph version was reprinted from an antique copy of Everard's volume.[19]

What seems to be the most accurate translation of *The Vision of the Poimandres* appears in an impressively complete, well-researched and authoritarian work. This is a four volume set of translations and extensive commentaries by Walter Scott, first published in 1924. They are entitled *Hermetica, The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings Which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus.* Scott worked with a number of fourteenth through sixteenth century Greek and Latin manuscripts, which were *"more than sufficient to enable us to reconstruct the lost archetype from which they are all derived."*[20] Scott's version of the *Poimandres* compares quite closely to Randolph's, which is certainly an indication that although they come from different sources and languages, the root source must have been adhered to with some integrity.

Following closely the publication of the above volumes, Manly P. Hall presented a more imaginative and interpretive version of *The Vision of the Poimandres.* Working with both above translations and other sources, he included his own retelling of this ancient "channeling" in his outstanding volume, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages,* published in 1928. He enhanced this retelling with *"amplifications derived partly from other Hermetic fragments and partly from the secret arcanum of the Hermetic sciences."*[21] Hall retains the literal ideas of the vision, and rewrites them in a form that focuses on the metaphorical images rather than the precise original statements. In doing so, he retains the all-important imagery yet avoids some of the tedious wordings that result from the direct transliteration of the ancient languages. According to Hall:

> *The Vision [of the Poimandres] of Hermes, like nearly all of the Hermetic writings, is an allegorical exposition of great*

> *philosophic and mystical truths, and its hidden meaning may be comprehended only by those who have been "raised" into the presence of the True Mind.*[22]

These words reveal the real way to interpret this ancient piece of writing. The images presented in this vision are not to be understood as literal truths, but rather as keys to deepening our understanding of ourselves. These images are friendly to the subconscious, especially if accepted and allowed to sink in undiluted by rational and logical analysis. In this way, they move through the mind rather than being caught up in the illusory aspects of the mind. This is the formula for alchemical integration of allegory. "True Hermetic Transmutation," says the *Kybalion*, "is a mental art."[23]

Without an internal integration of the symbolic images, the mere reading or study of the vision is like knowledge gained without understanding. The purpose of this chapter is to bring this metaphorical vision to you, the reader of this *Journal*, within a process which allows you to access its images directly. The true Hermetic wisdom teaches not to merely study such wisdoms, but to put them to actual use. Reading the vision in both its original form and in the form that follows is a valid way to begin one's study. Rereading and allowing the images to begin to work in the deeper mind begins the process of integration. To begin to put the wisdoms into use internally, one may choose to experience them the same way that Hermes describes his own first experience, in a trance-like state. The Invocation of Hermes is designed to first open the aura to the current of Hermes' wisdom so that the vision may be thus integrated.

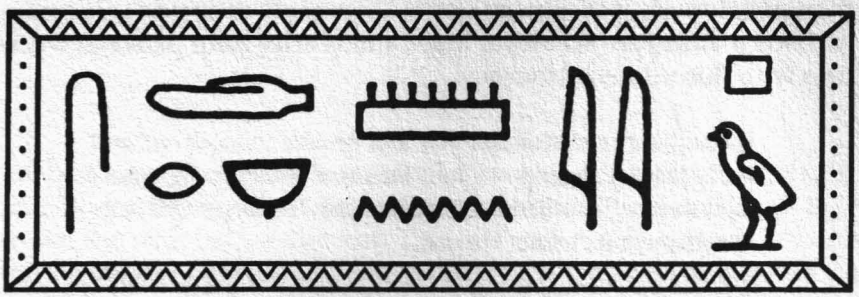
For these reasons I offer this *Invocation of Hermes Trismegistus* and yet another retelling of *The Vision of the Poimandres* of Hermes, in the form of ritual pathworkings or imagistic journeys. These two workings will perhaps make the ancient visions most accessible to twenty-first century minds. Manly P. Hall wrote in the preface to his *Secret Teachings of All Ages* of the importance of the preservation of ancient writings for today's world: *"May the twenty-first century bring with us a restoration of those systems of inspired instruction so desperately needed."*[24] Hall recognized the ongoing power and value of ancient words and wisdoms, and in that spirit do I offer this vision in renewed form and language, apropos to the modern vision-seeker.

In rewriting the vision, I have attempted to preserve the basic ideas and images of the original writings as closely as possible. Because I am working from the English translations and not the more ancient languages themselves, in many places I have had to make interpretive judgments as to the meanings of phrases. Rather than attempting to

define various metaphorical and poetical sections, I have maintained the essential images and their original descriptions so that the reader of this working may use these images to catalyze their own individual discoveries. *The Invocation of Hermes* is an original creation of my own, using sources for inspiration from the Golden Dawn teachings and Manly P. Hall. In adapting *The Vision of Poimandres*, I have used the sources named above—Randolph, Scott, and Hall—and have included footnotes for direct quotations where applicable. In closely comparing these three versions, I chose to leave out most ideas that were obviously those of any single interpreter. One exception to this is the idea that Poimandres is a dragon, which is an alchemical attribution of Hall's and has nothing to do with the original writings.

"Poimandres" allegedly comes from the Egyptian. I can find no direct translations for this word. The name may be a composite word or phrase, which was common in many ancient languages. In spelling "Poimandres" in phonetic hieroglyphics, one possible translation presents itself. The first syllable, *poi* could be a prefix meaning "this" or "that," or possibly even "my." *Mand* may be the Egyptian *mnd*, meaning "breast." In Egyptian, the word for "breast" is the root for the word "tutor," as in one you receive from or suckle from either literally or figuratively. *Rs* as a suffix can mean "as to me" or "as to us." It is interesting to note that in this form the suffix is used as a neuter gender, which was uncommon in Egyptian. The meaning might then be "this 'breast' as to me," or "as this 'breast' is to us." While Poimandres calls himself "The Great Mind," the more ancient Egyptian meaning possibly conveys a rather nurturing or affectionate sense of teaching and sharing. This is not a cold and rational form of mind. For some people, therefore, the image of the dragon may not resonate as well as a divine spirit, an archangel, or even a goddess or god figure. In this case, the reader might wish to change the image to suit his/her preference. Poimandres most likely is bisexual, in this instance meaning of both sexes simultaneously, as are the Divinity and other beings in the story.

The ancient writings of Hermes have been accessible to us in English for only decades out of the thousands of years that they have existed. Today's reader is likely to find the given wordings obscure and obtuse. Available translations read of the Victorian simile and adjective-filled fashion of nineteenth and early twentieth century language. All versions to which I have access reflect the cultural and religious bias of the translators and their times. One of the main ideas in Hermes' vision is that the Creator—the Divine—is of both sexes. Yet in all translations, the words used to describe the Creator are exclusively "God" and "He." The original complete balance of sex and gender on all planes from divine to mortal is one that I feel is worth preserving in



Hieroglyphic Spelling of Poimanders

the language of the vision, so I have removed all reference to divinity as masculine. The original English translations also contain an emphasis on "reason" as the most prized quality that sets humans both above and over the beasts, again reflecting nineteenth century philosophic fashion. I deliberately omitted ideas of human domination over nature. I did retain the frequent use of the word "mind" throughout, which I trust the reader will interpret in the highest spiritual sense for her or him self. In the Greek, the word given is "nous," a concept relating more to the living light of life than to the process of ordinary thought and logic. It is important in this vision and other ancient writings to remember that much of the nature of the original meaning of a concept or phrase may alter as it is transliterated into other languages. I prefer to believe that certain ideas such as rational preeminence, the subjugation of nature, and the complete evil of the material world were due to later adaptations of thought and not part of the original essential wisdom. This may or may not be true, but I chose not to pass these ideas on through my own writing.

In past history, the writings of Hermes seem to have provoked much political discussion as to whether they were Christian or Pagan, monotheist or polytheist. I enjoy Hermes' writings because they seem to both predate and transcend such divisions of religious thought. I find in these writings many truths that go beyond the theology of any particular religious doctrine. One very important concept addressed in this vision is that of immortality. The manner in which Poimandres explains to us the trap of the illusion of mortal death bears much similarity to the philosophy of the Tibetan Buddhists and the Native Americans. Hermetic philosophy often contains the essence behind all great religions, showing the unity that underlies all genuine spiritual truths. The student of these writings who is looking for spiritual answers will find them in the context of their own inner truths. Hopefully these will not become arguments to support the superiority of

their own beliefs over anyone else's. I leave it to the reader, therefore, to discern and glean whatever inspirations arise from personal workings with this visionary journey.

> *If you are a true student, you will be able to work out and apply these principles—if not, then you must develop yourself into one, for otherwise the Hermetic Teachings will be as "words, words, words" to you.*
>
> —*The Kybalion*[25]

How to Use the Ritual Pathworkings

The pathworkings that follow are designed, as stated above, for use. *The Invocation of Hermes Trismegistus* should be performed first in one session, and may then be used again at any time to contact this divine being. In my own magickal work with Hermes Trismegistus, I have found that he is a great teacher. For many, this invocation can be an introduction to further work with the spirit of Hermes as a divine higher-plane guide. I definitely recommend that the invocation be performed before using the pathworking of *The Vision of the Poimandres.*

The second pathworking, T*he Vision of the Poimandres,* is lengthy and complex, and should be performed in a separate session following the invocation pathworking. More than one session may be required to fully appreciate its depth. For both pathworkings, the best way to use them is either to have one person read them aloud while others listen, or to record them on an audio tape and play them back for the workings. Perform the workings in a setting away from any possible distractions, and ideally in a prepared magickal working area. Because of the length of both pathworkings, participants will probably be more likely to stay awake sitting in chairs or upright on the floor rather than lying down. One may wish to begin with a Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, and possibly also a Lesser Banishing Hexagram Ritual, although this is perfectly optional. I recommend that the pathworkings be preceded by a moment's relaxation. This may include practicing fourfold breathing, or simply sitting for a moment with eyes closed, relaxing, and allowing the breath to come naturally while the attention turns inward. Both pathworkings should end with the closing, which is given following *The Vision of Poimandres.*

INVOCATION OF HERMES TRISMEGISTUS: A RITUAL PATHWORKING

We begin our journey on a dark trail through a dense forest. It is night, and there are many stars above but no moon. Still there is enough light to see the path before our feet. This is a trail that leads back into the dark recesses of a deep and heavily overgrown place. The slope of the path is upwards, and we can feel the climb. The earth beneath our feet is slightly damp, so we carefully place our steps upon the rocks and grass for firm footing. The brush on either side narrows the path even more, so that we must move branches aside with our forearms in order to pass. Just ahead now is a dark and steep cliff. There are steps in the rock face leading up the side of the cliff. We grasp at the rough rock with our hands for balance as we begin our ascent. We find the steps easy to walk up, and the footing firm and safe. As we climb, branches brush against us in the darkness, but our feet find each next step as surely as though we had walked this way many times. We arrive at the top of the cliff and a strong breeze greets us. Stars fill space above and around us. Before us the cliff abruptly ends in a sharp edge, and beyond this the vast sea appears, a hundred feet beneath us. The sound of waves crashing against the rock mingles with the wind in our ears.

We walk along the cliff as though we were walking along the top of the world. The wind is invigorating, and cooler now. The trail leads downwards now, into a crevice. The place is narrow and leads inland as though towards the end of a box canyon. A little farther ahead we see a dark opening like a cave. We do not hesitate for a moment, and continue without a break in pace into the total darkness. We can see nothing around us, not even the floor ahead of us. Yet our feet continue to carry us straight ahead. There are no obstacles, and we feel no fear. A little distance further we see the glow of fire, a small reddish-orange circle of light flickering. It looks like a torch. As we approach, the glow spreads and illuminates a small chamber in the dark cave. At the far side of the chamber, just ahead of us, are high doors of smooth polished black. There are giant brass rings on the doors, like handles. We reach up to grasp the one on the right. The door is heavy but swings easily towards us and opens just enough so that we can pass through.

The temple before us is not quite like any we have ever seen before. The floor is smooth, polished white marble. The walls disappear in the darkness all around us, yet they seem to be of the natural stone of the cave walls. Only the central area of the temple is illuminated. Above the center of the hall hangs an oil lamp, which burns

with a small blue flame. Beneath the lamp is an altar. It is in the shape of a double cube, and appears to be made of solid gold. Some distance ahead of us we see pillars. To our left is a tall column of solid black stone, perhaps marble, topped by a carved lotus. On our right, the column seems to be of ivory or white alabaster, and is identical in shape including a white lotus at the summit. Between them hangs a diaphanous veil of pale shimmery fabric. The light from the lamp casts rays of radiance across the veil. The air in the room seems itself filled with rays of radiant expectancy. A potent electricity tingles the pores on our skin, causing hairs to stand on end.

We stand still, just inside the doorway. A sudden crackling sound startles us and a flash of lightning strikes, coming down through the fabric of the veil. Thunder roars and echoes through the hall, and we can feel it in our very bones. The brilliant flash of lightning blinds us for an instant, and then we see the smoking edges of the fabric where the lightning has torn it in two. From beyond the veil a glowing haze appears, like a billowing cloud beginning to move toward us filling the central area of the temple. Sparks of radiance flash like trillions of tiny diamonds in the billowing haze. We stare into the cloud, looking for something tangible to appear. A figure steps out of the dense radiance. He is taller than any mortal man could be, standing in a regal and confident posture, surrounded by a flickering greenish sheen. He appears to be from Egypt, although he bears a strong resemblance to the muscled and lean figure of the Greek Hermes. He wears a yellow and violet striped nemyss. He is crowned by a golden band upon which are the disc and crescent of the moon, raised from his forehead as gleaming emblems. His loin cloth is also striped yellow and violet and folds into a triangular shape in front. On his feet are golden sandals, and his arms are banded by golden bracelets. His collar is jeweled and sparkles like the radiance from which he emerged. His dark skin is partly transparent, and we can see inside his body, see the place of his brain through his forehead, and his heart beating inside his bare chest. As we watch, his brain appears to change into an incredibly clear green emerald, cut and faceted in a rectangular shape. The green light of the emerald flashes, picking up the radiance of green luminance surrounding his body. His heart turns into an ibis bird, white and beautiful with the graceful curve of its beak emerging forward. In his left hand is a wand of entwined serpents terminating in a pair of wings and a golden orb.[26] He reaches forward with his Caduceus wand and holds it before him for us to see. His eyes look directly into ours. Never before have we seen a face of such kindness, benevolence and wisdom. Never before have we imagined there to be a male presence who carried the dignity of a true Priest so strongly as this living being who stands now before us.

In his right hand he carries a parchment scroll wound on a magnificent golden roll. Without letting his eyes drop, he raises the scroll before him and holds it aloft along with the Caduceus wand in his left hand, then unrolls the scroll with his right hand. He speaks. (Note: This speech may be given either in Latin or in English, as follows:)

Lumen est in Deo
Lux in homine factum,
Sive Sol,
Sive Luna,
Sive Stelloc errantes,
Omnia in Lux,
Lux in Lumine
Lumen in Centrum,
Centrum in Circulo,
Circulum ex Nihilo,
Quid scis, id eris.
F.I.A.T.
E.S.T.
E.S.T.O.
E.R.I.T.
In fidelitate et veritate
universas ab aeternitate.
Nunc Hora.
Nunc Dies.
Nunc Annus.
Nunc Saeculum,
Omnia sunt Unum
et Omnia in Omnibus.
A.E.T.E.R.N.I.T.A.S.[27]

(or)

The Light is in Divinity
The LVX hath been made into humanity
Whether Sun,
Whether Moon,
Whether wandering Stars,
All are in Lux,
The Lux in the Light
The Light in the Centre,
The Centre in the Circle,
The Circle from the Nothingness.
What thou art capable of being,

that shalt thou become.
Flatus. Ignis. Aqua. Terra.
Air. Fire. Water. Earth.
Ether. Sal. Terrae.
Ether, the Salt of the Earth.
Ether. Subtilis. Totius. Orbis.
The subtle Ether of the whole universe.
Ether. Ruens. In. Terra.
The Ether rushing into the Earth.
Let it become so. It is. Be it so. It shall be.
In Universal faithfulness and truth from eternity.
Now an hour.
Now a day.
Now a year.
Now an age.
All things are One,
And All in All.
ETERNITY.[28]

Then he cries aloud, and says:

> *I am called Thrice-Great Hermes, Hermes Trismegistus. I am Hermes Mercurius, the Son of the Divine, the messenger uniting Superiors and Inferiors. I exist not without them, and their union is in me. I bathe in the Ocean. I fill the expanse of Air. I penetrate the depths beneath.*[29]

He then rolls the scroll back up, and places it in his belt. He catches our eye, and indicates that he is about to begin the magickal motion and we understand that we are to come with him. We hesitate just a moment, then move to follow him. He moves, sweeping like the wind, and we hurry to catch up with him as he begins to circumambulate the temple. His mighty strides take him sunwise around the perimeter of the hall, outside the pillars, and we hear the clicking of his golden sandals on the marble floor as we watch his heels before us. Then we look up and watch as a mist-like light begins to rise in our path. Once, twice, three times, we circle the entire temple in quick pace. The light grows. At the end of the circumambulation, we come to the West and halt. Projecting his arms before him, Hermes salutes the East with the Sign of the Enterer. We do the same. His majestic voice speaks again:

Holy art Thou, Creator of all things,
the One who is before the first beginning.
Holy art Thou, whose purpose is accomplished
by thine own powers
which thou hast given birth to out of thyself.
Holy art Thou, who wills to be known,
and is known by them that are thine own.
Holy art Thou, who by thy Word
hast constructed all that is.
Holy art Thou, whose brightness is not darkened
by the material world.
Holy art Thou, of whom all nature is an image.
Holy art Thou, who art stronger than all powers.
Holy art Thou, who art greater than all pre-eminence.
Holy art Thou, who surpasses all praises.
Accept these pure offerings of words
from a pure soul and heart uplifted to Thee,
Thou of whom no words can tell, no tongue can speak,
whom silence only can declare.
Creator of the Light, and of the Darkness.[30]

Together, we touch forefingers to our lips and give the sign of silence. He then turns to face us. He reaches out with the Caduceus wand and touches this to our forehead, and we look directly into his brilliant dark eyes as he says, "May Thy mind be opened unto the higher."

Suddenly, in our awe, we feel compelled to kneel before this Priest, and we say. "O great Priest, show me the ways to wisdom. Guide me and teach me."

Hermes then returns to stand before the Pillars in the East. We stand still in the West, facing him. Between us gleams the golden altar. Hermes makes the projecting Sign of the Enterer towards us, and we give the same sign in return to him. For a moment we stand with our arms outstretched towards one another as our eyes meet. The feel of the power of his gaze is strong. He then makes the sign of silence, and we follow by also giving this sign. Above his head, we see the light of his crown chakra begin to glow brightly. Around the place of his heart, the light also shines more strongly than before. Beams of this radiance come forward to touch us. From his crown, a ray of light connects with a sphere of light above our own heads. From his heart, a ray shines forth and touches a sphere of light that grows around our own hearts. We stand thus for just a moment, feeling the connectedness of the divine light between our Priest and our selves.

We speak now to Hermes, from our own hearts and minds. He listens as we ask our questions. We may ask for him to speak in words, or to take us upon a journey, or to show us in symbols and images that which will have meaning to us. Speak, either aloud or in your mind. Use this time with Hermes Trismegistus wisely.

(Allow as much time as seems appropriate for pathworkers to explore their individual visions. When ready to return, refer to the closing which follows the second pathworking.)

THE VISION OF THE POIMANDRES: A RITUAL PATHWORKING

It is time to return to the temple of Hermes Trismegistus. I remember the way. I begin to walk again up the earthen trail in the starry night, moving quickly through dense undergrowth, following the trail up the steps on the face of the steep cliff. With the breeze in my face and the sound of the ocean waves crashing below, I move ahead along the high rim of the cliff to find the trail leading down into the crevice in the rock. Moving downwards now, there I see the dark opening to the stone cave, and I enter. The light of the torch beckons me to come forward to the tall black doors. I tug on one brass handle and the door comes easily open, just slightly ajar. I pass through, into the temple. I stand in the temple once again. A familiar feeling of both expectancy and comfort fills me. I see the black and white pillars with the pale veil hanging between them. Before me is the golden altar with the lamp hanging above it, and beneath my feet is the smooth white marble floor.

A sudden crackling sound startles me, and a flash of lightning strikes, coming down through the fabric of the veil. Thunder roars and echoes through the hall, and I can feel it in my very bones. The brilliant flash of lightning blinds me for an instant, and then I see the smoking edges of the fabric where the lightning has torn it in two. From beyond the veil a glowing haze appears, like a billowing cloud beginning to move towards me filling the central area of the temple. Sparks of radiance flash like trillions of tiny diamonds in the billowing haze. Out of the haze steps Hermes Trismegistus, tall and majestic, surrounded by a flickering greenish sheen. He is muscled and lean. His nemyss and loin cloth are striped yellow and violet. He is

crowned by a golden band upon which are the disc and crescent of the moon. He wears golden sandals, golden bracelets, and a jeweled collar. Within the place of his forehead I see the faceted emerald, and within his heart the beautiful ibis bird. He holds forth the Caduceus wand with the entwined serpents, wings and golden orb. As I watch, the place above his head begins to glow, and around the place of his heart the light begins to shine. Beams of this radiance come forward to touch me. From his crown chakra, a ray of light connects with a sphere of light above my own head. From his heart, a ray shines forth and touches a sphere of light that grows around my own heart. Hermes and I stand thus for just a moment, and I am aware of the connectedness of the divine light between this Priest and my self.

With his radiant eyes, Hermes beckons for me to follow him, and turns and passes through the torn veil. I am aware that Hermes is at a slight distance ahead of me, always guiding me upon this journey. Somehow I know that he will be continually present no matter where this journey takes me, as a watcher and a guardian. He disappears now into the darkness ahead and beyond the veil, and all that I can see is the distant glow of the light above his head guiding me like a beacon, reminding me of the Light of the Hidden Knowledge, the Lamp of the Kerux. As I move to follow this light, passing between the pillars and the dangling pieces of scorched fabric, I am overcome by a heaviness of sleep. I feel myself incredibly relaxed now, every cell of my body falling into a state of complete release. It is suddenly as though I am no longer in my body at all, but that my consciousness is completely freed from all physical sensations. For a moment, everything is dark and I feel disoriented. Then all at once my vision clears and I see a little distance before me a great Dragon, huge and awesome. I can hardly believe the reality, the distinctness and the detail of the figure who appears before me. I stare in amazement, seeing each feature of this immense being clearly before me—the shape, the texture, the face and the incredible eyes. I startle as I hear this great being call aloud my name.

"Child of Earth," the Dragon says, "what do you wish to hear and see, and to learn and come to know by your thoughts?"

Terrified, I fall prostrated on the ground before the creature. Hesitatingly, I speak. "Who are you?"

"I," says the Dragon, "am Poimandres, the Great Mind of the Creator, the Animating Principle, the Creative Soul and Intelligence of the Divine."

I say, "I wish to learn of all things that exist, to understand their nature, to obtain knowledge of the Divine."

The Dragon says, "I know what you wish, for indeed I am with you everywhere. Keep in mind all that you desire to learn. Keep my image in your mind also, and I will teach you."

Suddenly everything before me changes. Poimandres the Dragon disappears into clouds of pulsating and radiant light. This light broadens my field of vision, and before me I see a boundless space of myriad rays of color, moving and reflecting upon one another. I feel myself being lifted upon these rays of light, rising up into a sky of prismatic beams, surrounded completely by brilliant shining lights.

Again my awareness shifts, and I feel myself more alert and attentive. I can see now more clearly than ever before. Beneath me swirls a sea of darkness. As I stare to what lies below, I see the darkness become turbulent water, like an ocean of glossy blackness tossed by giant waves. Steam rises from the waves, and then the steam becomes smoke. Out of the clouds of smoke, flames begin to burst forth, and fire rages around the edges of this sea in tremendous orange-red tendrils. It is an awesome and terrifying sight. The vision is so terrible that I open my mouth to cry out, but no sound comes. All around me there is an expectancy in the vast silence. Then from the center of the heavens comes a solid column of the most brilliant, pure white light. The beam shines down, descends, upon the waters, and stands radiant and strong as a pillar of perfect light. I stare at this column of pure, brilliant white.

I hear the voice of Poimandres say, "Do you understand the meaning of what you have seen?"

"Tell me, please," I say, "so that I will know."

The voice of Poimandres says, "I am the Light which you see. I am the Great Mind, the first Creator, who was before the watery substance which appeared out of the darkness. The Word, the Voice, which comes from this Light is the Child of the Creator."

"What do you mean?" I ask.

"Learn my meaning," says Poimandres, "by looking at what you yourself have in you. Within you, your word is your child. Your mind is the parent of your word. They are one, for Life is the union of Word and Mind. Meditate upon this mystery: That which in you sees and hears, is not of the earth but is divinity incarnate. Thus does the Light dwell in darkness. The union of Word and Mind produces the mystery called Life. Learn deeply of the Mind and its mystery, for therein lies the secret of immortality."

"I thank you for this," I say.

"Now, fix your thought upon the Light," Poimandres says, "and learn to know it."

I feel a chill up my spine. I tremble all over, and raise my head up to the light of the column. From the light beam, the figure of the Dragon appears again, staring directly into my eyes and holding my gaze. As my vision is thus held, I am aware of many moving lights in my mind, and I have a sense of them as many powers. It is as though the sight of the Dragon opens my mind to an awareness of the heavens as a place of innumerable intersecting rays of powers, creating in their patterns an ordered world without bounds. As I perceive this in my thoughts, I am amazed. The source of the entire universe is there among those light powers, a celestial source like that of the vast and infinite cosmos.

Poimandres speaks again. "You have seen in your mind the archetypal form, which precedes the beginning of things, and is limitless."

"Tell me," I ask, "when and how did the elements of nature come into being?"

"The Creator looked upon the beautiful World," replies Poimandres, "and felt desire, and spoke. The Creator's Word came upon the Water, and formed an ordered world. This created the elements. Fire rose from the Water, as you saw in your vision. Air followed the Fire, and this rising caused a separation of the Water from the Earth. This was the birth of Nature.

"Above this created World, Mind the Maker was born of the first Mind, Life, and Light. The Maker made the archetypal spirits of the seven planets from Fire and Air, and gave to them the operation of destiny. The Word of the Creator moved with the Maker, setting these planets into orbit.

"The Creator of All, who is Life and Light, gave birth to humans, and took much delight in them. The planetary spirits also took delight in humans, and gave to them a share of their qualities, so that humans were endowed with the semi-divine attributes of the seven sacred planets."

As I struggle to keep this all in mind, Poimandres continues.

"Nature also loved the humans, for she saw the beauty of the Creator in them. The people became enamored too with the beauty of Nature, so that they chose to reside in the place of their desire, in the world of form and the elements. And thus took place the mating and bonding of Humanity and Nature, for they were in love with one another.

And that is why humans, unlike all other living creatures upon earth, are twofold. Your bodies make you mortal and subject to destiny, yet you have souls of eternal substance. You are of both sexes, as your Creator is of both sexes. And you are sleepless, as your Creator is sleepless. Yet through your love for Nature, you are mastered by attachments to material desires and by obscured awareness."

After this, I say, "Tell me the rest, O Great Mind, for I am also mastered by the desire to hear your teachings."

Poimandres says, "This is the secret which has been kept hidden until this day. Nature, mingled in marriage with humanity, brought forth a marvel most marvelous. The first people received from the structure of the heavens the qualities of the seven planetary spirits, and they were mated with Nature. From this union came forth the sacred seven, which were each of both sexes simultaneously like the Creator: the seven races, the seven species and the seven wheels of life, and all creations of the sacred number of seven."

"Now, Poimandres," I say. "Please don't get off the subject."

"Be quiet!" says Poimandres. "I have not yet finished explaining this first thing."

"All right. I'll be quiet," I say.

"All beings of seven," says the Dragon, "were made of Earth and Water, and received their vital spirit from the Aether. This was the same in humans. The Divine Life became the Soul, and the Divine Light became the Mind. Everything was this way at first.

"All living beings until then had been each of both sexes simultaneously, just like the Creator. The bonds which held these living creatures thus were eventually loosened, by the design of the Creator. Then the sexes were separated. Thus were created females and males. Upon this event, the Creator spoke: 'Let the person who is aware of the Mind within recognize that you are immortal, and that the cause of death is desire for the material, for incarnation, for love of the body. You who have recognized yourselves shall enter into the Good.'

"And when the Creator had spoken these words, destiny and desire brought about the unions of male and female. So began the process of birth. All creatures multiplied after their own kind. And those who recognized themselves entered into that Good which is above all being. Those who were misled by material and physical desires, and who were enamored by their own physical bodies, continued wandering in the darkness of the world of the senses. They suffered the lot of death."

"But what crime," I ask, "do they commit, the ones who by ignorance alone are deprived of immortality?"

"O, child," Poimandres speaks, "it seems you have not heeded what you have heard. Did I not bid you mark my words?"

"I do!" I say. "And I remember what you have told me, and what's more I am thankful for it."

"If then you have marked my words," Poimandres replies, "tell me why those who are in ignorance deserve death."

I answer, "It is because the source from which the physical body has issued is that original darkness, from which came the watery substance of which the body is composed. In the world of the physical senses is that from which is drawn the experience of death."

"You have understood correctly," comes the response. "But why is it that 'They who recognize themselves enter into the Good', as it was said in the Divinity's speech?"

I answer, "It is because the Creator of all consists of Light, and all people come from this."

"You are right," Poimandres says. "If then, being made of Life and Light, you learn to know that you are made of these, you will go back into Life and Light." Thus spoke Poimandres.

"But tell me this too," I say. "The Creator said, 'Let those who have Mind in them recognize themselves.' But don't all people have mind?"

"O, child," says Poimandres to me, "don't say this. Even I, the Great Mind, come to those who are good and pure of heart. These people come to knowing and to recognition through grace, through loving worship, with thankfulness and devoted affection. Yet before they give their bodies up to death, they must eschew the misleading bodily senses. From those who are foolish, wicked, and harmful, I stay far away. I give way to the avenging demon who brings upon them the struggling of their own appetites, for their desires are insatiable. The punishment of their desire is the agony of unfulfillment."

Hermes Trismegistus, who all this time has stood silently out of view, steps forward now into my awareness. He bows his head in silent acknowledgment to the Dragon.

"You have taught me very much, O Great Mind," I say, "even as I wished. But can you tell me how I might enter into the greater Life?"

Poimandres answers, "At the dissolution of your material body, you will first yield up the body itself to be changed. The visible form you carried will no longer be seen. Your self, you will yield up to the atmosphere, so that it no longer works in you. Your bodily senses will go back to their own sources, becoming parts of the universe. Ultimately they will combine with other energies for other purposes. After this, you will move upwards through the structure of the heavens.

"To the first zone of heaven, the Moon, you will give up the force which works increase and decrease, that which ebbs and waxes. To the second zone, Mercury, you will give up the designs and guiles of illusory intelligence. To the third zone, Venus, you will yield up the lusts that deceive and mislead. To the fourth zone, the Sun, you will give up domineering arrogance and unhealthy ambitions, the false desires for power and selfhood. To the fifth zone, Mars, you will yield rashness, presumption, and all malicious aggressions. To the sixth zone, Jupiter, unbalanced

strivings for personal gain. And to the seventh zone, Saturn, which lies at the gate of chaos, the falsehood which lies in wait to work harm. Once you have been stripped of these, you will ascend to the eighth sphere, where you will find your own proper and fitting power. Here, you will join with others who will rejoice. You will hear the divine Powers, who are above you still, and you will sing the praises of the Creator. From this place, you will give yourself up to the Powers, and become of the Powers yourself, and by this enter into the Creator. This is the Good. This is the consummation. This is the attainment of the Gnosis.

"And now, why do you wait? With what you are learning, make of yourself a guide to others so that through you, all may be assisted to evolve toward the highest."

As Poimandres speaks these final words, I watch as he breaks into rays of light, mingling with the powers. Before me his image dissolves into the radiance of the Light, and all I see are the intersecting rays and brilliant sparkles of all colors. I hold in my mind the memory of the words of Poimandres, the images of what I have seen.

I review what I have heard and understood, knowing that I will remember. My trance seems more now like full waking of my soul. Although my physical eyes are closed, I can see with true vision. The silence within me is full of realization. I reflect on an awareness of new inspiration. I remember and repeat the adoration by which Hermes began this journey.

Holy art Thou, Creator of all things,
the One who is before the first beginning.
Holy art Thou, whose purpose is accomplished
by thine own powers
which thou hast given birth to out of thyself.
Holy art Thou, who wills to be known,
and is known by them that are thine own.
Holy art Thou, who by thy Word
hast constructed all that is.
Holy art Thou, whose brightness is not darkened
by the material world.
Holy art Thou, of whom all nature is an image.
Holy art Thou, who art stronger than all powers.
Holy art Thou, who art greater than all pre-eminence.
Holy art Thou, who surpasses all praises.
Accept these pure offerings of words
from a pure soul and heart uplifted to Thee,
Thou of whom no words can tell,

no tongue can speak,
whom silence only can declare.
Creator of the Light, and of the Darkness."[31]

"I pray that I may never fall away from the knowledge and understanding of Thee which matches with my own being upon this path. Grant this my prayer. May I receive the power and ability to share this wisdom with others, with my sisters and brothers. Through my belief and this witness, I enter into Life and Light. Blessed art Thou, Creator of All."[32]

I become aware once again of Hermes with his guiding light above him standing at my side. He tugs on my arm and we step backwards together. Before me are only radiating and scintillating sparks now—remnants of the divine fireworks of a vision that even now has almost entirely faded from sight. Together, Hermes and I step backwards through the veil and into the temple.

Closing for Both Pathworkings

I am aware of the temple around us, with walls of darkened stone and a floor of perfectly smooth white marble. I look around, and see the tall pillars and the golden altar. Before us are the scorched remnants of the fabric of the veil, hanging loosely between the pillars.

Hermes Trismegistus stands before us now, just in front of the veil. His eyes meet ours in a farewell gesture. With this look, we convey our thanks to him for guiding us upon this our journey. We feel loving warmth returned to us by Hermes, and feel sure that we may come to this place again to meet this divine Priest and learn more. From beyond the veil, a green billowing misty haze comes forth and begins to envelop Hermes. As he disappears from view, the mist also fades and we are surprised to see that the veil is whole again, hanging pale and intact between the two pillars. We give a salute in farewell, then turn and leave the way we came. The black doors of the temple swing open before us and we move past the torch light into the passageway of darkness. Moving steadily, we find ourselves outside again, in the stone crevice following the pathway up and onto the rim of the cliff. The waves crash upon the rock below, and the wind is brisk upon our faces. We come quickly to the edge of the cliff and make our way carefully down the steps, brushing aside the branches as we move onward. We are back in the dense undergrowth now upon the earthen path. We are aware of the solid earth beneath our feet. We take one last look at the starry sky above, and then return our attention to our bodies.

We feel the room around us, the floor beneath us, and the breath moving in our bodies. Take a moment now to focus your attention on your breath, moving in and out. Allow your consciousness to return, bringing all your clear memories with you, and be right here in this space as fully as you can be, taking as much time as you need before you slowly open your eyes.

Endnotes

[1] Three Initiates. *The Kybalion: Hermetic Philosophy*, (Yogi Publication Society, Masonic Temple, Chicago, IL. 1940), p. 213.

[2] Randolph, Paschal Beverly. *Divine Pymander: Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus*. (Yogi Publication Society, Des Plaines, IL. Undated), from "To the Reader," not numbered.

[3] Scott, Walter. *Hermetica, Volume I*. (Shambhala, Boston MA. 1985), p. 33.

[4] Hall, Manly P. *The Secret Teachings of All Ages; The Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabalistic and Rosicrucian Philosophy*. Philosophical Research Society, Inc.,Los Angeles, CA. 1988. p. 37.

[5] Randolph, "To the Reader," not numbered.

[6] Randolph, "To the Reader," not numbered.

[7] Hall, p. 37.

[8] Hall, p. 37.

[9] Randolph, Preface.

[10] Hall, p. 37.

[11] Hall, p. 38.

[12] Hall, p. 37.

[13] Hall, pp. 37 - 38.

[14] Scott, Walter. *Hermetica*, Volume II: Notes on the Corpus Hermeticum. (Shambhala, Boston MA 1985), p. 11.

[15] Scott, Vol. I, pp. 20-22.

[16] Scott, Vol. I, p. 17.

[17] Hall, p. 38.

[18] Randolph, "To the Reader," not numbered.

[19] Randolph, preface.

[20] Scott, Vol. I. p. 22.

[21] Hall, p. 38.

[22] Hall, p. 37.

[23] Three Initiates, p. 222.

[24] Hall, preface.

[25] Three Initiates, p. 14.

[26] Hall, p. 37.

[27] The letters A.E.T.E.R.N.I.T.A.S. as notaricons are: Ab Kether. Ex Chokmah. Tu Binah. Ex Chesed. Regina Geburah. Nunc Tiphareth. In Netzach. Totius Hod. Ad Yesod. Saeculorum Malkuth. From the Crown, out of Wisdom—Thou, O Understanding art Mercy, Queen of

Severity. Now the perfect Beauty, in the Victory, of all Splendour, for the Foundation, of the Ages of the Universe.

[28] Regardie, Israel. *The Golden Dawn*, (Llewellyn Publications, 1982), Excerpted from "Document M," with translation and notes by G.H. Frater S.R.M.D., Volume IV, pp. 47-48

[29] Regardie, *Ibid.* p. 48.

[30] Adapted from Hall, p. 38 and Scott, Vol. I, p. 131.

[31] Adapted from Hall, p. 38 and Scott, Vol. I, p. 131.

[32] Adapted from Hall, Scott and Randolph.

About the Author

Oz is a practicing Magickian in the Golden Dawn system, and also a Wiccan High Priestess. She lives at "La Caldera de Hekate" in Albuquerque, New Mexico—a center of much magickal activity and frequent group ceremonial events. She considers herself to be a somewhat eclectic magickian, often combining the non-traditional with traditional esoteric techniques. Her private ceremonial practice may include rites that draw from Wiccan, Native American, Buddhist, and Hermetic sources. She occasionally teaches and leads workshops that delve into her favorite aspects of the pathways of spirit, including Goddesses, death and rebirth, and ritual. She is currently developing therapeutic ritual techniques that combine the most powerful and effective transformative energies of the above traditions. If she isn't careful, she'll succeed and transform right out of this plane of existence. Oh yes, she also loves cats and roses. Particularly red.

Hermes Trismegistus

Of Hermes Mercurius

Sam Webster

Thou of the Herm, I call you
Thou between all things, I call you
Thou the living form of Intelligence,
Lord of the Threshold
Lord of the Roadmark
Lord of the Hardnesses of the World
Hermes Thrice Great, I invoke You!

Sing into me your word that I may awaken the magi again to your call. We who have preserved thy mysteries, who have worked the way of mind. We have given birth to the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and to science, all by means of your inspiration. Your way of the co-creator, the operator, the participant in the evolution of the world—though forgotten when the darkness of Christian hegemony fell upon the land—your patient voice that sings out in the betweennesses of things has called us back to the way of sacred life. Guide me again as I speak of this.

Hermes is a God dear to my heart. Trickster as he is, he comes in innumerable forms. His compound name *Thoth Hermes Mercurius Psychopompos Trismegistus* alludes to the depth and complexity of this God—Thrice Great, guide of souls. The Greeks, Hellenized Egyptians and Romans all claimed him. For many years my worship and patronage centered upon his Egyptian cousin, Tahuti, profound and austere, the Lord of wisdom. Yet for the last five years this deity, more accessible and friendly to humans, has claimed my attention, particularly in the form of Hermes Mercurius. He has been at pains to show the difference between himself and Tahuti and even between his Greco-Roman manifestation and his Egyptian recension, Hermes Trismegistus. There is something older and richer, less easy and less gnostic, in the subtle slayer of Argos, the star-beast. To this one, this essay is dedicated.

Yet we will not ignore Hermes Thrice Great of Alexandria, for we, being magick-users, draw so much of our heritage from the land watered by the Nile. Our craft took shape and bears the impress of the unique fusion of cultures that arose in Ptolemaic Egypt. Much of the method we will use is well-called "Hermetic" and comes to us from

the collection of writings called the *Corpus Hermeticum* pseudepigraphically attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. This method was greatly reworked or developed by the Arab Alkindi in *De Radiis Stellicis* and the Florentine Ficino in *De Vita coelitùs comparanda*, and comes to us for the greater part through the Golden Dawn.

It will help us to remember that at the time of the writing of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Hermes had not wholly lost his associations with magick to the inheritors of Alexander's Empire. Yet, this was virtually subsumed in Hermes' function as God of commerce. Hermes arose originally as Lord of thresholds and boundaries and of all the borderline experiences in which his magickal powers make themselves felt. Later, circa 600-400 B.C.E., Athens became a commerce-centered democratic state. Hermes' rulership of boundary-crossers—traders and crafts folk—acquired for him a new level of status. The place for trade was moved from the periphery to the center of town, the Agora, and much of the population was engaged in trade. Hermes' mastery of the process of exchange made him patron of the commercially inclined common folk. Needing only the craftiness of speech and technical skill in craft, Hermes' more subtle magickal powers were left behind.

In the first two centuries of the Common Era, the decline of the culture of the Late Antiquities was making itself strongly felt. In the cosmopolitan crucible of Alexandria men and women, divorced from ordinary venues to power, status, and wealth by the oppressive bureaucratic state or simply by birth, sought recourse in magick derived from the black land in which they lived and in nostalgic reminiscence of the glory of the pharaohs and their temples. They were Greek-speaking and Helenisticly cultured, and so their appropriation of the temple cults was framed in the categories of Greek philosophy and expressed in the names of the Olympian Gods. By choosing Hermes as the name of their magickal God the Alexandrians reclaimed a deeper stratum of the Lord of threshold's nature, the chthonic magick which no story of him can ignore.

The goal of this essay is to outline the inner and magickal cult of Hermes. Its task is to point out the way of attaining to the state of the Divine Hermes. By separating and then using in tandem the tricky personhood of Hermes along with the technology and cosmology of the lofty Trismegistus, a method will be evolved which, when practiced, will lead to the direct realization of the true nature of existence and the sovereign power of the mind, along with certain other, more prosaic, accomplishments.

As below so above,
And as above so below,
To accomplish the miracle of the One Thing.

This verse from the *Emerald Tablet* is but theory and pretty words if it is not acted upon. There is a way to demonstrate this proposition to oneself and thus find your place in the armature of the spheres, the web of causality, and thereby step beyond its limits and the bonds of necessity.

What the first book of the *Corpus Hermeticum* calls the armature of the spheres is a cosmology rooted in one of the deepest extant strata of human experience. It was developed extensively by the city dwelling, agrarian, temple-building cultures and forms the basis of contemporary astrology. It is its ability to be directly experienced through magickal technique, and thus become something more than mere theory, that makes it valuable to us. At the time of this writing, my culture is plagued by bitter alienation and anomie. Many of us feel homeless, even with a roof overhead. By each of us finding our own unique place in the cosmos through this technique, we feel where we are and the rightness of our being there. We arrive home.

No longer alienated from our home, we can no longer sit idly by watching its destruction. Indeed, we begin to perceive that damage to our environment is damage to ourselves—but also that our own healing brings about healing in our immediate environment, and far beyond as well. This is a manifestation of the *web of causality*. In the West the Hermetic folk were one of the first to rigidly postulate the principle of causality. The *Kybalion*, a modern text (ca. 1900), formulates this as there being no effect without a cause and no cause without an effect. Now we are learning the true depth of this notion (although the Buddhists have been saying this since 600 B.C.E.) that every effect has innumerable causes and every cause innumerable effects. The task of our vision is to perceive the tangled web formed of the vectors of cause and effect. While this vision gave birth to modern science, we must take it farther still to extend our limits and progressively free ourselves from the bonds of necessity.

Fear and worry arise from limits to our actions in response to implacable necessity. Yet Hermes, says the Orphic Hymn, is *"of care the loosener...and of necessities to mortals kind."* This he does by showing us the way through the web of causality and how to use it. By this we engage in the Great Work of improving the lot of all living things— the co-creative operators and participants in the evolution of the world.

Yet, at the risk of contradicting myself (and in trickster fashion pointing backwards at truth) in the end of this process the Magus'

task is to raise change to the infinite power whereby it becomes stability; and all desire to cause change becomes subsumed in the vision of the purity of existence (see Crowley's A∴A∴ document entitled *Liber B vel Magi* for a further articulation of this). Through this vision one attains to a deep comfort with what is. What one would have changed is seen as already perfect. There is a danger in this method in that one could become apathetic and disinterested. Thus we will not spend time discussing here its intricacies. But we will point to its sovereign cure—compassion.

With these roots in mind we turn to the method itself. First one must demonstrate empirically that the above is as the below and *vice versa*, which is to say "as within so without," and vice versa. To do this requires intensity of focus and keen observation. Intensity is required for invocation to be effective. The whole of one's being and will must be directed towards the object of your call. Thus it is absolutely essential to choose to invoke something that the whole of your being is desirous of and consonant with. Then, upon completing your invocation, it is necessary to fully release it, so as to attain to "deliverance from the lust of result." To these several ends, the Sign of the Enterer, projecting a word of power towards an abstract graphical representation of the invoked (such as a glyph, sigil, lineal figure, or pantacle), followed by the Sign of Silence is a sovereign method.

The objective is to place a great call out into the world of such a sufficiently distinct and intense a nature to *require* an answer. Intensity is required so that the response is noticeable. Distinctness is required so that you are certain that the response is in fact to that particular call and not all the others you are inadvertently sending out.

For this is the true virtue of this method, that you learn how much of the phenomena that you experience are in fact your own production and the production of your subtle beliefs and wishes. For this reason this method is kept secret; the unawakened, upon realizing that they cause so much of their own experience (and that being suffering) they would collapse under the burden of the responsibility.

To invoke but once is insufficient. "Invoke Often" as Abramelin exhorts us. Frequency by itself adds to the intensity of the call, but practice adds to its distinctness. Each time we call, we have a greater clarity about that which we call. We sharpen our grip and refine our intention, we purify our signal, so that it attains to a coherence that can not be ignored.

Each time you invoke purely, it is as though you are ringing a bell that must be answered. The bell is in fact the harmonic nature of the world, the cosmos, itself. In the West, Pythagoras is known for this idea which likened the structure of the cosmos to the musical scale.

The differences were that of one octave and another. Its unity was demonstrated by the ability of a tone of one octave to stimulate the arisal of the same tone in an other octave. Thus, the lowest and the highest remained connected by embodying the same form at different sizes.

To work with this principle you will need a sharp awareness to catch the responses to your invocations. These will occur as coincidences between your actions and the symbolic associations with that which you have invoked. The numbers, colors, odors, sensory, and semantic correspondences you have with your intention will arise spontaneously in the midst of your ordinary activities, telling you that you have impregnated the very world with your invoked word. So often this is seen as proof of the objective nature of correspondences, but this is a distraction from the deeper reality disclosed by the stubborn fact of *response*. This response has been called by Carl Jung "synchronicity" yet the ancients called it simply an omen. What it is—is the world answering your call.

Phenomena arise in response to strong feeling, with like attracting like. What shows up around us embodies and is characterized by the strong spirit we put out into the world by previously embodying it ourselves through our invocations. This is a function of Being itself and is not dependent upon the will of any single being.

If you attend to this process you will discover that you do not end at your body's edge and that you are inextricably united with your world. This is the One Thing referred to in the *Emerald Tablet*. A being is never found in abstraction from its world. You and your environment arise together, co-creating each other, and in fact, constitute a single entity. What happens to you happens to your world, and what happens to your world happens to you as well. Only your inability to attend to it in the overwhelming welter of stimuli prevents you from noticing it. One goal in this method is to develop the skill to resolve out of the noise the return flux of the signal you put out. To this end we use the Sign of the Enterer and the Sign of Silence.

The synchronistic reflex itself is the echo of the intention spoken in the deeper world out of which our experienced world has arisen. The whole of that experienced world is in fact the result of all such "spoken" intentions. This "deeper" world is the whole out of which the immediate and apparent part of the world that we are experiencing arises. The deeper world is the ground of determinacy, and yet is wholly undetermined. By invoking we draw from this vast, even absolute, wealth and bring potential being into manifestation.

Once you have attained to this realization, you have the opportunity to attain to immense power. But power for its own end will destroy you, while power in service to a greater cause acquires the

momentum of that cause as well as its protection. This is not the silly prattle that power corrupts. Absolute power has nothing to fear. Rather the search for power (or anything else) for mere personal gratification creates an egocentric process of such immense momentum that it will overwhelm the self doing the seeking. Alternatively one can dedicate the power (or other) acquired to a purpose greater than the self. This relieves the self of the centripetal force of carrying by itself the invoked power and avoids implosion. Further, the quantity and quality of the power attained when not self-centered is greatly improved over the inverse, not having the limits of the individual to constrain it.

The Hermetic Tradition as expressed in the *Corpus Hermeticum* was founded upon the insight that beings who possess minds participate in the divine reality. By being able to think we are not limited to merely repeating the limits of determinacy, but we can envision novel ways of acting and being. Embodying this open mind, we are co-actors in creation, even co-creators, and with that we have the responsibility to create well. As magick-users we discover that this truth is not simply instrumental but ontological. We are not Being's or some God's way of getting things done down here. We *are* Being or God getting things done here. We are not a tool of some greater force, rather we are the manifestation of force.

Yet Being is so accommodative that it will permit us to do ill, to cause harm, and to create evil. It simply leaves us to the consequences of our actions. We who practice magick however have a greater responsibility than those who have not awakened to their inherent creativity. We, having greater power for good or for ill, must act well or reap the consequences of evil, all the worse for having harmed another. To do this it is wise to fix the mind in the right attitude before beginning any magickal practice—the attitude of the Awakened Mind.

This is well formed as a vow, though other methods are possible. An example:

> *From now until the world of Suffering is empty,*
> *I will work for the benefit of all beings,*
> *Each of whom has given birth to me.*

This vow, or its spirit, is the first discipline and the beginning of wisdom. The first line is rooted in the recognition that suffering exists and that it is unnecessary to existence. Feeling the presence of suffering acts as the ox goad reminding us of the purpose and goal of our efforts. Without the vivid recollection of hurt, the causes of hurt and those harmed, we will have little motivation to engage the ensuing labors to cause change. Further, if not rooted securely in this motivation, we may

simply make our own pleasure the goal. This failing is mistaking personal work for the Great Work, the massive project engaged in by all true initiates directed towards the liberation of all beings from suffering. The second line affirms this intent.

The last line speaks to the ontology or stubborn fact of the matter driving this right motivation. Traditionally this line is interpreted by reference to reincarnation. In the vast cycles of time, any being that we experience in this life has been at one time or another our parent, child, friend, or enemy, and so on. We are counseled thus to treat them with the care of a parent for a child or as a child for an aging parent. Yet the inner meaning is more subtle.

When one acquires the power of perceiving the web of causality, it becomes obvious that in each moment we recreate ourselves anew. To do this we draw upon all of the past and every one and every thing in it. We take, as it were, strands of their being, now perished, and weave ourselves a fresh body. In this manner we are dependent on every being that exists for our very existence; they all give birth to us and we give birth to them. No being is independent from any other being nor from its world. The magick we are engaged in here will prove this to those who doubt.

This is another aspect of the web of causality. It is a vision that permits us to navigate life's challenges with some grace. It is also a demand for action rooted in the compassionate awareness that nothing that we experience is separate from ourselves. Unless we are stricken with pathological and self-destructive tendencies, we tend to care for and protect ourselves. The web of causality demonstrates through the interdependence of all phenomena, that all we engage with are but other aspects of ourselves. This is the One Thing referred to by the *Emerald Tablet*.

In the first of the discourses of the Hermetic Corpus, called the *Poimandres*, we are told of the original insight of the Hermetic tradition: all is mind, all that perceives is the word spoken by that mind, that mind is "god," and that our minds are that same mind. We all too often find ourselves in our limited perception of the world and do not experience it in this manner. To understand the *Poimandres* we must deeply appreciate Hermes' tricky nature. *Poimandres* means "shepherd" and this mind that speaks to the one called Hermes Trismegistus is none other than Hermes the shepherd, a most ancient title. This guiding mind is the mind of Being that strives to reach out to the receptive, to guide those minds to the realization of their own true natures. This guidance is omnipresent and unlimited by human forms or conventions, nor constrained by organizations or lineages. Rather it is accessible by all beings who have minds *as their minds*. For mind to be the teacher, we must simply treat it

as such. Among the Adepti of Crowley's A.·.A.·., this is expressed as the Vow of the Magister Templi, sometimes called the Vow of the Abyss: "I vow to perceive every phenomenon as the direct communication between Being and my Self." Simple words, difficult practice.

One practice that leads to the deepening of this perception can be called *invoking the teacher.* First sound a long "Ahhhh." Radiate this from the heart. You could visualize a white letter "A" pouring out rainbow light there. Feel the vibration pour outward. Send this tone, light and feeling out to (1) everyone who has ever taught you or helped you in any way, (2) to every being who has dedicated themselves to helping others and especially to all those who have attained to complete realization, and (3) most of all to the living intelligent awareness that is Being itself. Send it out with the request for aid and support. Next sound "Ah" again but this time hear, see, and feel it coming *into* you, filling the space of your body, which dissolves into rainbow light. This is the response of those beings to your request for aid. Lastly, from this space of being filled with that aid, in which you have united yourself with the state of those you have called upon to aid you, sound "Ah" and send that radiance back out into the world to all those who need aid, and feel them supported and helped by that aid. This practice alone can lead to the highest attainments.

If you would take your place in the cosmos you must learn about the "armature of the spheres." This is the classical or "Ptolemaic" conception of the cosmos. This is a system with Earth at the center surrounded by seven domains associated with the seven classical planets with the domain of the "fixed" stars beyond them, all of which are whirling about the pole-star. Deposed by the modern cosmology this model has been used by most of the world's cultures. It forms the basis for many myth systems and thus is invaluable in their interpretation. As such, it also forms a deep structure in our own psyches and is ignored at great peril. Learning this map with the whole self is the purpose of the following technique.

The stars are our legacy, according to the Hermetic tradition. In the *Corpus Hermeticum* humanity derives from the cosmic *anthropos,* who, wishing to unite with nature and possessing all of the powers of the heavens and beyond, reached across the "armature of the spheres" and became the divine in nature—humanity. This union is figured as that of lovers, each and every one of us being an instance of that union. Thus, we both belong in and are of nature, and we also are of the divine stars, the cosmic fire, and that which gave rise to them all.

Structured invocations disclose the cosmos' subtle structures in experiential ways that are therefore indescribable. But the method works, to this I can personally attest. Due to the Golden Dawn character

of this *Journal*, Golden Dawn rituals will be especially referred to below, but there is no reason to limit your practice to them. For the sake of space, I have assumed familiarity with the techniques mentioned below. For reference, they can all be found in the *Golden Dawn*, Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice*, and in numerous other specialized works.

1. *Learn a good way to banish and to invoke* (in the sense of consecrate or fill with energy or divine presence, however you would express this). The Lesser Banishing and Invoking Rituals of the Pentagram do this well. Do these for at least one month, preferably three times a day, particularly the banishing form to purify yourself. Be certain to use the Sign of the Enterer and Sign of Silence while charging the pentagrams.

2. *Learn a way to step up your energy.* The Middle Pillar Exercise and the INRI formula do this well. This will increase the intensity of your workings and speed the results. Practice this for another month.

3. *Choose a simple balanced elemental invocation to perform.* The Greater (not the Supreme nor the Watchtower) Invocation of the Pentagram is very effective here. An excellent pattern for each quarter/element is to (a) draw the pentagram, (b) charge it with the Sign of the Enterer and the word, (c) catch the reflux of the energy in the elemental godform while visualizing/attending intensely to the element, (d) seal the quarter with the Sign of Silence and go on to the next quarter. Supporting (c) with verbal invocations can greatly extend the power of the practice and build useful skills for other ritual work.

4. *After balanced invocations the next phase is to systematically imbalance yourself.* Here the importance of having learned to banish well becomes clear; it is necessary to be able to efficiently put closure upon your practice. Now, invoke one element at a time. If you were using the Greater Pentagram rite, you could simply replace all of the pentagrams, etc., with those of the element of the moment. Invoke this element for as long as it takes to go through a cycle of easy, uncomfortable, and then smooth again. The longer you can sustain this the better you will be grounded in that element. No less than a week is worth while, about a month is average, a year is not

unheard of. Complete the cycle by including the Quintessence and then repeat the cycle of balanced invocation (per step 3) for at least a few days, preferably a week.

5. *Having establishing yourself in the physical domain, enter the realm of the human by mastering the hexagram.* Acquire the Lesser Hexagram Ritual or any other balanced planetary cycle in a manner similar to step 3. When this has stabilized go through a cycle of invoking one planet at a time. An excellent way of doing this is to invoke by hexagram, planetary glyph & name, and *ARARITA* on the day of the planet during the week. Verbal invocations, spontaneous or memorized are helpful. Wear or have about you the planet's color, metal, and gemstone as well as any other attributes available to you. Invoke upon rising in the morning and do not banish until going to bed. Do this for as many weeks as are required to give you a clear sense of the planet's nature. A clear measure of this will be when events of that day are of the distinctive quality of the planet invoked. You will find that this will form a permanent link between you and the planetary nature of the day of the week.

6. *The next layer of this process, the zodiacal, can be combined with the penultimate phase.* While you can approach the zodiacal invocations as above (the consecration of the Lotus Wand makes an excellent balanced form), combining that exploration with a symbol set that composes a "whole system" including the elements and planets, turns this analytic movement back towards its origins in a new synthesis. Learning the tarot and/or the Qabalah or any other such system will do this. In alchemical language one separates the various parts of one's being and discovers their relationship with the world at large. One then refines those parts each in turn. Then one reassembles them into a coherent, structured, interrelated whole —*solve et coagula.*

7. *At some point in your working with the system of your choice you will come to a place of crisis, perhaps painful, perhaps joyous.* At this point you will need to make the transition from the theoretical and provisional unity of the system you have learned, to an actual and felt union. How you will do this is dependent upon the system you are using

and your own ingenuity. (For myself, having used the Hermetic Qabalah with the tarot, my unification practice involved being able to experience the entire Tree of Life in my body and coterminous with the world via the astral, i.e., stellar, powers. This culminated with a meditation in a sensory deprivation tank wherein each of the tarot trumps were burned into the subtle neural pathways connecting the Sepheroth in my body. This process united the physical, the energetic, and the intelligible into one cohesive and coherent whole. Being became reunited into one presence—lucent, provident, and compassionate.)

8. *Yet even unity is not the final stage as this, too, must be set aside.* Having attained to a complete relationship with the cosmos, one must then release all of this to go beyond the starry canopy of the sheltering sky to the deeper world that lies beyond and yet so interpenetrates our realm that our realm is none other than the playful manifestation of that deeper world. When this becomes for you the living act, you will have attained to your true place in the cosmos.

So much of our time has been focused upon the workings of Hermes Trismegistus, yet the trickster has subtly guided our way. Those knowledgeable will note that his thieving ways have brought to us two exercises stolen from the Vajrayana Buddhist traditions of Tibet. Now a third must be mentioned before we wholly give way to Hermes Mercurius.

At the end of our rites, many elders of our tradition have noted, a certain ill will has a tendency to arise. Conflict, irritation, and general bitchiness between the practitioners often characterize the post-ritual phase, at least until all have grounded and had some food. Our colleagues in the East have also noted this and have discovered both the cause and a cure. The cause is rooted in the very nature of our rites. During them we transform ourselves into divine beings partaking of their power and view of the world. We use this to do our magick. As an added effect our egos and self-awareness can become inflated with the self-important sense that "I have accomplished this." This over-blown sense of self leads us into conflict and so it must be dissipated. Our colleagues hit upon an elegant method: giving it all away. What is done is that all the good that is generated by the practice just completed is dedicated to the benefit of all beings with the exclusion of none. This can be done with a simple phrase at the end of the rite. However, being Pagan,

I tend to work with folk who can raise, direct, and release energy in ritual. Using this, we tend to gather up the "good we have done" into an energy ball in the center of the working space and then, starting with a low tone and going to a high one, we reach under the ball of the "good" and raising it slowly at first and then faster we fling it into the sky to rain down on all beings everywhere—aiding and supporting them. This act elegantly shares the benefit of the work that has been done with all we intend it to. This benefit has been likened to a drop of water: if hoarded, it is ever in danger of drying up. But if that drop of water is put in the ocean, it will remain forever. By giving away the benefit of our practice to all beings, human and not (and including ourselves in this), we expand its effect immeasurably, and make it a permanent cause for good.

This exercise should be done at the end of all practice. Similarly, generating the attitude of the *awakened mind* and *invoking the teacher* should be done at the beginning of every practice session. These will greatly increase the effect of the practice and speed your results.

Tricky God
Consort and companion of the Great Goddess
You who extend nature with art and artifice
You who read the Book of Nature
and with her words weave new possibilities
You who yielded authority not power
when the king gods came
and take it back again as they now fail
Patient one, Crafty God,
Guide me.

It would be unfair to come this far lauding the powers of the great God Hermes without giving a specific practice to invoke him. All the practices thus far lead to the acquisition of the mind of sovereignty, the specific awareness that engenders the depth of Hermes. Yet we need also to acquire his form, to *become* him, in order to attain to his divine state.

There are many invocations available that have the potential to lead there if followed assiduously. Liber Israfel, found in *Gems from the Equinox* and other places, gives an excellent approach through the form of Tahuti. Crowley provides an insightful commentary to its use in the second chapter of *Magick in Theory and Practice.* It is well worth the attention. But here we are working with the tricky God himself, Hermes Mercurius. We are fortunate in that the Golden Dawn provides us with an excellent little text for him called *Liber M, the Vision of the Universal Mercury.* It reads like a visionary experience that someone once had, but no author is given. With a little reworking I have used it on occasion to access the helpful God particularly in his more

cosmic manifestation. This we will examine and prepare for ritual and meditative purposes. You can find the original in the fourth volume of the *Golden Dawn* text. Here we will break it up with commentary.

M.

The Vision of the Universal Mercury[1]

> *We stood upon a dark and rocky cliff that overhung the restless seas. In the sky above us was a certain glorious Sun, encircled by that brilliant rainbow, which they of the Path of the Chameleon know.*

We enter this invocation at a place where all four elements meet. The earth, sea, sky, and fiery Sun coming together allude to the Quintessence, appropriate to our Hermetic Mercury. In temple, this alludes to the center of the circle. Thus it is best if the elements have been invoked and the practitioner finds him/her place at the center. The Sun itself refers to the Sun upon the ceiling of the Golden Dawn Vault of the Adepti surrounded by the rainbow rose. This is the path of the powers of light and color particular to the G.·.D.·. 5=6 Adeptus Minor grade. "Colors are powers and the signatures of powers" it is said in that rite. Thus it is best if the practitioner had attained to that initiation or at least Adeptship in the rites and practices given above. Each of the many powers explored there, is a color in this practice, and the Chameleon embodies the power to "put on" each color and wield its force as required. Further the Sun alludes to the balance point of the system in both Qabalistic parlance and in the sense of having tempered one's own soul through systematic invocations as above. From this balance point Hermes can be invoked.

Treated as a visual meditation, this opening paragraph shows the first scene to be built up in the mind. Then one must wait:

> *I beheld, until the heavens opened, and a form like unto the Mercury of the Greeks[2] descended, flashing like the lightning; and he hovered between the sky and the sea. In his hand was the staff[3] wherewith the eyes of mortals are closed in sleep, and wherewith he also, at will, re-awakeneth the sleeper; and terribly did the globe at its summit dart forth rays. And he bare a scroll whereon was written:*

Now the God appears. If fortunate, prepared, and practiced, Hermes may appear to us of his own accord. However most of us will have to do some work at this point while we wait "until the heavens open." If standing, the practitioner may use the Mercurial hexagram, with the Signs of the Enterer and of Silence, to charge the astrological sign or glyph of Mercury. Vibrating "Hermes" is excellent for this charge, as is "*ARARITA*" for drawing the hexagram. Making the sign of the Rending of the Veil before drawing the hexagram and glyph further helps. It is as though we are rending the veil of the heavens and placing the hexagram and glyph on the other side where our call can be seen/heard by Hermes. Eights and fours are sacred to Hermes, via the Qabalah and the Greeks respectively. They can be applied by adding the strength of circumambulation to the rite, especially between each hexagram-and-glyph call. Tolling a bell with each circumambulation or call adds a resonant base-note to the process.

If the practitioner is seated, reducing much of the above to visualization of the heavens parting, drawing the hexagram and glyph, and then holding the image is very powerful. In this case working the energy before the body in order to create an appropriate atmosphere for Hermes' spirit is particularly important. It is worthwhile to support the process, in either method, with a mantra or chant. Also incense, colors, and offerings aid tremendously.

According to Israel Regardie, this document was originally accompanied by "an illustration which depicted a conventional nude figure of Mercury, with winged helmet and sandals, diving into the sea. In the right hand was the Caduceus, and the left bore a scroll showing the words described in the text" and given below.

This along with the text's description is the visualization to build up for making contact with the God. Sometimes this will spontaneously form, but if it doesn't, it does not matter for the sake of this rite. Instead, by building up the image you give the God a form to animate and articulate, thus communicate with you. Do this with brilliance and intensity. If your practice is perfect, the vision of the God before you may well complete the rite and you could end the practice at this point. This is the classic attainment to the dualistic presence of the God. The God appears as an "other" in front of the practitioner. This is an excellent place from which to speak with the God and receive his teachings.

Also, if your practice is as yet undeveloped and although the form is created there is no deity contact, you may wish to stop here and conclude with the closing invocations, dismissing the elements and sharing the good of the working. Then return to the practice later and strive again. This builds a powerful practice upon its full success.

But if you wish to attain to *union* with the God, continue on.

What follows on the scroll is a summary of the promise of Hermes, what he gives in the attainment of his state. It is also an invocation that leads to that state if we can follow its path. (This is why it is followed by the direct speech of the God, himself.)

The Scroll:	*Translation:*
Lumen est in Deo,	*The Light is in God,*
Lux in homine factum,	*the LVX hath been*
	made into Humanity,

First we are given our pedigree and told that we are created from the light that is in the Divine. This gives us the right to enact this promise and attain to it. It also tells us to attend to the light that is in us, which is that same Divine light. We are to then follow this light through the process. It tells us what to do with our energy.

Sive Sol, Sive Luna,	*Whether Sun, Or Moon,*
Sive Stelloc errantes,	*Or Wandering Stars,*
Omnia in Lux	*all are in LVX,*

Now we are told that we are of the same stuff as the rest of the universe and that all are held in the same embrace. Our experiences of the Sun, Moon, and the planets (i.e., the wandering stars) are all rooted in the same thing, the light or LVX. Here we attend to those rays of energy or strands of light (the causal web) and weave them together into the unity of All. This is done through the harmonizing of all the disparate feelings received through the stands or rays into a felt unity without destroying the contrasts between the feelings. Each thing must be permitted to exist, even along side of its opposite, yet, together forming a complete whole.

Lux in Lumine	*the LUX in the Light,*
Lumen in Centrum,	*the Light in the Center*
Centrum in Circulo,	*the Center in the Circle,*
Circulum ex Nihilo,	*the Circle from the Not*
Quid scis, id eris.	*What thou mayest be,*
	that thou shalt be.[4]

Now we are told that the LVX is not the light of the Divine but it is in it. The difference is that the light is undifferentiated into manifestation, while the LVX has been made manifest as humanity and the stars. The light is of the deeper world out of which our experienced world, the

world of LVX, emerges. But since the LVX is a part of the light we can follow the LVX back to the light. We are to follow the LVX back to the light, and the light back to its center.

This center begets the prime dual of all experience, center and circumference or circle. These two are mutually dependent and thus in finding the one the other is also found. We experience this as the place where we are and our surroundings. The light returning to the center is like water going down a drain, but it is ourselves that stand in the place of the drain, following the light back to its source. Going to its periphery is like a wave pouring out into space in all directions or a sound fading into the distance. We must follow these both back to the birthplace of the light. This double movement is much like the infinitesimal contraction and infinite expansion of the Qabalah's Ain Soph. Yet our goal is the Ain.

When we come to the center of the light we turn our attention to the circumference of that light which is the void out of which the light itself arises. It is through following our way back through creation to the very origins of the Divine, back to the radical openness of the void, that we attain to the promise of Hermes, "That which you have in you to be, you shall be." Since we are one with all things, being of the same essential substance (light) we can become anything.

F.I.A.T.[5]	*Let it be (or become).*
E.S.T.[6]	*It is.*
E.S.T.O.[7]	*Be it so.*
E.R.I.T.[8]	*It shall be (or endure).*
In fidelitate et veritate	*In Faithfulness and Truth*
universas ab aeternitate.	*Universal from Eternity*[9]

This next section has a double meaning. In terms of pure attainment, it is affirming Hermes' promise. Each line affirms this from another viewpoint in time. Let it be; future, the event will happen. It is; present, the event is happening. Be it so; immediate past, the event just happened. It shall be; the past looking towards the future, what has happened will endure. The last two lines are a vow that affirms this unto eternity.

We are moving away from spatial motifs of light and circle into temporal images. This will be fully developed in the last phase.

"Fiat" occurs immediately after "Nihilo" of the previous verse, invoking creation "ex nihilo," out of nothing. This is a central key to all magicks, that we must return to the ground out of which all arises to be able to create. While the verses affirm our ability to reach into that vast potential, they have a parallel meaning and purpose. They can be used as words of power to crystallize a particular intention or act of magick out of the void. One merely needs to affirm that purpose

and follow the curve of the invocation down through the creation process and back out through the final verses. Of course one must first have grasped the essence of the invocation (practice, practice).

The spelled-out notaricons show this plainly. The four elements arise, stable, out of the void with F.I.A.T., E.S.T. The salt is the crystallized but not yet alive intention to be created, and as salt of the Earth it is the fecund potential awaiting animation. The ether of the entire sphere of the universe, E.S.T.O., is then grasped as it can enliven the salt. These two are the fixed and the volatile of the alchemical equation. With E.R.I.T., the ether rushes into the [salt of the] Earth and the intention, the dream, comes to life. Alive in truth, fidelity (to the dream), universal (being a child of the Spirit [read ether] of the whole universe) and taking its place in eternity as a factor in the creation of all subsequent beings.

Nunc Hora.	*Now an Hour,*
Nunc Dies.	*Now a Day,*
Nunc Annus,	*Now a Year,*
Nunc Saeculum,	*Now an Age,*
Omnia Sunt Unum	*All things are One,*
et Omnia in Omnibus.	*and All are in All.*
A.E.T.E.R.N.I.T.A.S.[10]	*ETERNITY.*

With this last section we follow the dream we have given flesh to out along the temporal axis. This is akin to making the Sign of Silence after the Sign of the Enterer or Projecting sign. We must release our dream or intention for it to have its full effect, to become wholly real. Thus we follow it outwards through time. (Is not Tahuti Lord of time?) The wave of our creation's effect spreads outward with our words through the hours, days, years and ages. Then it leaps beyond all such divisions to where All is One and All are in All. With this we cry "AETERNITAS" and let all sensation dissolve. It is good to rest in that openness at this point.

As an aside, while we are resting, I recommend close examination of the spelled-out notaricon of A.E.T.E.R.N.I.T.A.S. Its affirmation of the Tree of Life structure in the essentially open space of eternity is a particularly elegant maneuver to create the manifestation of one's desire.

> *Then Hermes cried aloud, and said: "I am Hermes Mercurius, the Son of God, the messenger uniting Superiors and Inferiors. I exist not without them, and their union is in me. I bathe in the Ocean. I fill the expanse of Air. I penetrate the Depths beneath."*

Now the God speaks. If we have been following the process of the scroll's invocation, with our energy and attention, we are ready to speak the birth-words of Hermes Mercurius. Out of the realm beyond time, from eternity we descend into being now as the God Hermes. If we had fully realized the God before us in the earlier section, he dissolved away into light, then void, during the scroll-invocation. Now we arise in his form, the nude figure of Mercury, with winged helmet and sandals, diving into the sea. In our right hand is the Caduceus, and the left bares a scroll (or a star).[11]

From this state of union we can speak the God's words. One with him we declare our/his nature. These words present a great mystery and upon speaking them, unless we are carried away into rapture with the God, we should remain in silence identifying as strongly as possible with Hermes. We should feel the depths beneath, we should fill the space of the air, we should feel ourselves as between all things and the union of all things, a profound state. What remains of this practice is what to do if we fail to achieve lasting union with the God, or when we fall from the divine rapture.

> *And the Frater who was with me said unto me: "Thus is the Balance of Nature maintained, for this Mercury is the beginning of all movement. This He, this She, this IT,*[12] *is in all things, but hath wings which thou canst not constrain. For when thou sayest 'He is here' he is not here, for by that time he is already away, for he is Eternal Motion and Vibration."*

Here the Frater is none other than ourselves, speaking to us once we have come out of the divine union, explaining the further mysteries of Hermes. This speaks strongly for memorizing the text and for regular practice. Then, when arriving back closer into your more normal frame of mind, the automatic functioning of the well-trained mind will take over, completing the practice with these admonitory words. You will be in the proper state of mind to receive these mysteries and understand them. Once they are understood the next verse is empowered.

> *Nevertheless in Mercury must thou seek all things. Therefore not without reason did our ancient Fraters say that the Great Work was to "Fix the Volatile." There is but one place where he can be fixed, and that is the Center, a center exact. "Centrum in trigono centri."*[13*] *The Center in the triangle of the Center.*

If thine own soul be baseless how wilt thou find a standing point whence to fix the soul of the Universe?

This verse reflects the creation process of the scroll, expanding upon its method. The salt and the ether are the fixed and the volatile while the center and circle, to which has been added the triangle, give the hieroglyph of the light-center-void transformation that we must follow in order to actualize Hermes' promise.

Christus de Christi,	*The Christ from the Christ,*
Mercury de Mercurio,	*The Mercury from the Mercury,*
Per viam crucis	*Through the Path of the Cross*
Per vitam lucis,	*Through the life of the Light,*
Deus te Adjutabitur!	*God shall be Thy Help.*

Of these last three sections, not too much can be well said since their inner meanings are easily seen by those who practice the rite, and remain murky without the experience. Of this very last verse, it would be improper for me to comment since I am not a Christian and thus would not use it in this form. I prefer to change the relevant lines to something more suitable to my worldview.

And so is the end of this work. You have before you enough to guide you to the wide and ancient road that Hermes travels upon. If you would work this way, remember to keep sacred the traveler and the stranger, for you never know if it is Hermes that you entertain. When you are in a room filled with conversation that suddenly and inexplicably lulls, know that invisible Hermes has entered the room. And once you have fulfilled these rites you will be able to bless all. May Hermes Mercurius watch over you in all of your travels!

Endnotes

[1] Found in Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 6th Edition, 1989), pp. 476-477. Also see "Translation of and Notes on Document M" by G.H. Frater S.R.M.D. on page 478 of that book.—CC & STC

[2] Hermes is Greek, Mercury is Roman.

[3] cf. v. 47 *Odyssey*: "Him promptly obeyed the active destroyer of Argus, Forth sped he and under his feet be bound his ambrosial sandals. Then, taking his staff wherewith he the eyes of mortals closeth at will, and the sleeper at will reawakens."

[4] I.e., what thou hast in thyself the capability of being, that thou shalt be (or become).

[5] Flatus. Ignus. Aqua. Terra., i.e., Air, Fire, Water, Earth.

[6] Ether. Sal. Terra. Eather, the Salt of the Earth.

7 Ether. Subtilis. Totius. Orbis. The subtle Ether of the whole universe.

8 Ether. Ruen. In. Terra. The Ether rushing into the Earth.

9 In Universal faithfulness and truth from eternity.

10 The ten letters are notaricons of: Ab Kether. Ex Chokmah. Tu Binah. Ex Chesed. Regina Gebura. Nunc Tiphareth. In Netzach. Totius Hod. Ad Yesod. Saeculorum Malkuth. Meaning, "From the Crown, out of Wisdom—Thou, O Understanding art Mercy, Queen of Severity. Now the perfect Beauty, in the Victory, of all Splendour, for the Foundation, of the Ages of the Universe."

11 Cf. *Cabala: Spigel der Kunst und Natur—in Alchymia*: by Stephan Michalspracher, 1616.

12 Some say this alludes to the Three Principles.

13 This is possibly the Golden Dawn motto of Frater Count Adrian a Meynsicht, otherwise known as Henricus Madathanus.

* (Supplement to footnote #13.) Henricus Madathanus was an early Rosicrucian writer who predated the Golden Dawn by a century or two. MacGregor Mathers' footnote in a Second Order document citing Madathanus as a "Frater" was probably meant to claim him as a "Rosicrucian Frater."—CC & STC

About the Author

Sam Webster, M.Div., Mage, is a student of transformative ritual. The Director of Crescent Ritual Works in the San Francisco Bay Area, he writes and gives workshops on ritual and Pagan culture. He is an Initiate of the A∴A∴, the O.T.O., several Wiccan traditions, several Eastern traditions, and is an adept of the Golden Dawn.

Images of Growth in the Hermetic Arts

Gareth Knight

The Hermetic arts deal with the phenomenon of what the magical Qabalist, Eliphas Levi, has called the *astral light*. And this in turn is closely concerned with the human aura, in terms both of the individual and the group.

For the aura exists, something after the manner of frog spawn, in a sea of light. When we conduct our meetings, (I speak in particular of a magical group, although the principles are relevant to any coming together of persons), their success depends upon the quality of the immediately surrounding sea of light.

There should be an osmosis of astral light, whose laws are analogous to the laws of physical liquid flow, between the various auras of all present. This may be experienced as, and in part may be induced by, a feeling of fellowship and mutual love and respect. This not in any sentimental way, which lowers the quality, or the specific gravity, of the astral light of the group as a whole. For sentimentality is more related to the solar plexus, below the diaphragm, than to the heart, the seat of the higher emotions, which is above.

The gentle eddy and flow of the astral light amongst all participants, (rather than a concourse of hard shells as would be the case in a more formal meeting), enable it to be moulded and caused to flow in patterns by higher beings who may be contacted.

Inner beings with levels of consciousness on the same level as the incarnate participants may well contribute directly themselves to the pool of astral light and assist in its circulation. But in circumstances of higher magic, or of mystical contact and intention, the higher entity contacted may not manifest at the level of the astral light—but come as a presence that irradiates and informs the pattern and substance of the group astral light. This brings about feelings of uplift, enlightenment, and inspiration to those present, in their individual ways. Indeed, if the astral swirlings or patternings have been profoundly affected in this way, it can lead to some considerable feeling of change in the psychological vehicles, that will not always be comfortable. This is because

the individual aura has been affected, either temporarily or more or less permanently by the experience.

It is for these reasons, that group working is generally more effective than solitary working.

The solitary worker is to some extent hoisting himself by his own boot straps. But not entirely, for inner help is always at hand—and aspiration, sincerely, and constantly held, will bring inner help and guidance. As with a team of climbers, an individual can be helped by the presence of others, if necessary even being hauled up bodily on a rope in areas that exceed his ability or his strength. Whereas solitary working depends on the forces of the individual aura, unaided by companions of the way.

However, the actual presence and cooperation of inner beings, built up generally over time, as faith, familiarity, and knowledge increase, can bring about considerable progress, even for individuals, who may be spiritually and psychologically uplifted, their auras cleansed, informed, and changed, by a higher presence acting in any of the ways or the levels that pertain for a magical group.

Ritual, be it complex or simple, hallowed by time or spontaneous, will have its part to play in all of these inner dynamics. For ritual is the expression of an inner pattern, and a pattern that is inspired by, or which represents, spiritual dynamics of a higher level.

Thus in ritual the force flows are more formalized and established. This can have a greater effect through their concentrated channeling, and so ritual can give continuity and momentum to the self expression of a group.

These patterns can also be aided by, and can attract and inform, Elemental beings—which leads to a wider dissemination of the patterns expressed within the ritual. This wider dissemination on the inner levels happens with any magical working, including *ad hoc* spontaneous rites, but these will not generally have the same power as regular formal rites, which gain strength through repetition.

As before said, these principles apply to the meetings of any human group, whether or not they realize, or intend, the involvement of inner plane beings. The world is a wider place than many realize. And incarnate spirits, if truth be told, are rather in the minority. Thus any meeting of people has its quota of inner participants, for better or for ill. All present have their auras with them, whether they realize it or not, and which are not, like ritual robes, put on and taken off for special circumstances. Like the physical body, the aura is there all the time. Emotional and intellectual interchange will therefore be taking place at a subliminal level.

Before the meeting starts these will be like eddy currents, of no uniform flow or purpose. But once proceedings commence, hearts and minds are formed into patterns, and a unified group mind is formed. This can be as effective upon the auras of all participants as any magical ritual.

In the case of musical or theatrical performance this can be a spiritual or uplifting experience, making profound changes in the individual aura. A person can be changed by a moving performance. It will stay in the heart and mind for a very long time, affecting actions and attitudes to life itself.

Performances of mere entertainment, light music or a comedy show are harmless diversions, that can also lighten or lift the spirits, increase humanity and human awareness.

However, you may judge for yourself the kind of inner entity that is attracted to the salacious, the pornographic, the destructive, and the depressive. Do those who take part in it come out uplifted or besmirched? Indeed it can be akin to what is conceived in popular imagination to be a "black magic" ritual.

It is an ambiance of trust, of the family grouped about the fireplace, that is the condition conducive to successful magic. Such was the atmosphere of the extended group, in cottage, in baronial hall, or tribe around a communal fire, listening to extempore telling of tales that led to the building of the myths and legends of the race.

The astral light is pooled in such circumstances and directed by the leader, the story teller, or bard. The communal hearth acts as focus, and indeed is the origin from which the meaning of the word "focus" derives.

You will thus appreciate that the fundamental requirements of magic are very simple. Whether it be verbal communication between the planes, or activity of the astral light that teaches or inspires. It is upon this basis that all else follows, no matter how complex the ritual, or extensive the organization. It is when this fact is lost sight of that desiccation or ossification sets in. When that which was once a living fire, shared by a few friends or fellow workers—followers of a similar ideal—becomes organized into an impersonal structure. Into an edifice instead of an organism. A robot, a machine, rather than a living being.

But by virtue of the simplicity of their basic needs lies the strength of the mysteries, and of intercommunication between the planes. If in any burgeoning group the contact should be lost; corroded like the terminals of a battery that will no longer pass power; or limed like the mouth of a tap that will give only a meager trickle of water; there is always the opportunity for others, commencing from basic structures, to start again from scratch.

Such a situation is of course unfortunate; that a large group inhibit the very things that it set out to demonstrate. Again it is like a spring that comes up in boggy ground that cannot provide a flow for it. The inspiration has been materialized, the waters silted up. It can be very difficult indeed to make the waters flow again in such a situation, and a new spring must be tapped at some other spot. A new rock struck with the wand of the magus to give forth a living flow.

How then is a new spring, a new source of living water to be found? How the rock struck? With which wand, and under what mandate?

It is by the gathering of a few friends with a common purpose. And with a faith in the reality and good will of those in the spiritual world whom they seek to make contact, and from whom they will receive protection, enlightenment, and teaching. This gathering of friends in common purpose and respect is the natural warmth that is spoken of in alchemy. To warm the alchemical still of the "first matter," the *prima materia*. To hatch the cosmic egg of higher consciousness and contact—so that a live chick shall be born. The alchemical bird, that at first needs careful nourishing, but which will grow by due care and process into a powerful creature indeed, a phoenix.

And this element of the alchemical bird being a phoenix is a further indication how the spark of the mysteries, once lit, is passed on. For the original fire, even if largely smothered, banked up by its own ash so that it hardly gives out further light or heat or living flame, can burst forth again. Any ember from that source of inner fire can be fanned by those who know and care, into a new manifestation of the phoenix—which will rise in a blaze of wonder and glory as powerful as ever it was when first hatched, induced, and evoked.

This is a natural path of progress in the mysteries over the course of time. It is to be seen in the history of many occult and esoteric fraternities, indeed in the larger area of religious bodies themselves. The gradual banking down of the original fire, and then resurgence of the flame by the spirit in the heart of some reformer. This can have a major effect, as for instance in the case of St. Francis of Assisi and the medieval church, or have more special local purpose, as in St. Joan of Arc, allied to political destiny aligned to group souls of nations. But at the most humble level it can also apply to simple servers of any tradition, whose love and faith can kindle the holy flame to visible appearance anew.

And remember that we speak of outer demonstration in the material world. A once blazing spiritual fire may have become with time no more than what seems to be a bank of ash covered embers, yet within that pyre may well remain considerable heat. It is a holy source of power

for some considerable time—that will last even while individual embers may flame, catch light but soon be extinguished, like burning straws.

We use the analogy of fire at this point, to demonstrate the power of the spirit as manifest on Earth. This is an alternative image to water, which with its life-giving flow can also demonstrate the power of the spirit. Just as Jesus used the image of seed, in the parable of the sower who went forth to sow.

These three analogues, of water, of fire, and of seed, are all apt analogies of the expression of the spirit within the material world, and are fruitful and instructional to ponder. In Qabalistic terms indeed they may be represented by the Hebrew letters of Mem, Shin and Yod, and all the deep metaphysical dynamics that are associated with these mighty glyphs, but they have their reality and their teaching, too, at a more mundane level as described in images or parables.

Just as the living seed may fall on stony ground, among weeds, on shallow soil, or in good earth and so be a successful expression of burgeoning life, so may there be different conditions pertaining for the fire, the holy fire of illumination and the spirit, or the water, the waters of rebirth and new life.

The fire may catch on the hearth-fire, or the tribal or city fire, if duly prepared with reverence and intention. Or it may be of short and flashy duration amongst a few fragments of dry tinder, giving off much crackle and sparks but soon consumed, having nothing of substance to feed the transforming flame. For fire is an element of transformation, and there must needs be something to transform.

Similarly with the seed. The kingdom of heaven was likened to a mustard seed, a tiny thing, like the widow's mite. But miracle of potential life though it may be, in its possible growth into a mighty tree, it needs the required conditions. Of earth for the roots, and sun and rain and irrigation, and the loving care of those who tend it.

And in the analogy of water, we also see the ways in which the spirit may be expressed in Earth. Whether it comes from tiny mountain spring, or gushing fountain, its direction through streams and rivers, into seas and lakes, or diversion into irrigating the land, or stagnation into marsh and swamp, are all figures of what may happen to the expression of higher consciousness in the lower world of personality and the outer affairs of men.

Fire, water, the seed; three great instructive emblems in the study of magic, which is the science of the transformation of consciousness.

The forming of a magical, or a mystical group, is like planting, nurturing and growing a seed. In the outer world you would take your pot of earth, good fruitful loam, for that provides the source of food for the growing seed when it sends forth its roots.

The containing pot is the physical location of your group. And the earth within, the basic character of those who are associated with it. Should they be of inappropriate character, they will provide a soil that is insufficient, or even hostile, to the growth of the seed. In the botanical world, soil may be too acid or too full of lime, in which case certain types of seed, (or spiritual group or growth in our analogy), will not be sustained. This concerns the mental set, the temperament of those taking part. What their expectations, their previous assumptions, may be. Whether they are mystically or occultly inclined. Whether sentimental, pious, in search of proof, or proud of open-minded skepticism. Those who are utterly skeptical will provide a type of soil that is not conducive to germination or growth at all.

As in the parable, there will be those who provide soil that is too stony, or that has no nutriment in it, or is like a quagmire of shifting sand, or of impervious clay, or drained by giving all to previous growth perhaps. Or those full of poison or disease, the ill-willed and the inherently destructive. Or with needs of their own that pull energy from the good earth around, and take from rather than give to the roots of the seed itself.

Neither must we forget the material conditions upon the outer plane. A suitable place of meeting must be provided, equivalent to the pot or bed for our seed, where suitable people of requisite good-will, faith and character can meet, undisturbed by physical distractions or an unsuitable environment.

This accounts for the outer requirements of our group. A suitable place for suitable people. The equivalent of suitable soil in a suitable pot or plot. There now remain the other factors required for the germination and growth of seed, namely water, heat, and light. In terms of the group these all pertain to the inner planes.

Our seed is the latent inner contact. And remember that seed can exist on its own, awaiting the right circumstances for germination, for a very long time. It has even been known for wheat from ancient Egypt, interred in a pyramid, to germinate after some thousands of years. Thus there are close analogies between the world of botanical fact and the metaphysics of magic.

There are three elements of being in a physical seed—the kernel, the pith and the rind. In human terms these are equivalent to intellect, emotion, and representation; that is, they may be expressed in terms of ideas, aspirations, or images. The three factors of idea, emotion, and image will be the means whereby the living roots and shoots break from the seed into the group.

Ideas and emotions, having broken through the symbolic imagery, will each play their part in further growth. The emotions pertain to the

roots, which pass through into the compost of the mind and soul of the group, and which in time, like a root-ball in a pot, will bind all together. And remember also the fate of a plant that is not potted on, when the roots pack tighter and tighter until no more nutrition is possible. The wise gardener pots on to a larger container that holds more nutritional earth. This is the analogy of the growth of a group.

But the image also holds good for those type of seeds that, by their nature, do not go on to grow large plants. There is a difference of quality here, that is not dependent on quantity. You may grow the seed of a blushing violet, of delightful form and scent, in a small pot. But if your seed is that of an oak tree, then at some stage planting on into open ground is going to be a necessity.

This is the equivalent of a religious group, or sect, that has a presence to be seen by all in the outer world. The average esoteric group, however, is one that grows on to be containable in a large urn, or a reasonable spot in a garden, like a rose, or lily, or fruiting bush. Here the criterion is the quality of form and type of the fruit and flower—not the size to which it might be induced to grow. The principle we seek to show is that of appropriate size of pot to seed, of group and location to seed ideas and aspirations.

The whole pattern of growth and characteristics of any group or plant is in the seed, and that is God-given. Or from a higher plane altogether; the divine or archetypal spiritual mandate that is to be expressed in ideas, emotions, and the symbolic images that contain them.

You can have whatever pot, or earth, you like, and feed it with whatever quantity of water and heat and light you like, but although you may affect the health and rate and state of growth of the plant, you will not change its nature. You can turn an acorn into an oak with due care and attention and passage of time, but you will never turn it into an ash or a pumpkin.

As we have said, the roots pertain to the emotions, and are that which feeds upon the aspiration and ideals of the members of the group. The means of interchange is represented by the life-giving water, which comes from the heavens, or the caring gardener above, and needs to be in circulation for growth and survival of the plant.

Without the seed within, be it remembered, the soil within the pot would be inert. It could stand out in sun and rain, and nothing would happen. The soil would become wet with falling rain or dew, and then dry out in warmth and sun. And this, we might say, is the lot of the ordinary man or woman of the world, or discussion groups which do not contain the necessary seed of esoteric wisdom or inspiration. They, like good soil, may be responsive to the gifts of heaven in

the forms of sun and rain, but without the appropriate seed sewn within, no new life can be created.

Once the plant begins to grow, the seed begins to take emotional input from the group. To take it up, with the inclusion, most importantly, of elements from the individuals involved. As every gardener knows, phosphorus, nitrogen, potassium, are needed for healthy growth of root, leaf, and flower, plus an important range of trace elements. All these are contributions of the souls within the group that form the soil. As members of a group—its earth, its loam—they contribute of their own being. And the human equivalent of the potash, the nitrogen, the phosphorus, and trace elements, is idealism and emotional commitment, expressed as devotion, loyalty, and aspiration.

The other direction of the seed's growth is upward, the green shoots that grow into air and light. In terms of the human group the air is the element of intellect, of intuition, of reason (in its higher and lower sense). The warmth and the light are provided by the spiritual sun.

But be aware too, that not all seeds or plants require unremitting heat or light. Some are natural denizens of shade, or the just and appropriate proportion of light and shade, of heat and coolness. A fern does not flourish in the heat of the sun, a sunflower wilts in the deep shade of the forest. And so with all the species of plant from lush lowland vegetation to those of alpine heights. Thus do groups correspond to a particular habitat in terms of their origin and surrounding culture.

Thus there are some groups that are mystical, some that are magical. Some prefer Qabalah, others Islamic, Christian, Eastern, or indigenous native forms. There is as much diversity in the ways of human groups and individuals towards the spiritual light as there is diversity of flora and fauna upon the earth. And the world would be a somewhat lesser place if all plants were forced to be cabbages, or all animals ten-toed sloths.

We now have a new entity, the growing plant itself, as part of our image of a functioning Hermetic group. Let us recapitulate what this means, with the help of Figure 1.

There is the pot, the soil within, the seed from which the plant has grown, putting forth root and stem and leaf. There is the sun and the rain, the environment of the plant and its container. All of this is part of a unity, a healthy organism properly functioning.

The container is that which is provided on the outer plane, be it hall, temple, living room, or other dedicated space, for the work of the group when it meets together.

The loam is the people within the group, the characters who contribute by their presence and commitment the conditions for the nurturing of the seed.

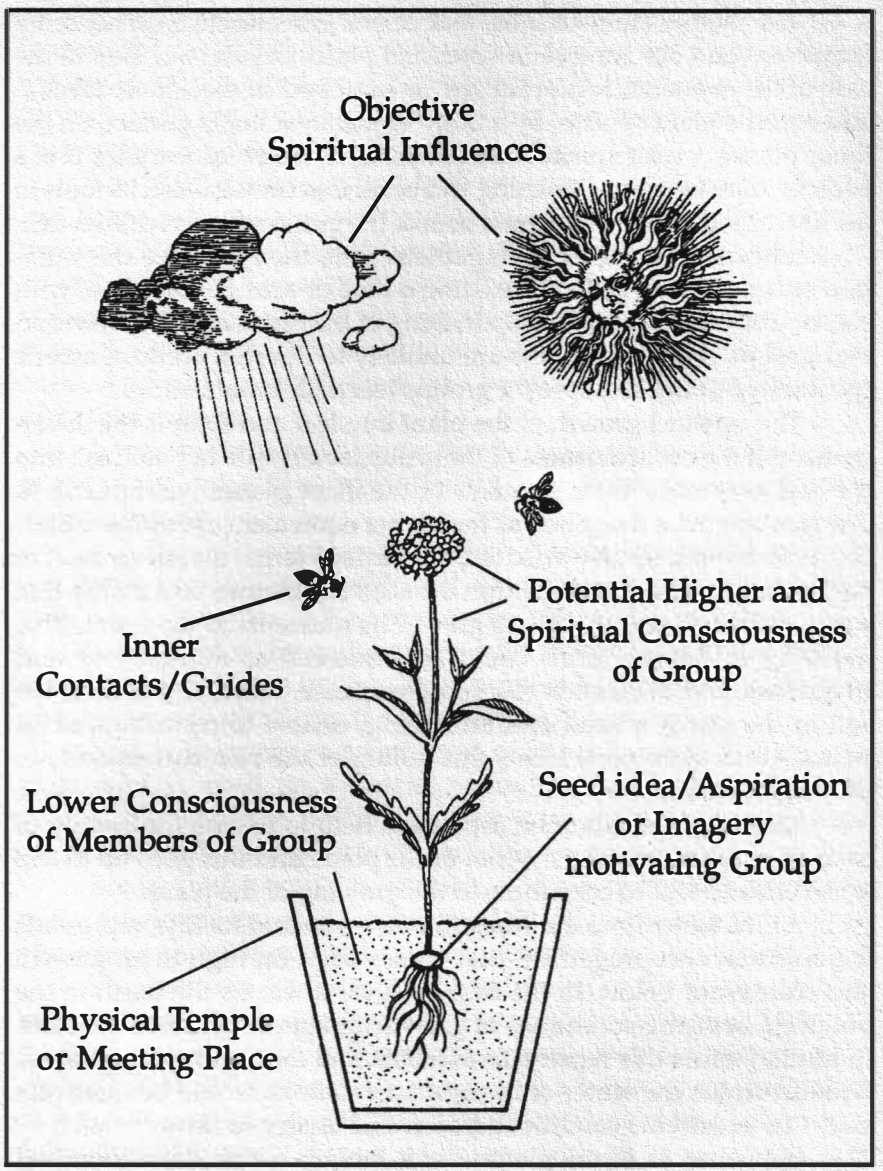


Figure 1: Seeding and Flowering of a Hermetic Group

The seed is the seed idea, that comes into objective existence by factors beyond our control, in times and places beyond our ken. In the case of the mysteries it is produced, as professional seedsmen develop and breed a plant species, by a body of just men made perfect, on the inner planes, under spiritual direction. In its outer appearance it is a body of knowledge and teaching and belief that can establish its roots in the hearts and minds of the members of the group who feel drawn to it.

(Should any not feel sympathetic to it, then we have the situation of lime or acid soil surrounding a lime or acid-hating plant, with consequent inhibition of the flourishing of the plant, at any rate within that group. Thus neo-pagans are unlikely to develop seeds of ascetic spirituality, or mystical prayer groups reach for broom sticks.)

The upward growth of the plant into leaf and stem is the development of the consciousness of the group, at any rate in potential, into the higher worlds. Here elements of the inner planes will nourish it. The rain might be described as the higher equivalent of emotion. Buddhi, or intuition, or love-wisdom, are various terms that describe it in part. It falls onto the earth within the seed's container, and makes that earth moist and fertile, able to give of its nutrients to the plant. This moisture in human terms could be expressed as mutual love and friendship, and dedication to a common cause. Without that love, the soil in the pot is a dead and arid thing, unable to contribute to its potential. In alchemical terms this falling of the rain corresponds to the stage of *solutio.*

This love and common aspiration help to release the quality of each group member into the root of the plant, and this goes up as sap into stem and leaf to contribute to the growing of the plant.

At the same time the warmth of the sun and its rays represents the spiritual encouragement that comes from on high to all growth and endeavour below. In the first instance it warms the Earth in the pot itself, bringing conditions of growth and germination to the seed. In human terms this represents idealism and faith and enthusiasm—without which the water of the human emotions would be relatively cold—or in extreme conditions frozen and unable to flow.

However, as in the plant world, there is a complex action and reaction of photosynthesis in response to the light. The implicit wisdom in the seed of the plant, according to its species and nature, reacts to the spiritual stimuli. This enables the plant to breathe, to survive and to act as a living organism in health and well-being that extend down to the very roots of the plant.

You now see the interior conditions for the growth and well-being of a group. There are also gardeners who feed the plant, sheltering it from too much sun or rain, striving to give it its best conditions

for growth. These are inner plane beings, whether human Adepti or representatives of the angelic hierarchies. And by our participation in the group, as providers, in our personalities in Earth, of conditions of the soil itself, the growing medium, we are participators in our own small way with these spiritual beings.

The plant itself will burst forth eventually into flower and fruiting, later seeding into greater proliferation than before, as a spiritual demonstration of the love and design of the Creator, and of all the creative hierarchies that seek to serve the Creator's vision. For we are talking of the equivalent of the heavenly garden, whose primal image, as far as the Earth is concerned, is the Garden of Eden or Earthly Paradise. And what reason is there for a beautiful garden, but the beauty of its own existence?

It may be apparent by now that what we have been describing, in the visual detail of a growing plant, is an example of one form of magical image.

It is the most common form, that of pictorial analogy, whereby we render simple, by specific and concrete example, that which is abstract and complex. It is a form of reasoning and demonstration that is to be found in many walks of life, from the parables of the Bible, to the pictorial diagrams in popular science books representing the complex forces at work within the atom. Examples are legion.

This is the most common form of image because it is the simplest, and is used as a means of enlightenment, not of power. Although it would be possible to use certain aspects of an enlightening or descriptive image in an experiential or empowering way.

For instance it would be possible, in single or in group meditation to use the simple image of the plant and flower in a more active way, by visualizing a specific part of the process described and identifying with it.

We may take for example the unfolding of the flower, from an enclosed bud. It is a simple exercise in magical dynamics to imagine yourself as the unfolding flower. As a simple exercise of meditation, perhaps stretched over several sessions for a beginner, or undertaken as a group exercise, to gradually feel yourself unfolding to become a fully opened fragrant flower, say a rose, with all its wondrous complexity of beauty and the spiritual fragrance that comes from it.

This is an exercise that not only exercises the visualizing faculties, but by image and intention opens up the latent inner faculties, and you may perceive the inner planes as the flower perceives the sun and the light. And as no act of meditation is ever solitary, so you may become aware of the inner equivalent of the bees, attracted by your blossoming, and of other flowers besides your own that are flowering.

This is a true "communion of saints" for in one, and the original, sense of the term, all who open their senses to the inner worlds are saints.

Nor should we forget the equivalent of the flower fairies of the outer world, who are by no means a figment of sentimental fancy. These beauteous and ancient beings are the servants of the Lords of Mind in untold aeons before human time and conception, who established the laws of botany and biology. These elemental creatures who frame and tend all growth within the outer world, have their equivalent, in human terms, in the ministering spirits and the guides within the inner world, who give us contact with the angelic realms.

Whilst, above all, are the attentions of the gardener, who looks upon all that has been created and brought to pass, of which we, each and every one, are small, but unique and special contributors, loved and admired in the wonder of God, equally with any other part of the creation.

Let us learn to blossom then, for that is the true state of our existence. And this again can be referred to the instructive image of the growing plant. For we may visualize ourselves not only as the blossom but as the whole of the plant as well. The analogy of the plant, in other words, can be seen to have an individual as well as a group application.

Our own inner being is represented by leaves, and stem, and roots within the earth, a kind of interior nervous system that passes from one state of being to another. Our roots in the Earth, our leaves and flowering in the heavens.

Think upon that as an example of instruction, for you can use it too as an image of power to feel your own true being as a creature whose faculties span the planes—for that is an overriding and distinctive human quality. And the way that you can use it is through the active use of magical images, in many forms and ways.

For the imagination is a natural God-given capacity that spans the planes. It is effective within and beyond the material world. We go to the material world for our images, but we should not let ourselves be limited by the bounds of that world. That is to be pot-bound, stunted, completely failing in our wondrous human and spiritual potential.

Our imagination corresponds to the moisture in the soil, and the sap within the roots, stem, leaves, and flower of the plant. And even in the botanical world, no matter what the plant is doing, there is imagination at work. For imagination is the means of creating forms, as well as bringing and sustaining life to them—even if it becomes an automatic and unconscious factor after a time. Yet once formed, as with a species of plant for example, the form cannot readily be changed by further imagination. It can only grow according to its originally imagined pattern. And if imagination is withdrawn, the plant will simply wither.

It follows that there are important magical dynamics to the function of imagination. That by the direction and control of images, we can develop our talents and abilities—or, let them wither on the vine. There are limitations, in that we cannot change ourselves into being what we are not. The archetypal pattern of our being is held in a spiritual seed atom as is that of the plant in the fertilized seed. But we can, by direction of intent and imagination, develop our latent capacities to the full.

Again this is done by means of magical images, sometimes very complex magical images. Those of myth and legend that function by directing imagination and emotion in the right direction for healing or for well-being, on a group as well as individual basis. The leaves of the Tree of Life were also said to be for the healing of nations.

The Hermetic art then, as applied to the magical image of the plant, is the free flowing of imaginal attention from root to flower. In the roots it seeks, and brings about expansion and means of sustenance in the physical world. In the stem it provides the backbone for upward spiritual aspiration—otherwise we would be content to grovel in the earth like beasts. In the leaves it develops the means of inner transformation from the upper air, from the spiritual light. And in the botanical world the leaf itself is the pattern for the flower. The flower is a modified leaf, brought about to be the crowning glory of the plant, a means for effective interchange with bees and insects, bearers of nectar and pollen.

In a sense bees, and similar functioning insects, are functions of flowers—if we look at things for a moment from the point of view of an elemental hierarch. And the equivalent of an elemental hierarch in relation to human spiritual pollination is a fairly high ranked angel. The flower of the plant, and the spiritual star or divine spark of the human being, also contains the new seed, the potential for further future abundance, as well as being a present glory and spiritual fragrance in its own right.

The magical image of plant as representative of the human psyche can be modified to ally it to the magical image of the human spine, and particularly the inner aspect of the human spinal column. We have the nervous system at the level of physical patterning, but there is a more complex etheric patterning beyond that. For any physical organism has a twofold aspect.

There is the patterning of solid and liquid that can be discerned as a framework for manifestation and expression on the physical plane and is alchemically represented by the elements of earth and water. But there is also an etheric patterning for that framework, which is represented by the alchemical elements of air and fire. This

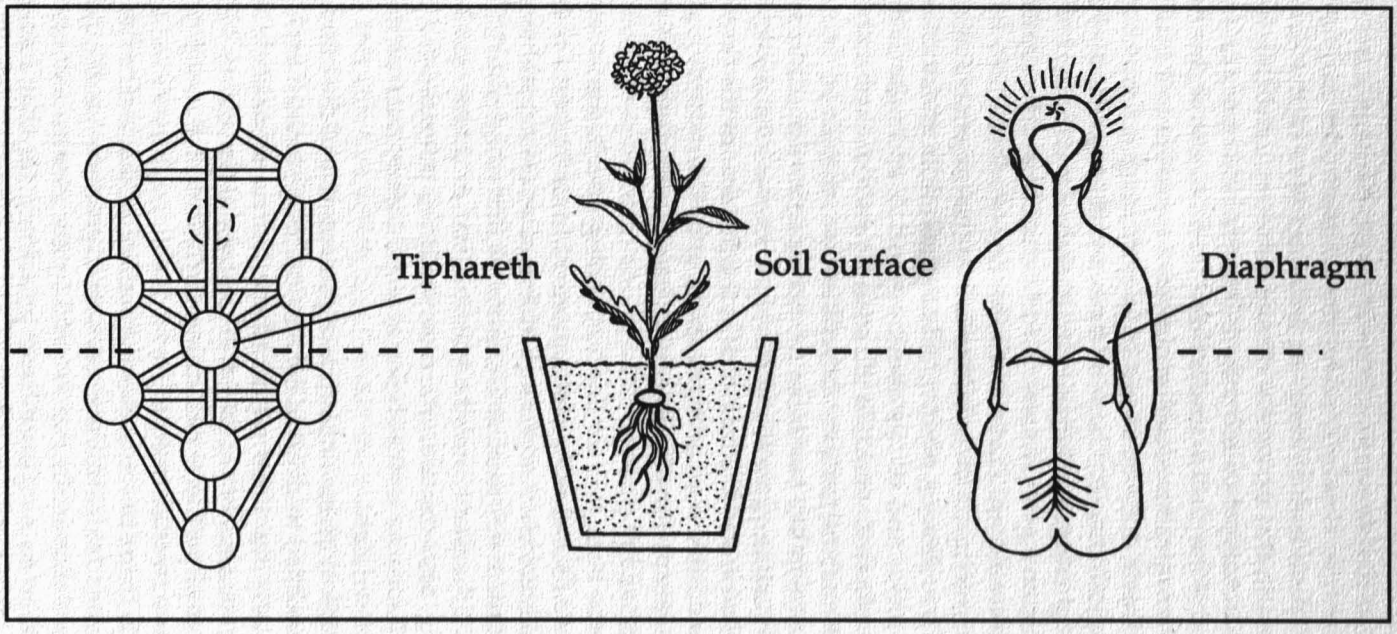


Figure 2: Hermetic Correspondences of the Division between the Upper and Lower Worlds

level is more complex, more extensive, in its way, than the material expression, although that, as we know, can be complex enough.

The detailed processes of the builders of form are intelligent and intricate indeed, and we are ever forced to simplify them when working on the level of the magical images. This applies even to a so-called "inanimate" stone. With all its complexity of atomic and molecular structure, a lump of matter is as extensive in its internal level as the starry universe appears to watchers of the skies. How much then does this apply also to the human organism, with its greater capacity for internal and subjective reaction.

But simplicity and ease of holding before the inner eye are the desiderata of the magical image, for it is by this means that power and comprehension can flow. Thus in terms of magical imagery the human nervous organism that is based around the spine can be likened to the plant. The complex system of nerves at the base of the spine, and much of the autonomic nervous system for the working of the internal organs and the body itself, correspond to the roots of a plant.

The plant and spine analogy has many parallels, one being the diaphragm within the human body. (See Figure 2). In the plant this corresponds to the level of the soil in which the plant grows. All below is the realm of root; all above is of the stem, leaves and flower.

The very bottom roots, searching in the depths of the soil for nourishment of the whole plant, are the physical senses, in their aspect of touch.

The stem itself is the link of inner consciousness between what we call the outer and inner worlds. But as appropriately shown in our image, the outer world is that of air and sun, and inner world of water and earth. The terms inner/outer, higher/lower, are relative, like mirror images—subjective and mirrored reflection being different according to which side of the mirror one's spiritual being is focused, so to speak.

The leaves of the stem represent the inner perceptions which take nourishment from, and interact with the upper outer air, and the spiritual sun. These pertain to psychic centers above the diaphragm. And it is along these lines that the whole structure of yoga is based.

For in yoga, there is a complex system of contrived magical images that correspond with points upon the spinal column, and to an extent with the endocrine glands. Thus by sustained meditation, concentrating upon these visualized images at their various perceived levels, the inner and higher faculties are developed. Even, in certain instances, the development of little known outer powers, which is the *modus operandi* of certain feats of yogic wonder working. This, however, is wonder working only in the comparative terms of

being relatively little known. These are perfectly natural functions of the human organism, albeit developed to an unusual degree, as a concert pianist, or tight rope walker, may develop a particular set of skills to a rare level of accomplishment. Although of course, as in all skills pushed to their limit of expression, an element of personal natural aptitude comes into play.

The head and brain itself, with an important node at the throat, is as important in its way as the diaphragm. For here is represented the heights of spiritual flowering of the inner human organism, the burgeoning of the spiritual seed, the fruiting of its crop.

The same structure is depicted in the fruitful imagery of the Tree of Life. What the chakras and complex system of nadis are to the Eastern system, the Tree of Life and the geometric formation of its spheres and paths, is to the West

On the Tree of Life, the roots, in the way we are looking at things, are to be found in Malkuth, the flower in Kether. The elements of growth that contribute to the transmutation or transition of leaves into flower may be seen as Chokmah and Binah. Indeed these can be regarded as the petals of the flower of which Kether is the stamen and the pistils. And the perfume of the flower is generated in Daath, whilst the element of the beings that respond to it (cosmic bees, so to speak) is to be found in the super-celestial realms the Ain Soph Aur, the Limitless Light.

As we come down the Tree, the side Sephiroth of Chesed and Geburah are as the leaves of the plant, being aware of and reacting to the light and warmth of the upper air, the vehicles of a kind of spiritual photosynthesis.

The Sephiroth of Netzach and Hod are below the ground level, which is represented by Tiphareth. They are the searching and responsive activities of the roots of the plant. Our intellectual and emotional reactions and responses to relationships in the world—the raw data of which is fed in through the sense perceptions of Malkuth.

In Yesod is the etheric/psychic structure—the subtler nervous system, including astral or imaginative inner linkages. All that is conceptualized in psychological theories as the subconscious or unconscious.

In a similar way the psychological equivalent of Tiphareth can be regarded as the superconsciousness, where such is recognized. But we have to remember that most psychological theory is formulated by those who have very little conscious awareness of anything that lies beyond Tiphareth.

Tiphareth, for all practical purposes, is the level of higher vision, where one can build magical images that relate to the higher worlds. The images of Yesod (and Malkuth, which has its own subliminal images also) relate more to the wants and desires of the

lower world, from sexual fantasies to dreams of material possessions; but for the most part, let it be said, to valid and healthy reactions to the everyday world.

The task of Hermetic training is raising the focus of consciousness, the point of the ego, the "I" awareness, up the Middle Pillar. In the animal, or the animal man/woman, the ego centre is toward Malkuth. In the more destiny-oriented person, it approaches Tiphareth. In moving into the higher reaches above Tiphareth it aims to produce the spiritually motivated personality, the Hermetic Adept, and eventually the Magus.

In Golden Dawn terminology, one of the principle aims of Hermetic training is the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. We are not served well in the Hermetic tradition by the lack of definition in many of our terms. For some this may stand for an inner subjective part of the self, that some call the Soul, or the Higher Self. Others may take it to refer to a more objective state of communication and guidance, under the title of Guide, Teacher, Daemon, Master, Secret Chief or Inner Plane Adeptus. The old Qabalistic term was *meggid*.

Moreover the whole subject has been complicated by a fashion for what is generally referred to as "channeling," from a variety of alleged sources, ranging from space men to angels and ancient prophets. As regards psychic contacts, all is not gold that glitters, but there is no real problem, for spurious communication does not stand up well to critical evaluation. But like bad poetry and indifferent guitar playing, there is a tiresome amount of it around.

But, by whatever terms it is described, gradually the Hermetic student becomes more aware, first of his or her own seat of consciousness beyond the Veil at Tiphareth, and then, along with that, the companionship and guidance of objective beneficent and tutelary beings who live and move and have their being at this same exalted level.

In the earlier days of initiation and instruction, these contacts will be subliminal or unconscious, but then slowly dawning into regular consciousness and everyday enlightenment. This is parallel to what may be described as the individual's aura becoming first in touch with, and then integrated with, a part of the aura of the Master.

At some stage this may develop into personal verbal instruction, but it is as well to realize that this is comparatively rare, for if those beyond the Veil can get across their teaching and intentions to their initiates without the clumsy medium of language then they will do so, preferring to drop complete ideas, images, or intuitions into the recipient's mind. Verbal communication is often reserved for those who have a particular vocation for teaching.

Such verbal teaching may be given out without unnecessary reference to the inner plane source, for the thing that matters is the content. But to the actual recipient, and his or her close associates, such an inner plane source may be referred to by name, and visually described, and then some confusion may occur, for the appearance is not necessarily the reality.

This is because of the technology of magical imagery that we have been describing. The concrete mind and the imaginative faculty of the recipient need some kind of conceptualization and visual imagery upon which to focus. In other words, we are dealing with a type of magical image that is seen in terms, not of a symbolic object, but as a symbolic person. However, for the communication to work well, the fiction of the imaginary has to be believed in. This, however, can raise some misunderstandings with those who are not aware of this element in the Hermetic imaginal process.

As Dion Fortune was fond of saying, an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory, so it may be helpful for me to conclude with a specific example. Here then, is the response I received from one such contact whom a sincere investigator had asked me to question as to his identity. The communicator involved has been around, to initiates of my particular school, for some seventy years, appearing in the form of a British army officer of the First World War.

> *You have been asked for more details of my last incarnation on Earth. To try to answer this kind of question is, however, to risk misleading as much as giving enlightenment or instruction. It is rather difficult to get this point over. For it will ever seem to the mind that is focused upon pin points, (or figurative map references), in Earth, an evasion. "Either you know where you are or you don't" is the natural response of the one who seeks such firm reference points. The numerical coordinates of a state of transitory being fixed within place and time.*
>
> *It is, however, leading the mind, the focus of consciousness, of the one who seeks enlightenment and instruction from us, in the wrong way. Back down into Earth. Pinning, defining, the free flowing source of communication into a concretely defined object of and for investigation. The polarities become twisted and reversed. It is rather like a beetle peering up the wrong end of a microscope to see the tiny eye, (as it will appear to him), of the observer upon the inner planes.*

In the process of communication we give you certain images. That is, forms that you may hold within the imagination, that will act as a focus for new comment or communication, help given to you from the world of souls.

This world is not a world of resuscitated personalities. What you regard as a personality is either absorbed into the essence of the higher being, (either at soul or spiritual level), or is in the rather unhealthy unabsorbed condition of being a "shell," perhaps partly attached to the inner being who gave rise to it, although sometimes apparently free standing, or else ensouled by another—although here we verge upon pathologies of the unseen that are not our concern for the moment.

The forms that you are given by the Masters who seek to communicate are generalized rather than particular, (within reasonable limits), as this gives a better, more comfortable, more effective state for force flow, especially in terms of communication between us.

It would be too generalized if we were merely to come to you as a personality "type." In this event the communications would have a vagueness, a nebulous air about them as is characterized by many forms of "new age" communication. On the other hand, too close a focus, as in the spiritualists' concern with personalities of the personally related departed, is too constricting. How much wisdom has come from family circles with an ouija board?

We who seek to teach you from the world of souls come therefore in forms that are specific enough to crystallize within your consciousness as a communicating personality a little wiser than yourselves. Thus you learn to give us names. And names, (another form of magical image), are words of power. They enable us, and you, to focus onto a particular "dedicated vortex" that forms, if you like, our personal mobile telephone. Or in another way, the forms you imagine are like images upon a kind of astral satellite dish that serve to focus in to that particular frequency.

As has been said to you before, and as you have had the good sense to quote far and wide, who we are you cannot imagine, and it is a waste of time for you to try. But we are close enough in being, to tune in, to focus on to the images that

we have, by various means of establishing them, agreed to use. And the proof of their validity is in their use.

You will gain very little in trying to exhume the remains of the personalities whose images we use, upon the physical plane. I speak of course in figurative terms—although I would not put it past someone trying to go the whole hog. After all, that is the rationale behind "relics." However, the function of relics is as much psychological as magnetic, as I think we have already explained.

Certain characteristics of those personalities involved, that we use as an imaginal focus, can be a help to you, just as in a novel a fictional character is built up to a state of imposing or convincing reality.

The principles are exactly the same. And thus, did we choose, we could have used the characters of fiction, had it seemed more pertinent to our cause. Many characters, from Dickens or Shakespeare, would do as well as those we have chosen from history, which is of course, at the level at which we are speaking, another form of fiction.

In some ways "fictional" characters as forms of magical focus would have their advantages. The problem would be one of credibility. How many would respect communications from Mr. Pickwick? Although he has indeed brought help and healing and inspiration in terms of human values to many. Fairy tales, or those such as those of Tolkien, give an area of greater "suspension of disbelief" at whatever points you prefer to identify upon the spectrum between faith and credulity.

Popular figures from history, or popular culture, thus give an ideal compromise, but run the risk of being too closely identified with actual personalities of former times. This risk becomes less the remoter the image in historical terms, but you will have noticed a "scale of communication," in terms of degree of abstraction, moral content, approach toward topicality, in what you have already received under the aegis of forms differently placed in time.

And you must go on believing in these characters. We are real actors behind the masks. All we ask is that you do not identify us too closely with those masks; or realizing that

they are masks, discard us as being as unreal as you may think that they are.

They are real upon the level of the astral plane of communication between us. You are real, and we are real. Keep that triangular form going, that operative vortex, and greater truth will gradually dawn.

Delving around for "evidence" though, is not a way to go. You are following a will o' the whisp. A corpse light. It will land you into many boggy areas rather than to the higher ground to which we seek to lead you.

The light we raise before you is real. It may be in a turnip head in celebration of Hallowe'en, but remember that "All Souls" are a veritable reality beyond the Earth. Do not delve too much among the turnips, the mangold wurzels, to see where the light comes from!

This last reference to the practice of putting candles within hollowed out vegetables was a topical allusion to the date this communication was received, (Hallowe'en 1993), and may also serve to demonstrate that those behind the teaching of the Hermetic arts are not without a sense of humour along with a sense of purpose.

We should perhaps conclude with an attempt to answer a question that is sometimes asked and which very much relates to our purpose when pursuing the Hermetic arts. Why all the emphasis upon service? Why become involved with the concept of "masters" and service to a beneficent hierarchy?

The answer to this is one of safeguard, for pursuit of the Hermetic arts needs to be part of an ongoing program of spiritual and ethical development. This is because the inner worlds, of which the outer world is a reflection, are as riven with the knowledge of good and of evil as the world we see about us. This is graphically illustrated in a Golden Dawn glyph, the Garden of Eden after the Fall, where the heads of the serpent are seen to rise up as far as Daath.

In practical terms this means that we need to approach inner plane powers with some in-built precaution. By virtue of the fact that they are inner planes, beings and forces there have a greater potency than those we are used to in the outer world. The increasing scale of potency of inner planes, according to some authorities, goes up logorithmically by a kind of square law.

There is also another fundamental law that applies upon the inner planes. This is that "Like attracts Like." This means that if we approach

the inner planes in a spirit of dedicated service we will automatically find ourselves in the company of beneficent spirits and fellow helpers whose being is focused upon altruistic service and ethical motives.

If, however, we approach the inner planes with intentions that are self-centered, then we attract the attention of another type of being altogether, whose motives, a reflection of our own, are supremely self-centered. And this type of being does not seek fellow servers of the spiritual light, but rather servants to itself, ultimately dupes, victims, slaves to the self-destructive darkness.

Thus may be seen the peril that awaits any who strive to draw aside the Veil of Isis without pure motivation and benevolent guidance. Those who seek to do so in a spirit of piece-meal experimentation or personal curiosity are taking something of a risk. But those whose motives are for personal gain, or self gratification, are in danger of opening a Pandora's box of furies. For let there be no mistake, the *sine qua non* of passing beyond the Veil is service to higher powers. No one is an island, and least so on the inner planes. So the ultimate choice is simple. Service to the servants of light, or servitude to the lords of darkness. There is, in this instance, no viable middle way.

And that is why the main thrust of teaching symbolism in schools of the Hermetic arts is couched in terms of growth toward the light.

About the Author

Gareth Knight was trained in the Hermetic arts in the Society of the Inner Light, the fraternity founded by Dion Fortune, herself a former initiate of the Golden Dawn. Early in his career he wrote *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism*, a well known analysis of the Tree of Life using the Golden Dawn system of attributions. Subsequently he has devoted much of his time to training methods in the Hermetic arts. Two of his more recently published books in the United States should be of particular interest to Hermetic students: *Magic and the Western Mind* (Llewellyn) which covers the historical background of the tradition, and *Experience of the Inner Worlds* (Weiser) which deals with modern practicalities and a system of self development.

Magical Notebooks

A Survey of the Grimoires in the Golden Dawn

Mitch and Gail Henson

The grimoires are books of magic that predate the Golden Dawn by several centuries and consequently have developed, through the practice of many magicians, a validation of their own. Usually, one thinks of these grimoires as they relate to the somewhat strange and wholly obscure alchemical tracts that flourished from the 15th century through the 18th century, or the translations of Greek classical literature that were popularized during the Renaissance. However, these books of magic, somewhat clouded by time and notoriety, were the magical notebooks of famous and infamous magicians. These textbooks on magic circulated from ancient times until the modern era. They became known as grimoires, a word meaning *grammars* (the etymology indicating a word of French origin) and were in fact, the personal scientific journals of practicing magicians. Even though quite a small number of these seem to have survived into the present, I would surmise that they were very popular among the scholars of their time, in spite of the fact that few of the writers of the period would ever dream of attaching their own names to these magical grammars for fear of a non-secular authority, preferring instead to attribute many of these works to long deceased authors who had nothing to lose.

It seems clear these magical notebooks were circulated widely since many of them survive in multiple translation. In any event, tantalizing titles such as *The Grimorium Verum, The Greater Key of Solomon, The Black Pullet, The Lemegeton,* and *The Sword of Moses* could be counted on to evoke a certain mystique in the minds of scholars and church clergy. What mysteries some of these works contained is the focus of this article. Because of the depth and breadth of the subject, we will content ourselves with a discussion of only those grimoires translated by S. L. Mathers that were circulated in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn at the turn of the century. These were limited to: *The Greater Key of Solomon, The Goetia* (the first book of the *Lemegeton), The Grimoire of Armadel* and *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin.*

Our discussion of these grimoires is tempered with an admission that the values of the texts are defined by the Golden Dawn tradition within the context of this article. This does not mean that they cannot be worked outside the ceremonies adumbrated within the Order. It would be the height of arrogance to insist that Golden Dawn technique is all that the blanket discipline of magic has to offer.

The later additions to much of the material originally found scattered in the grimoires by the Golden Dawn, contained within Order ritual texts, include safety valves to protect magicians who work with these powerful magical source books.

The Greater Key of Solomon

Certainly the most infamous of the grimoires was the *Clavicula Solomonis*, or *The Greater Key of Solomon*. From a modern perspective (along with the first book of *The Lemegeton*; aka *Clavicula Solomonis, Goetia*) it has been continuously in print since its English translation by S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers in 1888. Though, one might note, it existed only in a pirated edition from DeLaurence for most of that period.

Donald Tyson, in his monumental edition of *The Three Books of Occult Philosophy* by Henry Cornelius Agrippa[1] states, in referring to *The Greater Key of Solomon's* English translation by S. L. Mathers:

> *A composite version based upon seven manuscripts in the British Museum Library: one in 16th century Latin, one in Italian and five in French. Unfortunately Mathers saw fit to expurgate the more diabolical passages.*

Tyson sheds no light on what some of these passages might have contained. In any event and for the record, Mathers tells us in his introduction, the passages he deleted were not from the *Greater Key* but were later additions from *The Grimorium Verum* and *Clavicola di Salomone Ridolta.*

Francis King, in his *Rites of Modern Occult Magic*,[2] states:

> *It is surprising to note that A. E. Waite believed that The Greater Key of Solomon was a late Medieval forgery in spite of the fact that Josephus*[3] *specifically referred to Jewish magical works attributed to Solomon. While Waite's view may have been tenable when he first put it forward in his Book of*

> *Black Magic and Pacts it is amazing that he still clung to it when he published his Book of Ceremonial Magic—for eight years previously a copy of the Hebrew original had been discovered in the library of a deceased Rabbi and a full description of it published by a Jewish scholar of considerable repute. In fact there seems little doubt that the Key as we have it is a slightly Christianized version of a Qabalistic magical system of considerable antiquity.*

Ten years later in his (King's) introduction to *The Grimoire of Armadel*[4] he seems to have changed his mind, or at least modified the implication that the text to the *Greater Key* was genuine by stating:

> *On the other hand he (Mathers) naively assigned the authorship of the grimoire to King Solomon, airily remarking that he saw "no reason to doubt the tradition which assigns the authorship of the key to King Solomon."*

Which is just as well since he gives us no references, leading us to conclude that the manuscript and the Jewish scholar may or may not have existed.

King goes on to state in *The Grimoire of Armadel*, as did Tyson in his note in *The Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, that Mathers bowdlerized the text as much as his conscience would allow and explained some of the passages dealing with "blood and black magic" as allegory.

Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah in *Occultism: Its Theory and Practice*[5] appears to confirm King's earlier statement that a Hebrew text, *Mafteah Shelomoh* did, in fact, exist. At least Shah reports that it was *"mentioned by Gedaliah ibn Yahya in his kabbalistic work, Shalshelet he-Kabbala, 1697."* There is one point that we can be certain of; the body of Solomonic literature is extensive, indicating an ancient and long standing tradition. The question of authenticity, at this late date, is no longer germane because the whole body of literature surrounding *The Key*, including direct plagiarisms, seems to indicate against its being anything but genuine, except in so far as it being a sincere text. It is clear that there are a number of Christian interpolations, in the body of the text, that argue against a pure translation. This leads us to conclude that a link with an original specific text is questionable or at best inconclusive. In any event, we are quick to state that assigning it to the Biblical king is probably nonsense.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, mentions a book by King Solomon containing incantations for summoning up spirits. This is

probably fanciful conjecture on his part. As far as we can ascertain there is no solid evidence that King Solomon wrote such a text.

It seems that the earliest written versions of *The Key* date from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Mathers in his Preface to *The Greater Key of Solomon* tells us:

> *Of all these 10,862 Add. MSS. is the oldest, its date being about the end of the sixteenth century.*

The text of *The Greater Key of Solomon*, as translated by Mathers, though a bibliographical composite, is legitimately a traditional work and should not be thought of as a medieval forgery. At some point the reader is going to have to take the editor's word that he (Mathers) is satisfied with the veracity of the texts he had been working with.

In the following examination of the text of *The Greater Key of Solomon*, the reader will note that the unknown writer(s) provide us with a tradition for the book.

The first page contains a "Preliminary Discourse." This explains that the existence of *The Key* is an inheritance to Solomon's son Roboam (sic). It also states that the original text was in Hebrew and that it was translated into Latin by Rabbi Abognazar. There is then given a somewhat fanciful history of how the Latin "fell into the hands of the Archbishop of Arles" and how it was translated into the vulgar tongue.

This is followed by two subsequent introductions, the first going to some length to give it a Biblical flavor, cautioning secrecy lest the book should fall into the hands of the wicked. Part of Introduction One has an almost Rosicrucian undercurrent. We are told that after the death of the great Biblical king "certain Babylonian Philosophers" came to his sepulcher to renew it. After this had been done, an Ivory casket was discovered containing the "Key of the Secrets." The text seems to have been unreadable, until one of the Babylonians prayed to God for understanding and the book was opened to him. There is a point here worth considering. A tradition is being established to prevent the profane from misusing the text by being unable read the book.

The second introduction gives more of the same but sets the tone for the rest of the work by giving the reader some hints as to what will follow. The particular importance of the second introduction is the inclusion of a table of planetary hours, along with a second table of magical names of the hours and of the angels who rule them, and finally a third table of archangels, angels, metals, days of the week and colors attributed to each of the planets.

Thus we are ready to begin Book One of one of the most celebrated grimoires of the medieval period. The first chapter is the sound advice that *the acquisition of magic is through the power of God.* More to the point, it states that the only way an operation will be successful is if the planetary hours and the phases of the moon are observed.

Chapter II goes into a detailed discourse on the days, hours and the planets. It names the planets in Hebrew and English and explains the rulership of the planets over the hours of the day.

Chapter III moves along into the nitty-gritty by dividing the ceremonies into two types—those within the circle, and those without. The ceremonies within the circle are holy acts and the magician and his disciples are given instructions on the proper methods of fasting, cleanliness, prayer, and even the weather. Next we are told the proper methods whereby the circle is cast. Here it becomes certain that the original founders of the Golden Dawn were able to appropriate the four forms of the hexagram used in the Lesser Hexagram Rituals of the Order from the magic circle as presented in Figure 2 of the Weiser edition.

In casting the circle, one should note the detail with which it is defined. The text indicates that the circle will vary somewhat according to the Being evoked. We are told that the implement used to trace the circle will depend on the work at hand. Our choice is the knife, the sickle or the sword to cast the circle. There seems to be a great deal of concern about how much protection the circle is designed to provide. We note that there are, at least, three circles drawn, inside a double square. Nothing is placed within the double square, except four overlapping circles on the corners of the square. Inside each of the small circles is a censer, and above each censer is written one of the holy names; AL in the East, ADONI in the North, YAH in the West, and AGLA in the South. In the first outer circle are traced the four hexagrams, one to each quarter, followed by a divine name. In the inner circle are four Hebrew Tau's in each of the quarters. The geometric figures are given in exact dimensions. One must assume that no other size circle will do. The magician is then exhorted to recite a fairly lengthy list of Psalms, either during the casting of the circle or just after the circle has been cast.

Next we are entertained with a prayer designed to banish the circle by exhorting all demons to flee from the place of working. This is followed by another prayer that God might bless the circle and give his protection therein. After the second prayer, the magician puts on a crown to claim his sovereignty. Next are instructions concerning the pentacles or medals. What follows is the first of many conjurations given in the text.

As a conjuration the note is cautionary; in supplication the magician asks God to work through him to bring forth his angels and/or

spirits for whatever he might require. After a full page of this type of recitation, and confident that the power of God acting through the magician dare not be disobeyed, he makes a simple command: *"Obey me then, by the power of these Holy Names, and by these Mysterious Symbols of the Secret of Secrets."* Of course the magician is aware that there are reasons that, even angels and spirits might be hindered from coming forth at the Lord's command. For if *"they be hindered, detained, or occupied in some way, and so they cannot come, or if they be unwilling to come"* then the magician is instructed to perform the suffumigations and the censings again and to recast the circle.

In Chapter IV the magician makes confession; approximately two pages of self-abuse followed by a prayer. We get more of the same in Chapters V, VI, and VII. Chapter VII adds a "License to Depart," followed by another more forceful "License to depart" just in case the spirit might not want to leave.

Chapter VIII gives us instructions on constructing the pentacles. With Chapter IX begins a series of practical applications for *The Greater Key*. Now, we are going to learn, among other things, "Of the experiment concerning things stolen..." and "How to know who has committed a theft." The following chapters offer more of the same, "Of the experiment of Invisibility," "To hinder a sportsman from killing any game," and "How to make magic garters." This last is a method of rapid transit, by the way. "How to make a magic carpet," "How to render thyself master of a treasure possessed by Spirits," "Of the experiment of seeking favor and love," and so on, ad nauseam. In other words, Chapter IX through XVII amount to so much hogwash, probably inserted to discourage any persons seeking to use magic for a selfish end. Granted this is pure speculation and more than half rationalization, but the fact of the matter is that *The Greater Key of Solomon* is an anonymous text of uncertain date or origin and we will never know for sure the intent of the writer or writers.

The last chapter in Book One concerns the holy pentacles or medals. It is here that the thinking magician, the true sage, is given the hint to ignore the scatology in the preceding nine chapters. We are told that through the pentacles we will acquire grace and goodwill from man and woman, that we need not live in fear, and that a divine protection will be ours. The real importance of this chapter is that the magician is exhorted to take up the work to the glory of the Divine. He is cursed if he should take this work up for an evil end. An evil end could well be interpreted to mean any of the objectives in the preceding nine chapters.

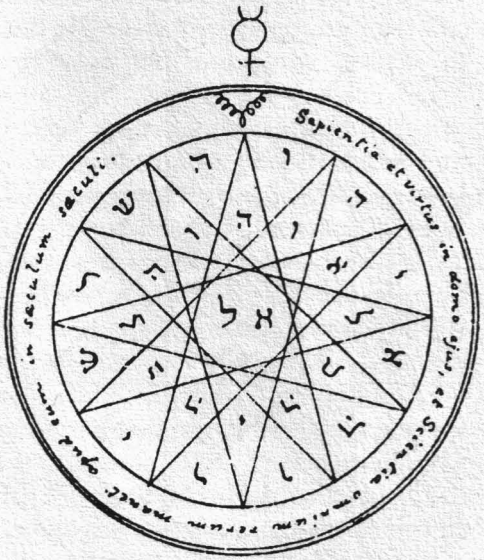
The next section deals with the pentacles and how they are marked, along with their consecrations, colors, and usage. These are divided up into seven orders:

1. Seven pentacles consecrated to Saturn—black
2. Seven pentacles consecrated to Jupiter—blue
3. Seven pentacles consecrated to Mars—red
4. Seven pentacles consecrated to the Sun—yellow
5. Five pentacles consecrated to Venus—green
6. Five pentacles consecrated to Mercury—mixed colors
7. Six pentacles consecrated to the Moon—silver

According to the tradition as outlined in the Solomonic text, the pentacles are used "for the purpose of striking terror into the spirits and reducing them to obedience..." This approach is virtually identical to the medieval policy of both church and state to keep their respective subjects in check.

The pentacles can, and should, be adapted to form a more appropriate function as talismans for today's Golden Dawn magician.

The type of ceremonial contained in *The Greater Key of Solomon* is a hierarchical system of planetary magic. The forces actually evoked are the blind unremitting planetary spirits which, in later Golden Dawn teachings, are controlled by the planetary angels through the Intelligence of the planet. It is this that distinguishes *The Greater Key* from contemporary Goetic grimoires.



The Fourth Pentacle of Mercury

A Mercury Talisman

It appears from an examination of the pentacles (more properly talismans) in today's enlightened context, that the fourth pentacle of Jupiter is the closest to being workable within the tradition later developed by the Golden Dawn. Even so, like Lovecraft's *Azothoth*, it is bereft of intelligence. On all planetary talismans the magician must include, at the very least, three symbols: the seal of the planet, the sigil of the intelligence, and the sigil of the spirit of the planet as outlined by the Order. A sigil is the name of the intelligence and/or spirit in Hebrew, and reduced by *Aiq Bekr*, then traced through a kamea (magic square) of the planet.

Kameas are a series of numbered squares set up on a grid that will add to the same sum horizontally, vertically, and on the main diagonals. (See Chic and Sandra Tabatha Cicero's *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition* for a complete explanation of magical squares.)

The pentacles shown in the *Greater Key of Solomon* are woefully incomplete and should be reworked to include the sigils of the forces to be evoked into the Triangle of Art.

The talisman pictured here, the fourth pentacle of Mercury, is taken from *The Greater Key* and illustrates several features that do not correspond well with talismanic magic as taught by the Golden Dawn.

The reader will note that the figure in the center is a dodekagram, a twelve pointed star. It would seem that an octagram would make better sense. Rather than change the integrity of the figure, we will add a bar and attach it to a second pentacle. Our second pentacle on page 246 contains an octagram along with the linear figures of the planetary sigils.

Note that there are no symbols with either a direct or indirect relationship to the planet in the first pentacle, though the verses in Hebrew and Latin bear directly on the ideas exemplified by Mercury, "IHVH, fix thou the volatile, and let there be unto the void restriction," and "Wisdom and virtue are in his house, and the knowledge of all things remaineth with him for ever." The second sentence indicates that the magician will not forget the knowledge he plans to acquire; while the concepts inherent in wisdom and knowledge pertain specifically to Chokmah and Binah but are reflected in Hod where the magician is able to manipulate them so that he or she will be better able to assimilate and grasp these ideas. These concepts are carried over to the second pentacle where we have also included the tarot trump *The Magician* to illustrate the magician in the midst of the elements.

To bring the original pentacle in line with traditional Golden Dawn talismanic magic, we have added the zodiacal attributions to the twelve points and included the names *Elohim Tzabaoth* and

Michael. This is to show a relationship between both sides of the newly formed pentacle.

Getting back to the *Clavicula Solomonis;* in Book Two, Chapter XVI, the use of blood is mentioned once: "Of the blood of the bat, pigeon, and other animals" which is extracted from the animal using a needle. This is not to be taken as a blood sacrifice and, in spite of Mathers warning, "that the use is more or less connected with black magic; and that it should be avoided as much as possible" is nonsense. Animal sacrifice is not part of magic, per se, but there is a legitimate use for it under some circumstances—Santeria and Islam contain ceremonies where animal sacrifice is required. In Santeria the meat of the animal is distributed among the poor, and in Islam when a house is blessed by the slaying of a lamb, the meat provides the celebratory meal.

Book Two is an enhanced repetition of Book One and is the actual *Key* of the *Clavicula Solomonis*. It is in this section that the reader is given greater detail surrounding the magic that he or she will be working. This leads one to speculate that the original texts may have been passed around to aspiring magicians in two separate parts.

It is at this juncture we will leave the *Greater Key of Solomon* to examine *The Goetia*, part one of *The Lemegeton*.

The Goetia

The Goetia currently appears in no less than four editions and a separate card set. This is unprecedented for any available text on ceremonial magic and needs to be examined in some detail.

Before we get too far along in our examination of *The Goetia*, it might not be a bad idea to clear up some misconceptions and interesting deceptions. Currently all of the available texts are reprinted from Aleister Crowley's 1904 edition published by his tongue-in-cheek "Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth." This is the first deception. Though it is often stated that Crowley commissioned the work and that it was translated by S. L. Mathers and edited by the old Beast, this is simply not true. *The Goetia* was copied from manuscript Number 2731 from the Sloane collection in the British museum. There was and is nothing to translate since the text is in English. I suspect that Mathers organized the contents and Crowley simply pirated it.

In Crowley's introduction he states that several variant texts were used and gives us a parallel view of those manuscripts. Part One of *The Lemegeton* is the text from which Mathers copied the edition of *The Goetia* as originally printed by Crowley.

The next misconception is "The Preliminary Invocation to the Goetia." This was "The Bornless Ritual," an unofficial Golden Dawn ritual that was widely circulated among Adepts of the Order. It was derived from a Graeco-Egyptian manuscript[6] and bears no relationship to *The Goetia* whatsoever, except in so far as to indicate that Crowley was on the right track and that even at this early date in his career, he was fully aware the one must ascend to the mystical marriage of one's Holy Guardian Angel in order to be able to command the realms of the spirit. If anything, it is more germane to *The Sacred Magic Of Abra-Melin the Mage* which we will discuss in more detail a little later.

Overall the book is an interesting anomaly. On the page following the title page, he included an Abra-Melin square to prevent the use of magic. Perhaps he intended this to be a safety valve. Subsequent experience has shown, however, that an unconsecreated Abra-Melin square is less than useless.

In the Preface he soundly castigates Mathers in an attempt to justify his break with the fallen Golden Dawn Chief. His argument is a weak and stupid rationalization, as if he had not gone to the trouble of slyly insulting Mathers on the title page by referring to his initiator as a "Dead Hand." With the exception of *Moonchild* this is probably Crowley at his worst. With interesting wit he closes the text "Given forth from our Mountain of A...," presumably, Abiegnus, the mystic mountain retreat of the original Rosicrucians. This is particularly interesting since Crowley, at this point, had given up all magic as futile and embraced the rational view of Buddhism which is expressed in his introductory essay, "The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic." Though we might suggest that Crowley may have been formulating his own magical order at this early date. This would later become his bid as the head of a psuedo-Golden Dawn group through the authority of the Secret Chiefs of the A.·.A.·. (i.e., Crowley).

My criticism of Crowley should be tempered with a statement that I feel Aleister Crowley to be one of the greatest magicians of the 20th century. That does not mean that I am unable to recognize those incidents and periods in his life when he could be a petty louse.

Before we get into the text of *The Goetia* it seems we are into a fairly well defined dichotomy as far as Crowley is concerned. His conceit has gone well beyond acceptable limits, while as a counterpoint, he managed to produce one of the finest essays on ceremonial magic ever written.

"The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic" takes magic out of the realm of the supra-natural and defines it effectively within the limitations of the psychology of Crowley's day. In spite of its brevity, Crowley postulates that all ceremonial magic can be redefined

from a subjective standpoint by referring the effects that the magician produces to those of one's personal perspective.

With a final flourish Crowley appends the seventy-twofold divine name, *Shem ha-Mephorash*,[7] as an introit to the listing of the seventy-two Goetic spirits and translates the Goetic evocations into Enochian. Priscilla Schwei perpetuates Crowley's witticism in her *Wisdom of Solomon* card set[8] by giving the orders of Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, and Powers zodiacal attributions. For the modern magician this helps to fully define the nature of the spirits he or she is working with and allows one a better reference. A humorous point of interest is Anton La Vey's use of the name in his Satanic psychodramas of the 1960s and early 1970s. As he opens his temple he declares, "SHEM HAMPHORASH," with little or no regard to the fact that it is a deific name of Light. Apparently he just assumes, because Crowley used it in *The Goetia*, that it really does refer to the Goetic spirits. (It may have been more appropriate to the philosophy of his First Church of Satan if La Vey had used an opening like, "Champaign for us!")

The text of *The Goetia* begins with a detailed list of the spirits, their names, influences, and the number of other spirits under their respective commands. There seems to be an inference that the spirits are planetary, though we cannot really be sure. The spirits are attributed to the metals which, in turn, have planetary correspondences. Iron, the metal for Mars is missing, leading us to conclude that there are no Goetic spirits of a martial nature.

After the listing of the seventy-two spirits there are the usual conjurations, constraints, and Licenses to Depart.

As stated earlier, the book is currently available in several separate editions ranging from two nicely presented facsimile volumes to an overpriced cheap trade paperback edition. The trade, alternately called, *Aleister Crowley's Illustrated Goetia* is produced by New Falcon Press and adds nothing to the overall integrity of the work. Lon Milo DuQuette's commentary is a witty, informative, and and exceptionally lucid interpretation of Goetic work. I wish I could say the same for Chris Hyatt's comments, which simply amount to so much gobbledygook. I'm not really sure if I would want to use the astral trash, represented by Goetic spirits, as part of a sexual exercise as outlined by Hyatt. Likewise, the illustrations are poorly executed and add nothing of value to this edition.

On the other hand, First Impressions has recently released a fine annotated facsimile edition from two of Crowley's personal copies. If for no other reason, this edition gave me some valuable insight into how Crowley was able to transform and extrapolate "The Bornless Ritual" into his "Liber Samech."

The Wisdom of Solomon set reproduces the sigils and descriptions of the Goetic spirits onto a set of seventy-two cards. It also contains a small book with instructions on candle burning ceremonies.

When Llewellyn Publications released the *Wisdom of Solomon* card set several years ago, my wife, a friend of ours and I decided to try one of the candle burning rituals presented in the book that came with the set. Essentially, the ritual is a scaled down Goetic ceremony. At the time Gail and I were between paychecks and were running a little short of ready cash. We decided that it could not hurt to use this as a means to acquire a few extra dollars to get us by. But, Gail and our friend John expressed an interest in acquiring "unlimited wealth." We proceeded with the ceremony.

The spirit chosen for the occasion was Bune to represent wealth. The ritual was performed according to Priscilla Schwei's instructions and on the third hour after sunset on a Sunday we began our invocations. I pronounced my desire to gain enough to supplement our income until the coming week. After I finished, both Gail and John took their places in front of the altar. After the preliminary invocation they called upon the spirit of Bune to grant them unlimited wealth. We closed the temple and waited patiently for any results. Mine and Gail's were forthcoming. The next day we received an unexpected insurance check. As a matter of fact we received a number of checks over the next week, which proved to be the difference between a little discomfort and being reasonably comfortable.

Several weeks after the ritual John called me and told me he had received checks totalling $2,600. I started to exclaim that it looked like the money would just start pouring in when he interrupted and explained that a friend had wrecked his car the week after the ritual and the insurance paid off immediately. Not only that, but the Junior College where he teaches sent a check he had not anticipated to complete paying off his current year's contract.

This and similar ritual work over the ensuing years have led me to conclude that all ritual work must following a set of natural laws. There are no miraculous incidents derived from Goetia ritual. Not being high grade spirits they have a tendency to follow the line of least resistance and will ultimately extract a high price, indeed, for their services.

The following ideas are highly speculative and should not be taken as my gospel opinion. It is simply a train of thought that I feel is worth sharing. In general, my personal reaction to Goetic work is somewhat negative, since I feel that, in spite of the general trappings of high magic, it is primarily a work of low magic. By this I mean that the goal of high magic is to further the evolution of the soul, while that of low magic is for an immediate gratification, usually of a secular

order. That is not to say that work of low magic is not justifiable or desirable under certain circumstances, but that one needs to separate the intent of the work one is doing and be aware of any negative consequences that might result.

In the spring of 1899 within six or eight months after Crowley's initiation into The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, he reports[9] that he made the acquaintance of Very Honored Frater Iehi Aour[10] who came over to him and said, "Little Brother, you have been meddling with the *Goetia*!" To which Crowley replied he had been doing nothing of the sort. V. H. Frater Iehi Aour responded, "In that case the *Goetia* has been meddling with you." It was soon after their introduction that Crowley invited Bennett to share his flat with him in Chancery Lane. As part of the bargain, Bennett agreed to tutor Crowley in ceremonial magic. Now, let us suppose that much of the work the two were doing involved the evocation of Goetic spirits. Would it be too off the wall to suggest that Crowley, not having attained to Tiphareth, may have been particularly susceptible to Goetic influence? My personal experiences with Goetic evocation leads me to believe that an untrained magician working with this type of magic will receive a backlash that will result in a trade—an unasked for deal with the devil, if you will—that seems to create a series of negative consequences for the magician and his or her associates.

During this phase of Crowley's life there were several things going on in the Golden Dawn that would soon prove fatal for the Order. Mathers was becoming intolerably autocratic and, consequently alienating many of the Inner Order members. Crowley, never one to keep his mouth shut, was rutting like a bull in heat. His escapades, to hear him tell it, were becoming almost legendary. By this time he had already had, at least one homosexual relationship along with several heterosexual affairs. This would prompt members of the Isis-Urania Temple of the Golden Dawn to refuse his initiation into the Second Order of the R. R. et A. C. Even though the Golden Dawn was remarkably liberal it was still a product of Victorian England, with the highly sensitive W. B. Yeats involved with the Order. Mathers performed the initiation which further alienated him from the Orders' ranking members.

In 1900 the Second Order revolted, taking over the Vault of the Adepts on Blythe Road in London. This occurred shortly after Florence Farr had received a letter from Mathers stating that Westcott had forged the founding documents of the Order and had never been in touch with the Secret Chiefs of the Golden Dawn.

Now, let's suppose that the Goetic spirits were having a field day at the Order's expense and that the magicians responsible were V. H. Frater Iehi Aour and Frater Perderabo.[11] Just suppose that when

Crowley stated that the Abra-Melin demons came unbidden, he was mistaken and that it was actually the Goetic influence from the work that the two magicians had done in Crowley's flat for a period of about one year.

There is at least one story that Crowley relates about a specific evocation he performed. He admits that he was half successful. (I'm afraid that's sort of like being half pregnant.) Allen Bennett suffered from a host of illnesses, aggravated by the cold and wet climate of Great Britain. It became apparent to Crowley that Bennett would probably die if he did not move to a warmer climate. In order to obtain the necessary funds to send his friend to the sunny clime of Burma, he evoked the spirit Buer. He states that the operation was not successful because the best he could get in his conjuration of Buer to visible appearance was something that resembled the "Spirit of Victory" rather than the Goetic force he expected. In any event, the result was successful because Crowley was able to obtain passage for his friend. But like all Goetic work it would come back to haunt him years later when he was subject to the yellow journalism of his day. He reports that the money was obtained through a benefactress that had developed a passion for him. He asked the woman to give him the money for Bennett's passage while declining to inform her what it was for; but in so doing she would prove to him that she could be completely selfless. Apparently, though we will never know, there was a little more to it than that, because she added her two cents to the newspaper stories about "the wickedest man in the world" many years after. The story she relates is that Crowley borrowed the money and simply did not pay it back.

At this point I think I've provided a case for leaving the texts of *The Keys* severely alone, unless one overlays that work with Golden Dawn teaching. The influence of the grimoires, especially the *Greater Key* and *The Goetia* are both very apparent and subtle.

It is certainly true that the various tables of planetary hours, the principle hierarchies and the implements of the Order were derived from these texts, as well as sundry Qabalistic works. These books also provide a wide range of tools which include those implements adapted for Golden Dawn magic and ritual: the sword, the cup, the pentacle, the dagger and the wand. What is not so apparent is the use of the cross and the triangle, derived from the Solomonic literature, which has an important relationship with the symbolism of the Golden Dawn.

The Golden Dawn teaches that the triangle is a symbol of the Supernal triad. This is the strongest geometric figure known, from both a magical perspective and an architectural one. The Solomonic literature provides the magician with a circle of protection containing the magician, and a Triangle of Art containing the evoked spirit.

In the Zelator grade of the Golden Dawn, the triangle is placed upon the altar with the Cross of Life contained therein. This mimics the Banner of the West, the symbol of the Hiereus, whose function is to hold at bay the Qlippoth from entering the temple from the West. At the same time this represents the containment of the candidate's life-force or auric sphere, bounded by the Light from the Supernal Triad.

In the Neophyte grade a progression begins with the cross descending to the triangle. In the Zelator grade the cross is contained by the triangle, which can be regarded as a fitting symbol for the path of spiritual attainment through the sphere of Malkuth. In the Theoricus grade the triangle is turned upside down, but it still contains the Cross of Life. In the Practicus ritual the cross is raised above the triangle but separated by the cup. Finally in the Philosophus grade the triangle is turned upwards with the cross underneath representing the philosophic sulfur, an important alchemical principle. In all events from the Neophyte grade through the Philosophus grade, it is the triangle containing and acting upon the candidate, cleansing, and protecting the aspirant on his or her spiritual path. In a similar way does the Solomonic magician hold at bay, cleanse, and acquire the knowledge from the spirits contained by the Triangle of Art.

The debt owed to the Golden Dawn, through the work of Mathers and the Solomonic texts cannot be over emphasized. But as we shall see, Mathers was to go on to a simpler but nevertheless more profound approach to magic with *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin.*

The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage

As delivered by Abraham the Jew to his son Lamech

A Grimoire of The Fifteenth Century

Even though the text of *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin* predates the Greater and Lesser *Keys of Solomon* by a century or so, it stands high above both later texts. In essence, it is the archetypal grimoire which typifies many of the same procedures outlined in the large majority of the grimoires. It seems that, in time, the later works would become a mere shadow of *The Sacred Magic*, for in this basic text there are no injunctions for the magician to do the impossible, while the books that take their pattern from this earlier work follow flights of fancy that can do nothing but challenge the best of today's science fiction and fantasy

writers. The magician will not find him or herself hanging around a crossroads at midnight to gather dead man's dirt or hunting for bizarre oddities such as the eye of a red basilisk. The text is readable and uncharacteristically clear, with common sense injunctions that amount to a simple reverence for the operation.

Of the four grimoires produced by S. L. Mathers, *The Sacred Magic* is far and above the most important. In his introduction to the book Mathers states that:

> *In giving it to the Public that I am conferring a real benefit upon the English and American students of Occultism, by placing within their reach for the first time a Magical work of such importance from an Occult standpoint.*

What Mathers had given us was no less than a complete program of self-initiation. It could very well be the basis for "confrontational psychology"; causing a change in the magician's character that would either result in an intense process of self-realization, actualization, or what we might call, a complete evolution of the soul. For the body of the text contains a six month program of introspection which, if worked according to the instructions, would allow the student to know him or herself intimately. The injunction of the mysteries ("know thyself") would be emblazoned in stark capitols for him to follow from the time the operation is complete until his last dying breath.

While other books on magic teach demanding rituals and elaborate prescriptions for the manufacture of the materials to promote the varied and time consuming operations, the injunction of Abra-Melin, as reported by Abraham, demands a more profound approach. Don Kraig, in *Modern Magick*, tells us that the grimoires were, as a general rule, incomplete. The reader is never taught how to raise and direct the subtle energies so necessary for the magical work. *The Sacred Magic* appears to be the lone exception by placing before the student a program of self study, prayer, and devotion that will culminate in the Knowledge and Conversation of one's Holy Guardian Angel. The subtle magical work is promoted through one's higher-self; i.e., the Neshamah or a separate Being of Light, whose whole purpose of existence is to guide the magician on his or her spiritual quest. Whichever view one holds, it simply does not matter because the end result is the same.

As important as *The Sacred Magic* is thought to be it must be understood that the long six month ritual is, at best, a quick fix. This is not to say that the effects would not stay with the operator the rest of his or her life; on the contrary, the magician will stand high above most other initiates traversing similar paths. But it must be noted that

the work takes *only* six months and is to be considered an *accelerated* program of initiation. Subjectively the period seems interminable but when compared to other schools, requiring years of arduous study, it is scant time indeed.

For the students contemplating this visionary quest I would suggest that, in addition to the text of *The Sacred magic of Abra-Melin*, they should acquire and acquaint themselves with *The Sacred Magician*[12] by William Bloom, and *Between Good and Evil*[13] by William Gray. Both books will serve as excellent guides to the student and are a wealth of common sense advice.

Simplicity itself is the principle injunction and the prescription from the unknown author of *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin.* Take care of your satisfiers. Make sure you live in a house undisturbed by neighbors, family, or friends. Keep yourself free of unwanted stress. Do not involve yourself in any likely affair that could conceivably bring your life into turmoil. In short, develop the lifestyle of the acetic and live by an acetic's rules.

Six months (divided into three periods of two months each) is the term prescribed to complete the operation. Follow the religious practice with which you are most comfortable, or as is stated in the text, follow the religion of your father and his father before him.

Abra-Melin stipulates that one undertaking the operation should be at least twenty-five years old but no more than fifty. He should be free of hereditary disease and free to provide everything necessary to complete the operation.

The injunction regarding age is an obvious point that should be carefully considered. Twenty-five years old is an age that most people, having attained, find themselves divested of their "wild oats" and are ready to settle down and do something serious with their lives. In today's world of advanced medicine, a ceiling age of fifty need not apply. In Abra-Melin's world fifty was considered a ripe old age. Anyone having advanced further would be prey to every conceivable infirmity that the middle eastern climate could throw at them. William Gray in *Between Good and Evil* suggests that fifty was the age that one's children were expected to have grown up and that anyone contemplating the Operation would be free of family distractions. Beyond being able to live free of stress and obligations to one's family and society (which can clearly be obviated with age and social status), the magician is free to pursue the Abra-Melin ritual.

The structure of the magician's home is considered for the entire six months of the operation. Abra-Melin gives us a full description of those requirements; consequently we can do no better then to quote him in full:

He who commenceth this Operation in solitude can elect a place according unto his pleasure; where there is a small wood, in the midst of which you shall make a small Altar, and you shall cover the same with a hut (or shelter) of fine branches, so that the rain may not fall thereon and extinguish the Lamp and Censer. Around the Altar at the distance of seven paces you shall prepare a hedge of flowers, plants, and green shrubs, so that it may divide the entrance into two parts; that is to say, the Interior where the Altar and Tabernacle will be placed after the manner of a Temple; and the part Exterior, which with the rest of the place will be as a Portico thereunto.

Now if you commence not this Operation in the Country, but perform it in a Town, or in some dwelling-place, I will show unto ye what shall be necessary herein.

Ye shall choose an Apartment which hath a Window, joined unto the which shall be an covered Terrace (or Balcony), and a Lodge (or small room or hut) covered with a roof, but so that there may be on every side windows whence you may be able to see in every direction, and whence you may enter into the Oratory. In the which place the Evil Spirits shall be able to appear, since they cannot appear within the Oratory itself. In the which place, besides the Oratory towards the quarter of the North, you shall have a roofed or covered Lodge, in which and from whence one may be able to see the Oratory. I myself also had two large windows made in my Oratory, and at the time of the Convocation of the Spirits, I used to open them and remove both the shutters and the door, so that I could easily see on every side and constrain them to obey me.

The Oratory should always be clear and clean swept, and the flooring should be of wood, of white pine; in fine, this place should be so well and carefully prepared, that one may judge it to be a place destined unto prayer.

The Terrace and the contiguous Lodge where we are to invoke the Spirits we should cover with river sand to the depth of two fingers at the least.

The Altar should be erected in the midst of the Oratory; and if any one maketh his Oratory in desert places, he should

build it of stones which have never been worked or hewn, or even touched by the hammer.

The Chamber should be boarded with pine wood, and a Lamp full of Oil Olive should be suspended therein, the which every time that ye shall have burned your perfume and finished your orison, ye shall extinguish. A handsome Censer of bronze, or of silver if one hath the means, must be placed upon the Altar, the which should in no wise be removed from its place until the Operation be finished, if one performeth it in a dwelling-house; for in the open country one cannot do this. Thus in this point as in all others, we should rule and govern ourselves according unto the ***means at our disposal.*** *(Emphasis mine.)*

I have quoted this passage to illustrate several points. Even though Abra-Melin is very specific about some of the details pertaining to the operation he mitigates these by reminding us that we can commence the operation within the limitations of our means. In essence this, at least, implies that the vast majority of people considering the Abra-Melin work should be able to follow through with it. It is Abra-Melin's very precise use of language that allows the operator a wide latitude in the arrangement of his home and, consequently, his Temple.

William Gray discusses the nature of good and evil in *Between Good and Evil* as a prelude to his assessment of the operation. I tend to disagree that the evil of the Four Princes and the legion or more of servitors can be so easily dismissed and defined as products of our basest nature. Here he assumes that the relevancy of the operation is to solidify and merge the very best and the very worst of our so, so human nature. It seems fashionable to explain away magic as an exteriorization of the human mind. It is plain that magic cannot work without the action engendered through the mind but that does not mean that mind and magic are the same phenomena. If that were so the practice of magic would be lumped with the work being done at the Rhine Institute at Duke University in North Carolina.

On the other hand, William Bloom, after having gone the length of the ritual, tells us, while the energy forms of the Princes did not manifest to visible appearance, they left evidence of their presence. He describes claw marks and hoof prints in the sand just after the convocation of spirits. I think the most convincing point in Bloom's diary is his decision not to take advantage of the awesome power he assumed from the operation. Instead he became one of the founders

of the Findhorn Association and has taught various means to access the most vital portions of our inner selves.

For the purist, the Abra-Melin ritual cannot go any further than William Bloom took it. Any secular use of that power must be seen as a distraction to the Great Work. This, in spite of the fact that Abraham gives us many examples of his use of that power.

As a final note I would warn any perspective candidates contemplating this ritual to leave it strictly alone unless he or she plans to committ a good deal of time to take care of their psychological satisfiers before embarking on the Abra-Melin Path.

The Grimoire of Armadel

Dating from the 17th century *The Grimoire of Armadel* was the last known translation of the grimoires that are credited to S. L. Mathers. Very little seems to be known about this particular book, except that it was circulated among members of Mather's latter day Rosicrucian Order of the Alpha et Omega. It was first published, with additional notes by Francis King, in 1980.[14]

The text of *The Grimoire of Armadel* refers the reader to another (unknown) source for information on the circle then goes on to advise us to recite "the Pater, an Ave together with the Credo..." A very short conjuration is given, followed by a License to Depart. A second conjuration follows with a greatly foreshortened License to Depart. The rest of the book is a collection of seals and brief descriptions of the spirits.

From this point forward, all similarity between *The Grimoire of Armadel* and Mather's translations of the other grimoires part company. While the seventy-two spirits of *The Goetia* are traditionally assigned to the Zodiacal decanates (see Crowley's 777) or the quinances (Philip and Denning's *The Sword and the Serpent*), and the angels, intelligences and spirits from *The Greater Key of Solomon* are assigned to the planets (and their corresponding Sephiroth), the spirits of Armadel are assigned to the twenty-two paths on the Tree of Life.

In his introduction, Francis King suggests that the various seals and sigils were derived from Aiq Beker or the Qabalah of Nine Chambers. As much as I enjoy reading and following King's work, a little experimentation will show us that he was just filling space.

The Grimoire of Armadel is so radically different from other similar magical notebooks that the approach one takes toward the text and the sigils moves from an objective view to a wholly subjective point.

They were neither derived from the kameas of the planets nor any known system of divination that I am familiar with. This leads me to believe that they came through the subconscious levels of Armadel's psyche. In which case this is the approach we must take when examining *The Grimoire of Armadel.* For this perspective I am indebted to Mr. William Stoltz for letting me examine his work on this subject.

Even though the book opens with a reference to a protective circle and a conjuration, because of the subjective slant, I suspect the use is more invocative than evocative. In today's New Age terminology the magician is in the unenviable position of acting as a channel to the spirits of Armadel.

In virtually all the grimoires that surfaced over a period of about two hundred years, the pentacles were used as weapons to strike terror into the entities one evoked. It was assumed that the beings would always be recalcitrant in their dealings with mankind and would have to be forced by the influence of the pentacles to do whatever the magician wanted. Earlier, I indicated that the pentacles from *The Greater Key of Solomon* could and should be reworked and transformed into talismans to draw the energies represented by the spirits for a more benign use of said energies. The sigils from *The Grimoire of Armadel* are neither pentacles nor talismans; they are focal lines that the magician uses by following and focusing his energies, from which he will derive information of an intuitive content.

So, we see that *The Grimoire of Armadel* demands a transformational approach from the operator. As with the Abra-Melin operation it is a work of a non-secular type.

The Qabalah teaches that the soul is divided. The clay material that represents the physical body is called the Guph. The first layer of astral material that overlays the physical body is the Nephesh, the material that is discarded at the moment of physical death—sometimes manifesting as an earth bound spirit. Next is the Ruach, the actual point of material focus and the ego, often referred to the mind and reasoning faculty. Above this is the Neshamah, the real Self and the objective of the Western ceremonial magician. It is traditionally divided into three parts corresponding to the three Supernals on the Tree of Life, i.e., Neshamah to Binah, Chiah to Chokmah, and Yechidah to Kether.

The Grimoire of Armadel serves as a means for the magician to integrate the Ruach in a mystic marriage with the Neshamah, or a transformation where the perspective of the operator becomes indistinguishable from the Higher Soul. In this way it serves as a parallel to the operation of *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin.*

For reference, the spirits of Armadel correspond to the twenty-two paths on the Tree of Life, but in a context of and by themselves. Even the names of the spirits are individual to themselves. For example Samael, as used in this grimoire, is not the Prince of Evil as defined by the Qlippoth. He is an entity that fits on the twenty-fifth, twenty-third, and twenty-second paths. He can be seen in terms of the corresponding ideas associated with the astrological signs and tarot trumps. His patterns and definitions are derived from the Hebrew letters that make up his name; Samekh, Mem, and Lamed. This works because the paths are in a constant state of flux, unlike the static Sephiroth.

In the Grade rituals of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the candidate must travel along all of the available paths to the intended destination sphere. For example, during the Philosophus initiation he will follow the twenty-ninth, the twenty-eighth, and the twenty-seventh paths. These paths connect Malkuth with the intended sphere of Netzach, Yesod with Netzach, and Hod with Netzach. Each path provides a very necessary series of symbols for the candidate to complete that portion of the initiation process. By the same token the multiple use of the paths in *The Grimoire of Armadel* suggests a similar transpersonal process.

It is interesting that the sigils are analogous to Indian mandalas or Voodoo Ve-Ves, sharing much the same purpose by acting as meditational focus locators to the astral plane. One follows the lines of the sigils, accessing a state of consciousness that imprints suggestions for a practical input from the sigils.

It seems that Armadel saw mMagic as an alternate alchemical process, using a different set of symbols to complete an inner integration of the psyche with the soul.

It certainly follows no set of rules as laid down by contemporary magicians, though it's possible that Armadel was an alchemist as well as a magician developing a system that was intentionally obtuse.

Space in this brief article does not allow us to examine some of the more salient features of these magical notebooks. In any event, we are in the process of producing a book that will, if not answer, at least deal with nearly all the questions raised here about Mather's grimoires, their place in history, and especially their influence on the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Endnotes

[1] Llewellyn Publications, 1993, page 858.

[2] Macmillan Company, 1970, Appendix B.

[3] Flavius Josephus, Jewish historian.

[4] Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

[5] Dorset Press, 1993.

[6] A fragment of a Graeco-Egyptian work on magic, from a papyrus in the British museum, edited for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, with a translation by Charles Wycliffe Goodwin, 1852. *See Ceremonial Magic; A guide to the Mechanisms of Ritual* by Israel Regardie, (The Aquarian Press, 1980).

[7] Certainly not Anton Lavey's *Shem-Hamphorash*—it doesn't sound very Kosher.

[8] Llewellyn Publications, 1988.

[9] *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant, (Arkana, 1989) p. 178.

[10] Allen Bennett.

[11] Aleister Crowley's first Motto in the Golden Dawn.

[12] Gothic Images, Somerset, Great Britain, 1992.

[13] Llewellyn Publication, 1989.

[14] Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, Oxen, Great Britain.

About the Authors

Mitch Henson has been interested in occult topics and alternative religions for over twenty years. He suggested that this might be a reaction to not having been struck dead by the hand of God for cursing out loud as a child.

This interest lead to a love affair with the writings of Aleister Crowley. He was active in an international Thelemic Order for many years. He found that there were some gaps in his knowledge of magic and similar topics and consequently joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Gail Henson's first love is sewing. It is a rare and unique talent when combined with her second love—magic.

They met at a lecture given by Mitch on ceremonial magic and Qabalah. It has been a strong and healthy magic ever since.

They live in Jacksonville, Florida with their three cats, Tiffani, Morris, and Kittles; all of whom are Secret Chiefs in the Inner Order of the Golden Dawn.

Women, Qaballa, and Masonry

Fran Holt-Underwood

What I am creating here and now is a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. It is a complex puzzle containing many disparate pieces, some of which do not, at first glance, appear to have any relevance to the rest. Some of you have a lot of the pieces already. Some have none. Hopefully, by the time I finish, you will be able to see three things: the development of contemporary Qaballa and Masonry, the connections between the two, and the place of women in both. Both Masonry and Qabalah are built from many pieces molded together so that each system provides a coherent framework of life. Therefore, this puzzle, too, is molded together from bits and pieces, which may not at first seem to fit within both frameworks. In some cases, that is because, during the historic events that brought darkness to both, there was no crossover between them and they moved in different directions. I cannot by any stretch of the imagination cover all of the ground within the limits I have of time and space. However, I intend to link the pieces in a way that is both elucidating and thought-provoking so that you, the experiencer of the puzzle, can continue to fit pieces together on your own.

In my process of linking pieces, I will introduce an idea, leave it to percolate within your mind and then circle or rather spiral back to it later to touch it from a different direction, a higher point; just as the four worlds of the Kabballistic Tree, if color-coded and strung on wire and then hung, spiral around each other much the same way our DNA spirals—the same point occurring repeatedly, but at different levels. One could compare this puzzle to the glories of the *Vesica Piscus* as used in the building of the gothic cathedrals without modern tools or measuring sticks or the wonders of the Fibinaci series as they appear in both nature and in the geomantic interpretations of the Cabala. Therefore, this becomes a three-dimensional puzzle—one requiring visualization skills that all magicians or ritualists must cultivate.

The first key to the puzzle is that both Masonry and Qabala are experiential. They depend on physical initiations that develop certain paths within the initiate to create the experiences that bring truth into their frameworks. They focus on the same aspects of human

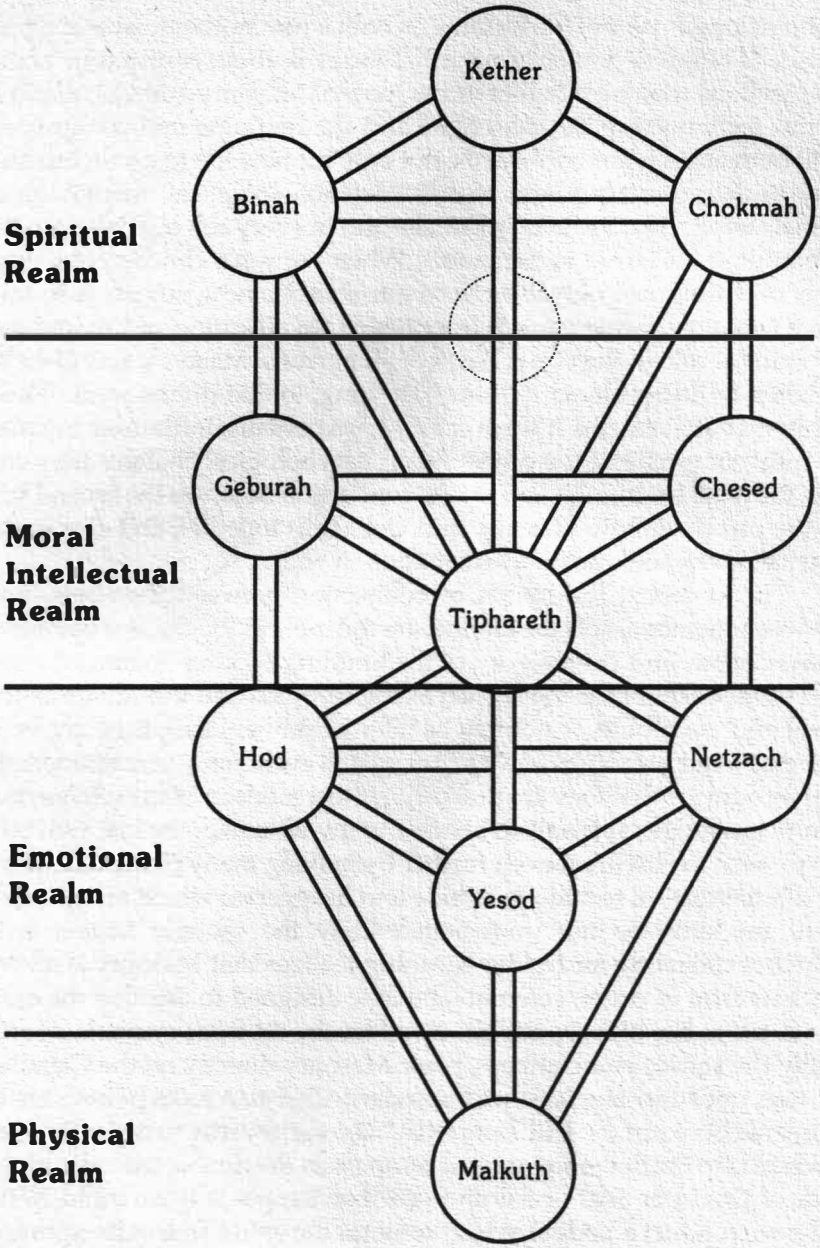
development—physical, astral, emotional, mental, creative, spiritual—but in very different ways. Both, in fact, clearly delineate which pieces of their structures, their instructions, and their initiations relate specifically to each of the worlds. Both require that the student, the initiate, or the apprentice make the connections inwardly that bring proof of their effects on the different interior and exterior pieces of the human landscape. You can read about either, or both, or listen to lectures on them, and be left with never a clue to their real power, meaning, or significance. Both *must be physically experienced* for the physical and psychological changes which lead to spiritual development to occur. That fact alone is the greatest secret of both. The biggest difference between the two is that schools of Qabala insist that their initiates know what they will be undergoing; Masonry lets its initiates figure out what changes each initiation causes on their own in all areas except for the relationships of the different degrees to the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual realms.

While I cannot, in this format, give you these initiations, I am here to create an experience for you that will shed some light on the matter, so to speak. As part of that experience, I have endeavored to use every possible and conceivable spelling of the word Qaballah—not to irritate, nor to muddle, but to add to the mystery of the experience—for each spelling has its own meaning and significance. Spelling, and the importance of variance in spelling specific key words to create specific psychological or subconscious patterning, too, is part of both Masonry and Kabballah. As a simple example, if you are a Cabalist, do you use Geburah and Gedullah, or Din and Chesed, or Geburah and Chesed for that particular key pair of Sephiroth? There are similar mutations in Masonic terminology that change from degree to degree or from rite to rite.

I'd like to begin with a quotation from a very new book from Harper Collins, a book scheduled for release in early 1995, entitled *In the Middle of This Road We Call Our Life: The Courage to Search for Something More*, by James W. Jones. Here are his very first words after his own obligatory introductory quotation:

> *The goal of childhood is to become an individual; the goal of adulthood is to give that individuality away. The task of childhood is to separate; the task of adulthood is to connect. This is a book about connecting; it is a book about love. (p. 1)*

For me, this quotation illustrates what we are here for today; why we gather together in love to learn more about the way the unseen world works and how we connect in love and trust to learn together; why I am writing, why you are reading. Jones is neither a Caballist or a Mason as far as I know. Yet he makes these and other

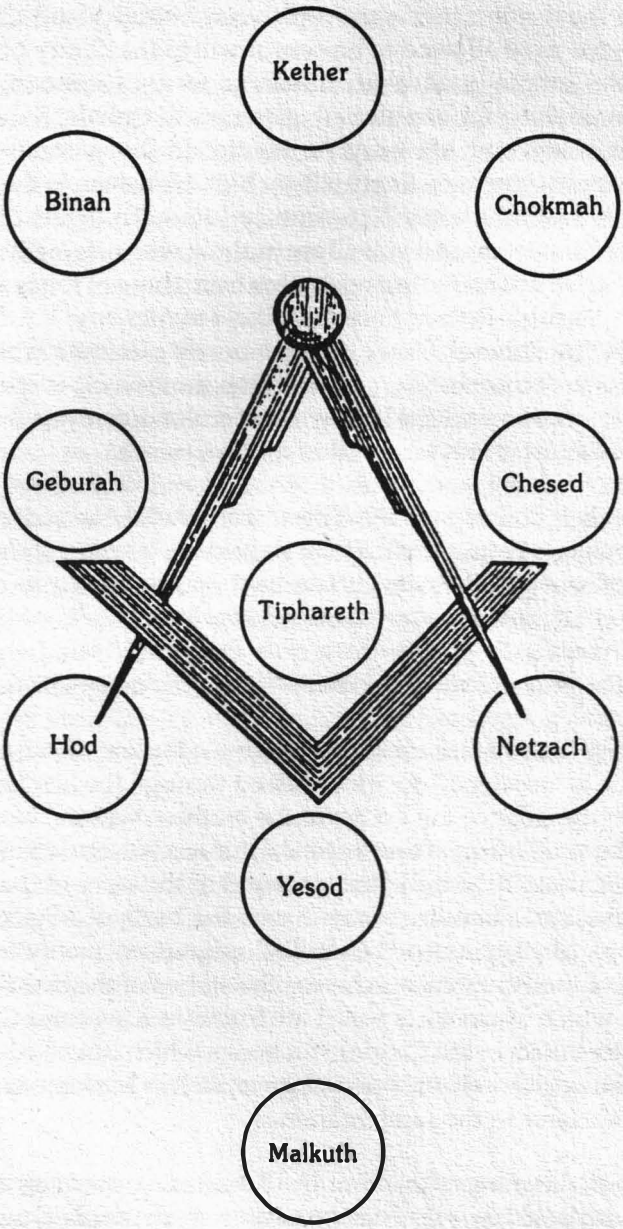


Different Realms on the Tree of Life

connections as part of his training as both a psychotherapist and a professor of religion. Similarly, my small essay is about connecting; about connections that are inherent in the roots of Masonry and Qaballa. It is about reconnecting the masculine and the feminine and recognizing that both aspects are necessary—not only for new life to occur, but also day-to-day in every phase of our existence—physical, mental, emotional, astral, creative, and spiritual—and in every cell of our being. We are adults; we strive to reconnect. When we were children our duty was to distinguish ourselves from our sources; now our job is to find once again the greater source from which we all spring and to find our individual role in the Great Work of all persons. Masonry and Qaballa provide building blocks to that connecting, to that divine work. Thus, while in both systems it is necessary to experience initiations in order to fully comprehend the physical and psychological changes they create, the need for human and divine connection becomes the second key to the puzzle of how Masonry and Qabala fit together, and also to the puzzle of women's active participation in both.

In Masonry, the points of connection between members, and between members and the Divine, are the tools of the ancient operative stonemasons and the allegory of the building of King Solomon's temple. Symbolism of the tools, such as the compass and the square or the level and the plumb, which can be interpreted very simplistically, veils the true inner meanings of Masonry so that even many practitioners do not recognize what they are practicing. Most modern Masons have chosen to ignore this symbolism because many writers of the late 19th century chose to obscure it even further by making many of the references to it ludicrous—a technique of hide and exaggerate which many impatient moderns do not understand. Only the esoteric Mason who searches diligently for hidden meaning realizes that Masonry is a very ancient form of ritual/ceremonial magic designed to develop the initiate to his or her fullest potential on all levels. Yet these symbols, specifically the square and compass, place Masonry directly on the Qaballistic tree, not surprisingly, since the Judaeo-Christian roots of both are in the same books of the Old Testament. The easiest way to make the connection is to finish the square and compass as the double triangles of the Star of David or Seal of Solomon (whose temple is it we build every time we conduct a Lodge), which contains the entire Tree in its embrace. (See the diagram of the Tree with Solomon's Seal.)

Note where the arms of the star cross the Sephiroth, especially as I go into the degree signification later in the article, and in terms of the Tree as the four levels of understanding (the triads) as shown in the introductory glyph. This, of course, is the simplest way of looking at the overlap and the degree system. What follows is a more complex view.



The Tree of Life with the Seal of Solomon

Let me digress for a moment from the Tree back to the spelling of words and the written connections between Masonry and Qaballah, I was privileged to be allowed to browse at will in the library of the main Scottish Rite Temple in downtown Atlanta for an afternoon; an afternoon I spent looking for any and all references to Qabala, Kabballah, or Cabalah in context with Masonry. As mentioned above, some of the references I found were exceedingly silly at best. However, in the works of three writers from the early 20th century I found nuggets of wisdom and hints of connection. All were from authors who originally wrote no later than 1923. I am including references from three of those authors.

From *Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of FreeMasonry, Vol. I.*, revised and enlarged by Robert I. Clegg,[1] we get merely a definition of Qaballa, which, to go back to an earlier edition of the same work, is spelled with a "c" in one version and the "k" in another version, even though the content of both articles is identical as follows:

> *Cabala is derived from the Hebrew word, Kabal "to receive" signifying doctrine received from the elders—"a system of philosophy which embraces certain mystical interpretations of Scripture, and metaphysical and spiritual beings" ... "covertly laid down in the first four books of the Pentateuch" found next in the Sohar of Rabbi ben Jochai—"Book of Splendor." (166)*

Mackey does not take the time to pursue the line of reasoning that Masonry too is "received" doctrine, passed through the hierarchy of the Lodge from the ruler of the Lodge to the brethren within. Nor does he point out the similarities of the "mystical interpretations of Scripture" to the symbolic uses of the builders' tools and of the story of the building of King Solomon's Temple, which forms the basis of Masonic ritual. Furthermore, Mackey extends Caballistic significance only to the first four books of the Pentateuch, whereas the stories of the building of the Temple on which Masonry is based are found in Kings and Chronicles (slightly later books in the Canon), but books which can be equally well interpreted using Qaballistic symbology as well as Masonic symbology. Mackey adds later in the same reference:

> *Similar teaching is found in the Zendavesta—teachings of Zoroasterianism—the Supreme Being is an absolute and inscrutable unity, having nothing without him and everything within him (in En Soph)—sent forth an emanation, Kether which gave form to the other 9 emanations which become the Sephiroth—pillars correspond to the...pillars at the*

> *porch of King Solomon's temple each with associated name of God and angelic name and attribute. (167)*

Again, what Mackey leaves unsaid is as profound as what he says: the universality of the concepts embodied in both the Qabala and Masonry, the use of the pillars in both, and the association of angels and names of God—all of which I will tackle later in reference to the Tree of Life itself. Finally, however, he does actually mention Masonry and Qabala in the same reference when he discusses the Four Worlds of the Qabala and the three methods of using the Cabala to interpret scripture:

> *Atzialatic World—emanations; Briatic—creations; Yetziratic—Formations; and Ashiatic World—actions—foundation to crown make all the mystical ladders including those used in Masonry. Gematria—numerical application of Qaballa to letters of words in the Biblical texts and other texts (Serpent = Messiah) (Abraxas = Mithras). Notaricon = use of initial consonants of words in a sentence to acquire additional meaning. Temura = transmutation of words one into the other by transposition of the consonants. (168)*

The other two references which connect Masonry and Qaballa are slightly more direct. First, in *Symbolic Teachings of Masonry and its Message,*[2] by Thomas M. Stewart who discusses the use of symbol and allegory of the:

> *...fundamental teachings in Masonry today; by direct inspiration from the Mysteries, they were given in parables and allegory to the Chaldeans, Persians, Babylonians and all other ancient peoples and found a resting place in the Kabalah of the Hebrews: a secret teaching from which Judaism is a branch. (32)*

Stewart also gives a specific use of Kabballah in within Masonry, as follows:

> *It is symbolic in its method, and by it we are able to discover a concealed reading of the Books of Moses in our Bible that harmonizes its allegories, and there is unfolded a logical doctrine connecting our teachings in the Great Light with those of all other ancient teachings, as all were derived from the same source.*

> *The Kabalah taught the doctrine of the Unity of God; in the eyes of the Kabalist, all men are brothers, and their relative ignorance is to him, but a reason for instructing them. (33)*

The final reference I copied ties Masonry not only to Cabalah but also to theosophy. In *Symbolical Masonry: An Interpretation of the Three Degrees*,[3] by H. L. Haywood, the author states that:

> *The framework of the Kabbala was a kind of theosophy expressed by means of a system of symbolism which centered about K. S.'s Temple. Inasmuch as there are things in the Masonic rituals which appear to be identical with many of the old Kabbalistic symbols and since the Kabbala was very influential in the 16th and 17th centuries, it is a reasonable supposition that it had a certain influence on Freemasonry during the years in which that society was undergoing a transformation. (26-27)*

Unfortunately, this is the extent of his connection at least in this work; he does not pursue the symbolism or the history further. In addition, these references pull us farther from the focus of my topic rather than pulling the pieces together. However, a quotation from the introduction to *The EAs Handbook*,[4] by J. S. M. Ward helps pull us back together. The introducer, Hon. Sir John A. Cockburn, states as follows:

> *Evolution takes place under the alternation of forces that make for difference and agreement. The process demands a continual adjustment between these apparently contrary, but in reality complementary factors. Each age sets out to balance any deficiency in the preceding period. ...The subject matter of Masonry is the relationship between Spirit and Matter, between Heaven and Earth, between God and Man, between Soul and Body. Emphasis everywhere is laid on the necessity of their reconciliation. (p.8-9)*

These relationships are our connecting points, the beginning thresholds from which to search.

Masonry usually is defined by its adherents or initiates simply as a system of morality which uses the tools of ancient operative stonemasonry as symbols to build character in men, and uses the Biblical references to the building of King Solomon's Temple as the primary allegory. In *The MM's Book*, Ward himself addresses this issue as follows:

> *Here at length we learn the true purpose of Freemasonry. It is not merely a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols, but a great adventure, a search after that which was lost; in other words, the Mystic Quest, the craving of the Soul to comprehend the nature of God and to achieve union with Him. (p.ii)*

Jones, as theologian and psychologist adds emphasis to this in his newest work:

> *Suppose for a moment it is true... that there is within all of us a soul, spirit, atman, Buddha nature, or divine image, and that the purpose of life is to access and develop it. Each person must find for himself or herself the best channel of access and the best symbolic expression of it. The question of finding a spiritual path becomes, in part, To what can I give myself unreservedly? ...Spirituality is process before content. Not memorizing rules, facts, or concepts but freeing the mind and the heart to explore new worlds of insight and connection. (p.27)*

This recognizes the Great Work and gives reason for not teaching the initiate what he or she should experience, or even for giving him or her what the experiences of others have been until he or she has made those connections and achieved those insights on his own. This is a very different approach from the system that says "This is what you are looking for. This is where you find it. Go and search." Or is it?

Dion Fortune in her great work, *The Mystical Qabala*, defines the Kaballah as the Western equivalent of a Yogic system of mystical and magical training. What do these two definitions share in common? It seems to me that the Yogic quest is a passive, internalized quest for the Soul to comprehend the nature of God and to achieve union with him by renouncing the world and all that is in it by reaching for that which is above. However, the impatient, action-oriented Westerner wants to do rather than to be. Western versions of Cabala focus on the *doing* as does Masonry. The Westerner is defined by embedding him or herself totally into the surrounding world while reaching into the other realms for connection with the Divine and for physical manifestation of the fruits of those connection—whether monthly, weekly, daily, or on whatever cycle measured by sun, moon, and planets fits both the physical and the ritual need.

Now that I have followed these connections of Qabballah to Masonry from the words of the segregated (or masculine) Masons to complete as much of the puzzle as I can in the time given, I wish to

raise a final question. Why have both Qabalistic studies and Masonry since the late Middle Ages been jealously guarded by patriarchal hierarchies which have consistently and religiously (pun intended) kept their secrets and their teachings for the most part not only out of women's hands but couched in misogynistic terminology? What does either system offer to women? As my aunt asked me, why would a woman wish to belong to a man's order? Or study men's teachings? Or be referred to as "Brother" for the rest of her physical life? Perhaps some light on the development of these systems and the historical factors affecting them will help set the stage for this final question.

First of all, there are several different approaches to Qaballa. Will Parfitt in *Elements of the Qabalah*,[5] divides Qabalistic studies into the oral, the written, the literal, the symbolic, and the practical, and further states that:

> *As well as being a system of personal development and self-realization, the Qabalah, more particularly, can be seen as:*
>
> *—a map of levels of awareness and energy*
> *—a means for the correlations and expression of experience*
> *—a tool for communication*
> *—a method for the expansion of consciousness*
> *—a way to connect the inner and outer awareness*
> *—a method for understanding other peoples' experiences*
> *—a way of formulating ideas with more clarity*
> *—a way of relating to all symbols, whatever their source*
> *—a method for testing the "truth" of any experience*
> *—a means for communicating with other beings, even those that may seem to inhabit other worlds or planes of existence. (p.2-3)*

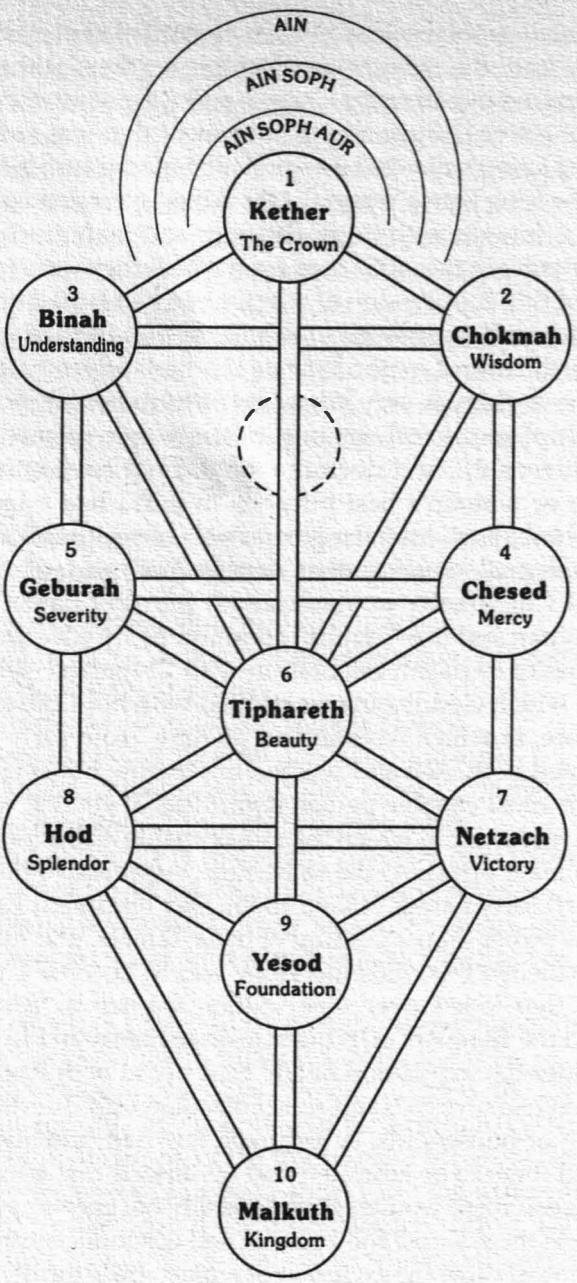
In this listing of possibilities, Parfitt has re-enumerated the purposes of Masonry—to build character using the tools of the ancient operative stonemason, character which includes the physical, the emotional, the mental, the creative, and the spiritual. He has also indirectly included in his listing of the five parts of Masonry the clue to the connections—the historical, which arises from the first four states.

In Pre-Christian time, if our Egyptology is correct, and according to Mozart in his *Magic Flute*, not only were women initiates, but couples were initiated together, relying on each other's strengths to balance out their own weaknesses. Both were necessary. If one did not make it through the trial, the other was not initiated. In the *Magic Flute*, the initiation of couples is represented when both Pamina and Papagena are given the choice to take the trials with their beloveds. Both couples are told that they must survive together. This practice of initiating

women as well as men seems to have continued right through Essene Christianity until the misogynistic Pauline writings of the New Testament took precedence over the Gospels and warped women right out of the fabric of active Christianity; a movement that was aided centuries later by King James's directed interpretation of scripture in what became known as the King James Version of the Bible—a version which has been proven to be fraught with mistranslations and inaccuracies, especially regarding gender in the older texts from which they were translated.

Part of this suppression of women can be blamed on economics, part on the harsh necessities of medieval life, including the lack of effective birth control methods once the herb wives had been eliminated by the doctors. A very large part of women's suppression was a direct result of social realities in societies where women had lost all rights of citizenship, and doctors who did not have either women's knowledge or women's best interests in mind had edged out midwives and herbalists. An even greater part of suppression of any religious or spiritual development occurred as part of the repeated attempts of Christianity to eradicate all traces of pagan tradition in both the Roman and the Anglican communion by covering all hints of gender equality or pagan celebration with Christian celebrations and festivals in which Goddess never reigned with her Consort and son—and therefore, in which woman had no part. From early monasteries that contained both men and women in separate housing which were ruled by the most capable person regardless of gender, we move to a patriarchal hierarchy in which the most capable Abbess still owes obedience to a male priest. At the same time, suppressive linguistics had translated all forty names of God in the Old Testament into male, singular forms rather than a mixture of male, female, and mixed forms.

To challenge this male hierarchy was to become a victim of the inquisition that killed over nine million women in addition to the Cathars and the Templars in its quest to erase heresy and to fatten its coffers. And after the Inquisition finally died out in both France and England, women had no rights and were considered uneducatable except in the running of households. A fortunate few had husbands or fathers who wished them to be educated and undertook that education themselves. But even these women were generally not encouraged in esoteric studies. From these social and political and economic moves to consolidate male power came the exclusion of women from the divine and from those branches of esoterica that survived the Inquisition. Most Qaballists chose male apprentices who would not be sold to marriage or killed in repeated childbirth crudely handled. Masonry chose the exclusion of women in the landmarks of the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1770. These landmarks since have been challenged by French



The Qabalistic Tree of Life

Masonry in the form of International Co-Masonry, Le Droit Humain and in Belgian Masonry, with exclusively female Masonry to balance the Tree in the form of Maconnerie Feminique, among others. And speaking of the Tree...

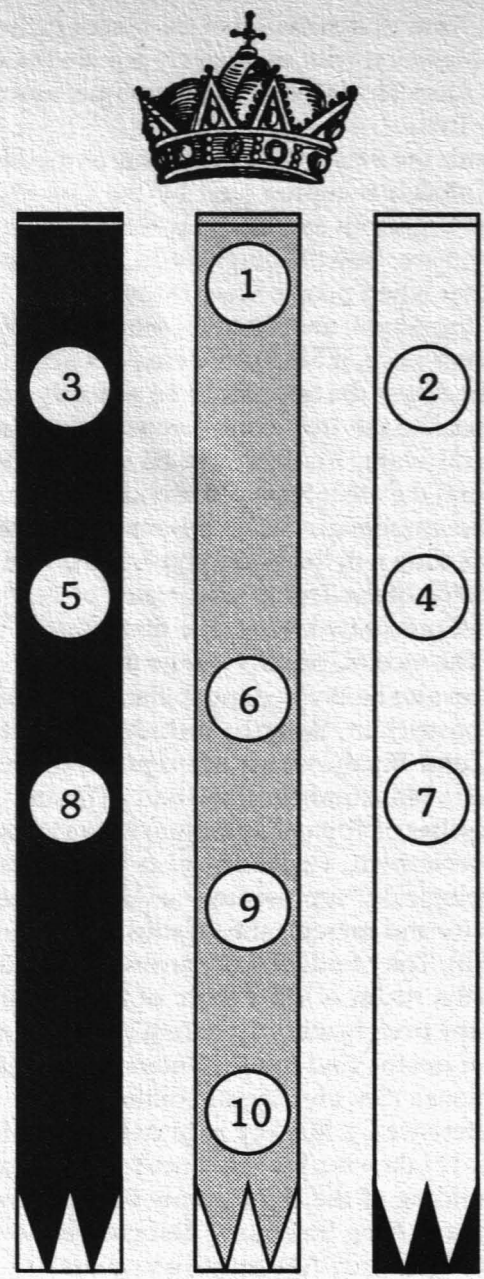
The ground, the basis, the foundation of modern, experiential and practical Cabalah is represented by the Qabalistic Tree of Life composed of ten Sephiroth and a void where the 11th (is, was, sort of still is) as shown here. (See the diagram on the previous page.) Some traditions say that when people were thrown out of the Garden, the Tree cracked at the Abyss, and Da'at fell out to become Malkuth—an interesting concept since, if Malkuth were put back in the Tree where Da'at bridges the Abyss the tree would be perfectly balanced.

But to go back to the Tree as it is commonly represented, it can be divided in several ways. Malkuth can be split out to represent the physical world and the other Sephiroth divided into three triads which then become the emotional/astral, the mental/moral, and the creative/spiritual as shown in the initial glyph of the Tree that begins this article. This division of the Tree can be related to the degree system in Masonry in either one of two ways. The first, which I touched on earlier, is obvious. The second, which I will go into later, is more complex.

The Tree can also be divided into pillars—three of them. The pillar of Form/Constriction/Severity includes (from the bottom up) Hod, Geburah, and Binah, which are represented astrologically as Mercury (intellect), Mars (passion), and Saturn (as the Great Mother of all beings). The pillar of Force/Expansion/Mercy includes (also from the bottom up) Netzach, Gedullah (also known as Chesed), and Chokmah, astrologically represented as Venus (luxury and ease), Jupiter (generosity and mercy), and Uranus (the irrepressibly expansive Father of All). The Middle Pillar consists of Malkuth (Earth/Elements), Yesod (the realm of the Moon, of illusion and delusion, of dreams and escape from reality), Tiphareth (Sun), Da'at (Pluto/Valley of the shadow of death), and finally, Kether (Neptune, Crown, summation/emanations). (See the diagram of the Pillars.)

But the reference by Mackey is to only *two* pillars. What happened to the third? Likewise, the reference by Hayward to the Biblical stories of the building of the Temple only refers to two pillars at the porch or entrance of King Solomon's Temple—hollow pillars which hide knowledge. The third? Anyone care to guess?

If you have ever visited a Masonic temple which gives public tours, and most of them do, you cannot miss the pillars. Most are quite large, quite decorative, and in every tour I've taken of a Masonic temple, whether in Oklahoma, Indiana, New York City, or London, if you miss seeing the pillars, the guide will point them out to you. Not only



The Pillars

that, but he will show you that one pillar is topped by a globe of the Earth and the other is topped by a globe of the heavens. Just a little blatant symbolism, perhaps? Where are these pillars? On either side of the door through which a person entering the temple for the first time must enter. How do they relate to the Qabalah?

Upon entering the temple, *you* become the Middle Pillar and move from the realm of Earth, through the illusion of Moon, to the brilliance of Sun, and then on to the mystery of Neptune, beyond which is another tree and above the final tree, are Ain Soph Aur, Ain Soph, and Ain—Limitless Light, Limitless Space, and the Unmanifest from which all descends. None of this is told to the Masonic initiate, however, unless there is within the Lodge an Esoteric Mason who has studied the symbolism for many years, knows his Qabalah, and is willing to share that insight. Otherwise, the initiate is left to discover that parallel for him or herself as s/he moves through the experiential initiations of which Masonry is comprised. Otherwise, as Mackey does, the initiate is simply told of the other pillars and their significance as s/he moves from degree to degree.

How does this use of the Tree differ from other magical systems? Obviously, most other ritual systems that are based on the Tree at least teach their initiates what the Tree is and the various ways of progressing upon it. Some systems work their students up the tree along the reverse of the Lightning Bolt path, moving from Sephirah to Sephirah in carefully controlled study and meditation. Others create their systems of initiation around the central Sephirah, Tiphareth, using the Sun as the center of light and of compassion in order to build upon it. Some move the initiate directly up the Middle Pillar and either ignore or sublimate the side pillars, viewing all as necessary but both sides as excessive and therefore to be avoided in the spiritual search for Light. Some teach all Four Worlds, as mentioned in the quotations earlier; some only the World or Worlds they are working in. But the primary difference, as far as I can tell, is that all other systems that use the Tree as either a basis of initiation or which recognize its symbology and its correspondences, teach their initiates the system! Why Masonry, which so clearly fits on the pattern of the Tree in many more ways than just this use of pillars does not, I have no idea; nor have I run across any authors which gave mention of it. Perhaps silence is held by the Brothers because Masonry puts much more emphasis on secrecy as a protection for experiential knowledge and because each Brother at more than one junction in his/her initiations is given the charge to study and to learn so as to be able to teach.

Secrecy is, in fact, another key to the connections between the study of Qabala and Masonry. Both had to be protected against the

Inquisition. Both have continued to be passed on with vows of secrecy of one sort or another in whatever forms they are found. But with everything possible published, what are the secrets *really*?

This is an often-debated issue both in Masonic circles and in other oath-protected esoteric systems. One answer is that secrecy is necessary because both working the Tree and working Masonry are so dependent upon personal experience that attempting to pass on the knowledge gained both cheapens it and lessens it. Another school argues that the experiential nature of any magic is so profound that any attempt to speak or to write what have become truths to the initiate cannot be understood by those who have not shared the experience and therefore become laughable. A third explanation is that working with any system of initiatory development changes our perceptions of truth with each day that we work it. Our paradigms shift—to use the most modern jargon. But everyone else's paradigms stay the same unless they have undergone a similar initiatory experience. Subsequently, truths half understood and spoken too quickly become the Biblical parable of the Shepherd, the sheep and undigested food. And, as we all know, speaking too quickly on an issue, before all segments of it are understood can make the speaker or the writer appear foolish and vain. Or, as Dion Fortune says, in *The Mystical Qabalah*:[6]

> *If we intend to take our occult studies seriously and make of them anything more than desultory light reading, we must choose our system and carry it out faithfully until we arrive, if not at its ultimate goal, at any rate at definite practical results and a permanent enhancement of consciousness. After this has been achieved we may, not without advantage, experiment with the methods that have been developed upon other Paths, and build up an eclectic technique and philosophy therefrom; but the student who sets out to be an eclectic before he has made himself an expert will never be anything more than a dabbler. (p.8)*

Only the Adept, the expert Fortune speaks of, has the knowledge to speak coherently, and he or she is by that time, usually bound by oaths not to speak except to students brought in according to the rules of the order, whichever order that may be. Jones echoes Fortune's statement with slightly different emphasis as follows from *In the Middle of This Road We Call Our Life:*

> *Paradoxically such freedom (to explore new worlds of thought and connection—earlier quotation) is the result of discipline.*

> *I am only free to improvise on the piano after I have mastered the discipline of playing scales and chords. Likewise, in order to gain freer access to the depths of the inner world, I must master the discipline of silence and learning to listen to myself in new ways. (p. 27)*

This matter of discipline before dabbling and Adepthood before experimentation is a very hot and touchy issue in the eclectic branches of the Wiccan, pagan, and magical communities. How much is enough? What exactly defines an Adept? This very issue, in fact, is what stops communication in some places through which communication could move. If you don't know exactly what training someone else has had or who did it or how complete it was; then how safe is it to communicate something essential or vital to your discipline which could be taken totally out of context and badly distorted by lack of understanding? Yet another reason to preserve the secrecy and keep each system intact. Yet the mere fact that it is brought up in a mainstream text on tackling mid-life crisis issues revolving around the values of one's life gives it even more importance in the magical/ritual disciplines.

So, with all these issues of connection, secrecy, and understanding laid out before us, and several differing glyphs of the Tree laid out for inspection, we can circle back to our original dilemma of placing Masonic tools onto this Tree of knowledge and seduction. Here I will only discuss the symbol most publicly seen—that which means Masonry to the mundane world—the compass and the square. As those of you who have heard Randall Carlson speak or who have read his work, these two simple instruments of Masonry have seemingly unlimited symbology and reference. From the square and compass found in the Chinese paintings of the twinned God/Goddess of creation with their entwined serpentine tails through the medieval renderings of the androgynous two-headed figure mounted in the midst of the zodiac with one half holding the square and the other the compass, these two instruments have found their way through history as symbols of the builder. In purely physical terms, the square is used to determine right angles and the compass to draw circles and all the figures—vesica piscas, golden mean, Fibinacci series spirals, etc.—which are so important to the Gematria study of the Qabala; a number system which gives rise to everything in the universe in mathematical terms.

How do these instruments relate directly to the Tree? Simple—when crossed, as they are generally pictured, they form the six-pointed Star of David, or Seal of Solomon (whichever you prefer to call it) into which the entire tree can be placed with Tiphareth as the central point, the point of the Sun—an image which gives rise (pun intended) to a

whole series of symbolic images appropriate to both Masonry and Qaballah. Where is the Light in the Qaballistic Tree?—at the point of the Sun (which is why the Golden Dawn initiates into Tiphareth in Yetzirah). Where is the Light in any occult system? Right in the center of our own divinity, our own being as reflection of or image of the Divine. Tiphareth is the point within the center of the star, the circle, and the Tree of Qabalah. Who is at the point in the initiatory process—the initiate, of course. And who is the Sun? I'll leave that one up to those of you in your various traditions to work out; but keep in mind the primary mystery of the Order—whose myth are we working? Why the star? How many points does it have? Whence come we and whither go we? Is this not asked in many systems? Why the circle when Lodges are rectangular? Hint: get a builder to tell you how rectangles and squares were drawn before retractable measuring tapes were invented and came into popular use. (Some old builders still use this method today if they want to check to see if a square is really square or not.) What do we seek? And where is the Tree that hides our knowledge?

Every system of which I am aware asks some variations of these questions and answers them in remarkably similar ways—in some cases, in identical words which fall into different places in the different rituals. Imagine my shock as an initiate of three different systems to come upon identical wording—if only I could tell you where. And the keys to all of the answers are hidden in the Qaballistic Tree as well as in whichever mythological Tree your particular system of initiation uses as symbol or allegory. And are we not forever changed by our experiences—on many different levels? Even those who leave the path cannot argue that it did not change them, only that they were not ready or willing to pay the price of continuing the spiral climb upwards to the Divine.

Meanwhile, this path of symbolism circles us right back to the path of an initiate up the Tree of Life. The Lightning Bolt path, which the divine energy of creation travels down and which those who travel in search of enlightenment laboriously climb back up, carries the student from the mundane world of Earth/Malkuth where he or she is aware only of the physical realm, through the realms of the elementals and the realm of dreams, visions, nightmares, illusions, and delusions as captured so very well in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. (I especially like the film version done by the New York Metropolitan Opera.) The male candidates are confined to wait in the darkness. The women wander through night and nightmare illusion. This on the Tree is the movement from Malkuth through Yesod. The next movements on the Tree are through intellect and then emotion, through barrenness and through luxury—either of which can entrap a seeker after knowledge into a totally different search. These four Sephiroth of Malkuth, Yesod, Hod,

and Netzach, form the lower section of the tree. These are the physical world and the astral/emotional triad. These in combination are enough for many seekers to spend an entire lifetime in. In a sense, these four Sephiroth are complete within themselves. As such, in the expanded system of meaning that reaches beyond the obvious, I believe they represent what is known as "Blue Lodge Masonry," the first three degrees which are known to be sufficient in and of themselves; the building blocks on which both Scottish Rite and York Rite Masonry are erected.

My proposals for the rest of the degrees, which I will represent in Scottish Rite terms rather than the equivalents in York Rite, carry us the rest of the way up the tree. The first and most important note about the Scottish Rite system is that, while there are thirty-two degrees that can be earned and a thirty-third which is conferred, only certain degrees are actually worked in their entirety.[7] From 3rd one jumps to 18th, then to 30th and 32nd. The information in the other degrees is given, but they are not worked. York Rite, for us provides optional and fascinating side degrees, well worth their own study, but not directly on the Tree in the same way the Scottish Rite degrees are. With that said, the placement of degrees on the Tree becomes much clearer.

Once the seeker leaves the physical for the emotional/mental realms of Hod/Netzach, represented on the Chakra equivalent as the solar plexus, the next step up is Tiphareth—the realm of the Sun, on the body placed into the heart chakra—represented in Masonry by the 18th degree of the Rose Cross, and in Christianity as the infant Christ, raised to maturity and slain in an act of self-sacrifice for the further spiritual development of humanity: "*For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son, so that whosoever believeth in him shall have life everlasting,*" (John 3:16). This position on the Tree is also the place of Isis and Osiris, and in fact of all kings born in anonymity, raised to Adepthood, and slain for their mastery.

All of these factors, plus the fact that Tiphareth is not only the first step into the moral/ethical triangle, but also the focal point for it, allude to this being the next significant step on the Tree as recognized in Masonic degrees. Again, the lesson is of balance, of polarities and extremes, brought together within the triangle for harmony and stability. For it is Tiphareth that brings the martial, passionate energy of Geburah into alignment with the generous, merciful, benevolent expansionism of Jupiter in Gedullah. These two points then add further emphasis, not only by their position combined as the throat chakra, but also by their positioning as part of the Qaballistic Cross—which as in most pieces of Cabala is given two attributes with several variations on the theme that I will not go into detail about it here.

The two primary interpretations used today of the Qabalistic Cross (as I was taught it in my non-Masonic magical traditions) are that it is used to ground and center the magician and to provide a direct connection with divine energy with slight differences in use as follows. In the magical version of the Qabalistic Cross, the actual invocation is of *Ateh* (attention!), *Malkuth* (and the kingdom of man), *ve Geburah* (through the limitation of passion), *ve Gedullah* (and the power of mercy), *Le Olahm* (be brought into oneness). *Amen*! The Qabalistic Cross pulls these four elements into alignment so that the energies of the Divine can flow down from Kether into this receiving vehicle, at the center of which, once again, is Tiphareth, the place of compassion, unbounded love, and self-sacrifice for the greater good. While this ritual is not specifically used in Masonry, at least not in the degrees to which I have been initiated, there are other equivalent actions in the opening and closing of the Lodge which accomplish the same aims. The variant version of the Qabalistic Cross in English—*"and the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory be yours, for ever and evermore—Amen,"* is sometimes placed only on the lower triad, with Kingdom as Malkuth, Power as Hod, Glory as Netzach. However, this severely limits the energy brought down the Tree into less enlightened realms and also does not match the Sephiroth invoked to the Hebrew words used to invoke them. It does seem, however, to match the all-encompassing view of Blue Lodge Masonry, covering the whole Tree as in my introductory remarks—a match in obviousness that would possibly earmark both "obvious" versions as smoke screens to cover the deeper and less obvious meanings in order to maintain the secrecy for the uninitiated, the cowans of both traditions.

In magical use, the ritual invocation of the Qabalistic Cross is generally followed by the invocation of the archangels through the medium of the God names (each Sephirah on each of the four Trees corresponds to one of the God names of the Old Testament—forty in all) and the resealing of the area with the Qaballistic Cross repeated once the invocations are completed. Therefore, the Qabalistic Cross itself is an alpha and omega, a beginning and an end; a circle in which the point of the Divine may be found at Tiphareth. Masonry does not go into all of this explanation, nor does it overtly call angels, archangels, and names of God in at all the same way. Theosophy does. And French Masonry is intimately tied to Theosophy through the joint memberships of Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater, who were greatly responsible for the rapidity of the spread of International Co-Masonry, Le Droit Humain, across the English-speaking world. In addition, Charles Leadbeater and W. L. Wilmhurst, of all the Masonic writers, go into the most detail about the correspondences. Though neither overtly

ties Masonic ritual into the kabballistic Tree, both focus on other realms and their inhabitants. Albert Pike's *Ritual and Dogma* makes some of the same connections with the first three degrees on Malkuth and the lower triad, and the 18th on the ethical/moral triad. Exploration of the symbolism of these degrees as seen in regalia, which can be viewed in any number of public venues, also supports this view.

Finally, as the initiate moves up the Tree, through Da'at, the valley of the shadow of death, the place of transformation, the place where all fears and phobias, all dreams and nightmares come back to confront the initiate and to ask those essential questions which make the difference between a Master or an Adept and the Journeyman on the road. On the other side of the Abyss are the Sephiroth devoted to the outer planets, to the universal, to the Divine. These Sephiroth (and the planets assigned to them) are viewed by some as unapproachable from the mundane world. However, it seems to me that it is necessary to explore the entire Tree, and it *can* be explored with care and caution. In fact, it must be explored in its entirety in order for an initiate to reach the higher levels of knowledge, understanding and enlightenment.

The way Masonry seems to address these issues, obliquely as always, is through the three highest degrees of Scottish Rite Masonry. I would place the 30th degree with Saturn in Binah (justice/Great Mother/growth through limitation and constriction), the 32nd degree with Uranus in Chokmah (the All Father/electricity and ambient energy which remains to be tamed and limited into form), and the by-invitation-only conferred 33rd degree with Neptune in Kether (Divine connection with wisdom and understanding). Again, these are personal inferences based on the symbolism used in the publicly-available regalia and on the materials from Pike and others—symbolism which could become several essays by itself.

But none of this specifically addresses the place of women on the Tree or in the Lodge, nor does it address roles of prominent women in either Masonry or Qabalah. Essentially, any study of the Tree shows that the Tree itself is balanced between male and female energies. As it takes male and female to create new life, and as we each contain parts within ourselves which exemplify masculine and feminine or anima and animus, then working the Tree requires balance and harmony, male and female—not only equally valuable but equally necessary. Otherwise, the heights of the Tree will not be reached and the higher paths remain partially complete and enlightenment shaded. Like the Yin/Yang imagery of the East, both sides are necessary for the whole to be complete and both are held within each other. One reason our Earth is in the shape it is in, I believe, is that she has not been honored as is her due since the

Inquisition, followed by the Industrial Revolution, took away the honor and respect given the female side of the Universe by the Western world.

As I have said earlier, for the most part, Rabbinical Kabbalists have refused to take women students. Likewise, Christian magical Adepts teaching the Tree have had few women students before the rise of the Golden Dawn. While some masculine Masons would argue that the Lodge herself is female, therefore, women in her are neither necessary or desirable, and others, basing their logic on misogynistic translations of the Bible would argue that women have never been included; I would argue that the dark ages with their suppression of women economically, physically, and through the realms of uncontrolled childbirth and social sanctions have eliminated women as students, initiates, and Adepts. Egyptology and what we know of the older roots from which sprang the Qabalah and all other mystical paths shows us that the ancients honored women's participation and, in fact, required it. More recent Biblical translations honoring the original gender references prove that distorted gender references (or lack thereof) occurred in the transition from agricultural societies to industrial, city-based societies.

But women have managed to find ways to enlightenment. *Written Out of History*[8] by Sondra Henry traces paths of Jewish women who studied, taught, and meditated on the Hebrew mysteries. And in our current list of popular Qaballistic writings, women outnumber men. Yet it has not been an easy road. Women magicians, such as those of the original Golden Dawn, have faced ostracism and worse in the mundane world. And women Masons? According to most literature put out by the masculine or regular Masons, we do not exist except as thieves of knowledge obtained by hiding and listening—not as full members of a community to which we rightly belong as initiates sharing the same light. But we have persevered.

Both Cabalah and Masonry have become openly available again to women in the last one hundred years and we have done well with the full complement of mystical training in the esoteric mysteries without destroying either system. Notables such as Madame Curie and Annie Besant bring honor to Masonry through the French line of Masonry—regularly initiated and properly prepared. In fact, International Co-Masonry, Le Droit Humain which sprang from French masculine Masonry in 1883 and separated into its own order in 1893, remains the only truly international order of Masonry with Lodges in over sixty countries still connected to Paris and including all regularly inhabited continents—North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The Supreme Counseil Universel Mixte, Le Droit Humain set before itself in 1987 the task of forming an historical committee to record the origins and the development of the Order, which

was published for the Centenary of the Order's existence as separate and distinct from Le Grande Orient de France. This was published in the English translation as *An Outline on the Origins and Development of the Order of International Co-Freemasonry "Le Droit Humain."* While the history of the development of the Order beginning with a series of conferences led by Marie Desraimes in 1968 to counter violent anti-Masonic and anti-Feminist attacks is important, what is most important to this essay is the statement *"Towards the year 2000"* which concludes this book. In part, it reads as follows.

> *The second half of the 20th century is generally considered to be the period of historic acceleration. Acceleration of events which continually transform and upset political, economic and social structures, as well as long established ideologies... Initiative and progressive societies, Masonry in general, and, more particularly, our International Co-Masonic Order, cannot be left out of the accelerated evolution of our times. (p. 65)*
>
> *The fall of the Berlin wall and the end of communist dictatorships have, in their turn, awoken the hopes of pioneers who are going to raise, or re-raise the columns of International Co-Freemasonry in Budapest, Prague, and shortly in Poland and Rumania.*
>
> *Everywhere where a woman is able to control her position, to take part in social, economic and political life, to win her independence... the complementary Man-Woman finds, on the initiatory level, a perfect home in the Co-Masonic Scottish Rite, whether it be in the Craft lodges or in the philosophical degrees. The growing number of philosophic lodges—the so-called "Higher degrees" is also a sign of the times... it would seem that this is why, whether or not one is scientific or religious, more and more of our Brethren are seeking out the traditions of the Wise who, from East to West, from South to North, are bringing some Light to the knowledge of the world, and some hope to alleviate human fears.*

The booklet published in 1993 was followed in 1994 by a call for visible public service, not for the revelation of secrets, but so that the awareness that we exist and provide a path for the seeker would be better known. The Lodges behind the Iron Curtain have been reopened after many years of silence in the face of persecution and sometimes death. In the United States, the seat of the Order resides in Ojai,

California with active Lodges across the country, yet still tied to Paris. The majority of the members are women (a slight majority).

The Belgians, in addition to having one of the three strongest centers of International Co-Masonry, have also given rise to the separate order of Maconnaire Feminique, sprung also from Belgian masculine Masonry, which attempts to right the imbalances of the previous two hundred years by only admitting women. On the Qaballistic side of enlightenment, others such as Dion Fortune (Hermetic Order of Golden Dawn) and Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki (Servants of the Light), both initiates of Qabalistic orders of magic, not only head or have headed their own Kabballistic orders, but through their writings have had significant, permanent, and lasting impact on scholarship and practical approaches to the Qabala and other forms of experimental/experiential magic. Though many men would say that women have no place in magic and be echoed by women who desired the training in the past and were refused it, those courageous women who work and study and write what they have learned, and others who follow in their footsteps, make a place for more to follow. And, perhaps together, we can forge a path for even more women to follow.

In conclusion, I hope that I have raised as many issues for further consideration and discussion between members of initiatory orders as I have answered questions about the connections between Masonry and Qabala and the place of women in both, historically and contemporarily. My personal opinion is that much Light has been lost in the many years of suppression and that, while there are many things we cannot share because of vows that hold members of all initiatory orders silent on certain points, there are many points at which our orders overlap, touch, repeat each other.

Masonry was not my first path, nor have I plumbed its depths and scaled its heights, having only moved halfway up the ladder. Qaballah, in any of its myriad forms, is a lifetime study—one in which I have participated in since 1980 and which I continue to both study and teach. My third path, which was actually my first, the path I began to explore in the '70s, contains many pieces of both, but is only taught one-on-one, face-to-face over a seven year training period with a seven year service obligation attached to the end of that training. Golden Dawn materials—such as were available—I've read and used chunks of since I acquired a copy of the 1974 Llewellyn edition of Regardie's *The Golden Dawn* in 1980. (Much was included in my first tradition—unknown, I believe, to the Priest who initiated and trained me in that tradition.) But I have only recently become officially involved with the G.D. system. All connect at different points on the spiral, some in strange and wondrous ways.

The Bibliography which follows is confined to the sources I actually used for this essay, with one exception, which is my very favorite book on Masonry by W. Kirk MacNulty. MacNulty does include an extensive study of possible connections between Kabballa and Masonry from 1460-1665 (p.12-14), but only in terms of who brought the knowledge, not in terms of how it was applied. The greatest feature of MacNulty's work are the one hundred and thirty-three illustrations and photographs, seventeen in color which include everything from architecture to jewels to plate to aprons and other pieces of ceremonial garb and the detailed commentary which accompanies them. Leadbeater's works, as I mentioned earlier, are esoteric in nature and very much rooted in the beliefs of Theosophy of the active participation of angels, archangels, and other companies of heaven, but are not overtly Cabalistic. Wilmhurst's views are similar and his works are more readable. (What isn't available through MacCoy in Virginia is available in reprint through Kessinger). A comprehensive bibliography would be far too extensive for these purposes, as would an annotated bibliography of just the best of the materials on Masonry, most of which do not reference the Qabalah at all. Yet such bibliographies are to be found, annotated and not, in other places, so this remains as it is.

Endnotes

[1] Masonic History Company, Chicago, 1958, pp. 166-168.

[2] Stewart & Kidd Co, Cincinnati, 1917.

[3] Masonic Service Association of the United States, 1923.

[4] Lewis Masonic Books, Surrey, 1988.

[5] Element Books, 1991.

[6] Samuel Weiser, 1984 edition.

[7] I am using the Scottish rite system which my Order uses.

[8] Biblio Press.

About the Author

Fran Holt-Underwood, New Leaf Distributing Company corporate Vice-President and head of the buying team, began her search into metaphysics in 1968 in a meditation workshop in an Episcopal church youth retreat. She went from there to Yoga and Karate-Do (karate as a way of life, including meditation) then found traditional Celtic/Teutonic Wicca,

which involved five years of heavy training including Kaballah. She studied Mystical Qaballah under both a Rabbi and a Masonic Geomatrician and student of sacred architecture, joined the International Co-Masonic Order, Le Droit Humain in 1990, in which she continues to advance.

She is also an avid reader "five to six books a week, more during vacation times," preferring science fiction, fantasy, and whodunits in addition to managerial materials and esoterica. She also loves to paint (oils and acrylics), write, travel, and attend Native American pow-wows and art festivals with husband John and two children. John is teaching her how to crochet and she is also learning Native American beadwork.

Bibliography

Fortune, Dion. *The Mystical Qabala*, (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1984 edition).

Haywood, H. L. *Symbolical Masonry: An Interpretation of the Three Degrees*, (Masonic Service Association of the United States, 1923).

Henry, Sondra. *Written Out of History*, (Biblio Press, 1988).

An Outline on the Origins and Development of the Order of International Co-Freemasonry "Le Droit Humain" by the Historical Committee under the direction of the Supreme Counseil Universel Mixte "Le Droit Humain," English translation, Paris, France, 1993.

Jones, James W. *In the Middle of This Road We Call Our Life: The Courage to Search for Something More*, (Harper Collins, 1995).

Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Vol. I., (Chicago, Ill: Revised and enlarged by Robert I. Clegg, Masonic History Company, 1958).

MacNulty, W. Kirk. *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

Parfitt, Will. *Elements of the Qabalah*, (Great Britain: Element Books, 1991).

Stewart, Thomas M. *Symbolic Teachings of Masonry and its Message*, (Cincinnatti, OH: Stewart & Kidd Co, 1917).

Ward, J. S. M. *The EAs Handbook*, (Surrey, UK: Lewis Masonic Books, 1988).

Ward, J. S. M. *The MM's* Book, (Surrey, UK: Lewis Masonic Books, 1988).

Editor's Forum

The Editor's Forum is designed to stimulate a creative dialogue amongst all of our authors on a specific topic. It is our hope that the Forum will provide the reader with a wide range of ceremonial expertise and advice from working magicians and authorities in the field. For this issue of *The Golden Dawn Journal*, the question posed by the editors is:

How are the Hermetic Arts Important to Today's Working Magician?

William Stoltz:

I would like to step in, as a devil's advocate, and question the reason to practice the arts at all. I have come to believe that without a natural or intentionally cultivated relationship with the magickal current—or transcendent Presence—behind Hermetic subjects, their individual value to the magician is minimal. Disconnected from the greater tradition these arts may be little more than boats, rafts, and fishing poles sitting in the desert. They have the potential to become either uninhabited cognitive structures in the shallows of the psyche—or oases providing life-giving energy and inspiration to the magician. It should be remembered that the God Hermes has a twin and paradoxical nature. He is indeed the God bearing gifts from the divine realms, but he is also the gatekeeper who, with a smile, laces the party cups with poison.

We have all, at one time or another, been seduced by stories and legends that surround Hermetics and magick, and there is no shortage of silly but alluring ones, (not to mention the authentic ones) fostered by otherwise level-headed magicians and their kin. This is not to say the stories and myths of our tradition are without virtue. Quite the contrary. Like the arts themselves, their substantive value is in how we understand and use them beyond their raw content; that is, provided we can steer clear of the natural, inherent tendency to idealize and live through these stories instead of our own unique rarity. (Lest we forget

the mind-boggling numbers of incarnated Crowleys, Hypatias, and Christs sharing the Earth at this very moment ... buyer beware!)

It must also be recognized that to a large degree, individuals who have a sincere attraction to Hermetics already have a kinship with the magickal current contiguous to its nature. All works of a Hermetic nature, like alchemy, and the Hermetic Qabalah, are metaphors for the presence, energy, and subtle patterns of the divine mind underlying them. Take for example the word "apple." It is descriptive of a real apple and leads to substantial knowledge about the object. But in order to have a real experience and relationship with it you must actually find and eat one. Only then will you have an intimate knowledge—or Gnosis with it. As the Eastern teacher Ram Dass would say: "a finger pointing at the moon— is not the moon."

Additionally, if we examine the Hermetic lineage and Western mystery schools, both ancient and modern, we will discover a continuity of free and esoteric thought flowing down through time, independent of religious influence and dogma. In this regard Hermetics is to the West what Taoism is to Eastern traditions: a free-standing philosophical and practical tradition principled on the elements of Wisdom and energy. In the Hermetic lineage we also find a workmanship crafted by the hearts and hands of figures influential in the development of the Eleusinian mysteries, down through the Templars, the Neo-Platonic and Hermetic academies of the Renaissance, Freemasonry and magical organizations like the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. In like fashion, a similar thread can be seen woven into the works and lives of influential figures including: Plato, Hypatia, Hildegard of Bingen, H. Cornelius Agrippa, Marsilio Ficino, Eliphas Levi, S. L. MacGregor Mathers, Aleister Crowley, Dion Fortune, Gerald Gardner, Israel Regardie, and numerous others committed to the Hermetic magickal current and its vehicles.

The essence of any Hermetic art is the stream of consciousness and energy leading eventually back to its greater source and wellspring. Like any other esoteric current, however, it inspires and renews only those who will drink from it. When we do take pause, and drink from the cup of Hermes, we also drink from the fountain of wisdom shared by our tradition's brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers who have passed before us—thereby leaving us the cup, to pass to those who follow.

Lon Milo DuQuette:

Magical work is a lot like a game of Simon Says played with the imagination. It begins when the magician loses.

As a young aspirant learning how to travel in the spirit vision, I began by closing my eyes and pretending I would see a landscape

planted, decorated, and colored appropriately for the sphere I was hoping to visit. I then "saw" such a landscape. Then I pretended that I would hear the appropriate sounds, feel the appropriate energy, smell the appropriate odors. I then "heard," "felt," and "smelled" those things. Then I pretended that I would see an angel or spirit of the proper countenance and stature, dressed and bejeweled correctly. I then "saw" such a spirit. Then I pretended that I was going to address the spirit by its correct name, and that the spirit would answer me (with words I put in its mouth). Then I pretended that I was going to ask the spirit a question appropriate for its sphere of existence. And I did so.

Then, quite naturally, without me even realizing what was happening, the spirit answered me with words I had not first pretended it would speak. Then, and only then, did the vision commence.

Imagination is the doorway to the magical plane. Like the vast majority of individuals who have the audacity to call themselves "working magicians," I still spend most of my time playing Simon Says in my imagination in an effort to approach the threshold where pretending stops and magick begins. This cannot be done by letting the imagination run wild, or by utilizing unsuitable imaginative images that cannot lead us to the threshold. To effectively prime the pump of our imaginations we must program ourselves with a series of images, themes, and structures that harmonize with the universal facts of life. The Hermetic arts supply us those images, themes, and structures which from time immemorial have proven themselves worthy programming guides.

How are the Hermetic arts important to today's working magician? Simon says...

M. Isidora Forrest:

The terms *Hermetic, Hermeticism,* and, indeed, the *Hermetic arts* cover a lot of ground. Many modern magicians would agree that Kircher's list on the frontispiece of his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, which includes everything from mythology to philosophy to alchemy, is a fairly accurate picture of "the Hermetic arts." Given this kind of diversity, the entire Western Esoteric Tradition can be considered as the Hermetic arts. So what is the value of this tradition? For us today, the value of tradition lies in its ability to provide a pathway others have tread before us. It connects us with the past through the methods, hopes, and devotions of our spiritual ancestors. By using the symbols they used and found meaningful, tradition empowers us. It leads us, guides us, explains things to us. It provides potent archetypal symbols, sanctified by use, energized by the meaning traditionally invested in them. It provides a context for our own spirituality. It connects us. The Hermetic Tradition provides all this to the modern magician. Yet, today's magicians are not the same people

that the first Hermeticists were—or even the same as the Hermeticists of the Golden Dawn just one hundred years ago. In our hands, tradition should be a tool, but not a chain. If we are to find value in the ancient Hermetic arts, we must seek first to understand them, to find inspiration in them, and then, to wisely adapt them to reflect our spiritual realities and needs today.

Madonna Compton:

Hermeticism is an extremely valuable part of our Western tradition. Without roots in the ancient Hermetic arts, we have no contact with the vital foundation upon which occultism is based. This, in my opinion, is why so much New Age material is "fluff"; it has little depth, because it has no tradition. Since much of our present generation has no interest in institutional religious organizations, its aimlessness is everywhere apparent and reflected in cultural anomie: the sense of being "disconnected"; of having no roots. Therefore there is a great need for some other kind of community bonding.

Today's occult organizations like the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn seek to draw on the valuable insights of our ancient Western heritage, while simultaneously evolving their own unique set of expressions which also reflect a more modern understanding of the universe. This is, in fact, what all great "revivals" are all about, from the rediscovery of Plato and Pythagoras in the Renaissance to the modern occult revival today: ancient truths are timeless, and yet reveal particular meaning to the age which uncovers them anew. And Hermetic truths are vital for today because our fanaticism with materialism has presented dangerous—indeed perverse—consequences. It is robbing the world of its soul-making properties.

The revival of the ancient Hermetic and Qabalistic arts seeks to restore this balance, reintroducing us to the immeasurable gifts of the invisible kingdom of the imagination. Dr. Paul Case once said that by focusing on the symbols which this tradition offers, we place ourselves in a position of tuning in to the states of consciousness of those who have attained an awareness beyond our own. We thus are able to use concrete tools to tune the sets of our personal "receiving stations" to powerful broadcasting stations of the Inner School. Some would say this is a method of tapping into the "akashic records." Either way, one realizes that this cosmic memory is rooted in tradition, and we need the keys of this Hermetic tradition to tune in. Leaping into the abyss becomes a little easier when there are sign-posts along the way.

Donald Tyson:

The term "Hermetic arts" might lead some magicians to think of alchemy. Hermes has become closely linked with the magic of transformation, both physical and spiritual, thanks to the *Emerald Tablet*, a brief alchemical tract that claims his authorship, and other less well-known alchemical works. For me, the magic of Hermes Trismegistus has always been the art of transcending the gulf that lies between ordinary human consciousness and divine consciousness. This is appropriate because Hermes is the Greek messenger of the gods and the psychopomp of souls, while Thoth, the Egyptian god connected with Hermes in the minds of the Ptolemaic Greeks, is scholar-scribe of the gods and the inventor of all arts and sciences, including magic.

The surviving Hermetic books are generally divided into two classes: philosophical, and magical. It has long been the practice of legitimate scholars to study the first class and ignore the second. These two branches of the Hermetic art cannot be divided. Hermes Trismegistus taught a way of self-transformation that involves a deep intellectual understanding of man, God, and the nature of reality, but also a system of practical magic designed to elevate humanity to its rightful place as ruler of the gods and lesser spirits.

The two most precious magical legacies of the Hermetic teachings are: (1) the art of god-making, and (2) the power and use of occult names. Both techniques are rooted deep in the religious practices of ancient Egypt. Both have been tried and proven over thousands of years of continuous use. They find expression in many branches of magic around the world, but reached their highest perfection in the temples of the shaven-headed hierophants of the Nile.

By studying the Hermetic books, both philosophical and practical, we gain insight into what magic is and how it functions. We learn from the masters of our venerable art across the abyss of centuries its true meaning and proper use. Hermetic magic is an eternal touchstone for the modern magic of the West.

John Michael Greer:

From my perspective, the most important thing about traditional Hermetic writings and practices is that they help broaden my sense of the possibilities of magic. Growing up in a culture as hostile to magic as this one, the magician always runs the risk of falling into reductionism and coming to think of magic as nothing but psychology, nothing but a lifestyle, nothing but this or that. (I think it was Erich Jantszch who pointed out that in today's world, nihilism isn't a matter of nothingness so much as of "nothing-but-ness.") The great Hermetic writers and magicians, from the time of the *Corpus Hermeticum* down to that

of people like Giordano Bruno and Robert Fludd, didn't labor under the same disadvantage. To them, all things were possible to magic, and all things could be seen as tools of magic, ready to the hand of the magician. Reading their books and exploring their practical work is one of the best ways I know of keeping out of a rut.

A second value of traditional hermetics is that many of the problems we face as working magicians have been faced before, and solved before, by the magicians of previous times. The current magical revival has seen a lot of effort expended in reinventing the wheel. This isn't necessarily a bad idea, not least because a newly invented wheel might just work better than the old ones did. Still, it can be useful to have at least some idea of what's been tried in the past.

Finally, odd as it seems, there's a certain sense of companionship to be had from the texts of the Hermetic tradition. Even in today's burgeoning magical renaissance, the number of people seriously involved in high magic isn't large, and the work can be lonely at times. There's a certain comfort in knowing that other people have mastered the same arts, faced the same difficulties; tracing out characters for a talisman from the *Three Books Of Occult Philosophy*, one can almost see Agrippa looking on, stroking his beard, muttering, "Yes, that's how it's done."

Adam Forrest:

As Magicians of the Western Esoteric Tradition, *all* of our magical practices are Hermetic arts. And for those following the Hermetic Rosicrucian path embodied in the Golden Dawn, all magical operations ultimately tend to one goal, that of spiritual growth and evolution. The pivotal step in this work is described in the Tiphereth clause of the Adeptus Minor Obligation as the purification and exaltation of our spiritual nature so that—always and only with the aid of the Divine—we may eventually exceed the conventional limitations of our humanity, and raise ourselves to union with our Divine Genius.

This Great Hermetic Work of spiritual evolution calls us to awaken from our usual somnambulism and to attain an ever fuller transformative awareness and experience of truth, that is, of the true spiritual beauty of reality.

The Hermetic Tradition traces its symbolic origin to Hermes Trismegistos, a legendary master and human manifestation of the great God Thoth. So we may well end with these words of Thoth preserved in the 183rd Formula of the *Book of the Dead*:

> *I come unto thee with My hands bearing Truth, and My heart hath no lies within it. I set Truth before thee, for I know that thou livest by it...*

I am Thoth, the Skillful Scribe, Whose hands are pure. I am the Lord of Purity Who driveth away untruth, Who writeth that which is Truth, Who abhorreth falsehood, Whose pen defendeth the Ruler of the Universe...

Oz:

I, for one, believe that there is such a thing as magick staying in the ethers for all time. The magick performed in ancient times created doorways that exist on the subtle planes—entryways through which people of any time can pass. These windows of different states of consciousness and knowing are still in existence, open to those who learn how to access them. The ancient wisdoms hold the keys to these portals. Magicians, priests and priestesses of ancient Egypt and of other ancient cultures were able to devote their entire lives to the training and work which enabled them to access other dimensions, thought-processes and realities. What they accomplished is recognized as so valuable and useful that even time, cultural changes, wars, politics, and destructive religious persecutions can not prevent their sacred works from being remembered and preserved.

Adepts of all ages who were trained in the workings of these mysteries often became powerfully wise through their practice. In this way, the wisdoms were not only preserved but were enhanced and grew over time. What we today call the "Hermetic arts" are the knowledges and techniques that have come to us through this evolution. Like any other art or craft, we must be trained in those processes developed by our ancestors. We are then able to add our own creativity and ingenuity to what we are taught, and the results will hopefully be works of beauty that speak of both our heritage and our individuality. Magick is perhaps the most timeless art of all, for the fashions and aesthetics of the spirit never change. To create beauty from the unformed soul is the true goal of any magician. We are blessed to know how those before us worked with success towards this goal. Let us take this precious wisdom, nurture it with the light of our own lives, and carry it into the coming age.

Sam Webster:

The Hermetic arts are particularly important to today's practitioner in that they provide access to a stratum of practical working outside of the Christian paradigm. This is necessary if the spiritual shackles of that dying cult are to be cast off. Hermes appears to us in the Homeric tales as a servant god, but archeology and anthropology have unearthed that he is far older than the Olympian pantheon. He of the Herm was and is the consort of the great Goddess, being that intelligence that applies the

lessons learned of nature and seeks an easier way of accomplishing its ends. He, this intelligence, made himself servant to the king gods when they destroyed the peaceful river-valley dwellers, and being useful they accepted his service. They did not know that they had hired their own warden.

We who are rebuilding the old ways would well get to know this God. So much of our history and practice was in association with him. To my eye this is important, being American, and having little cultural heritage. In the Hermetic tradition, in its many guises we can find our roots and lineages. A lost aspect of who we are comes honorably to light. The works of Francis Yeats are an excellent scholarly source of this.

Hermes has a distinct advantage over many of the classical Western deities. His worship never stopped. This is because he is a god of the people. Whoever must travel, do business, or be clever to survive know him. The scholars, writers, mathematicians, librarians muttered prayers to him even in the darkest hours of the Christian hegemony. It is worthwhile to cultivate his presence, for he is the friendly God.

Gareth Knight:

There is an inner side to the Earth. We can ignore it if we choose, and this is the attitude of scientific and commercial materialism. Or we can try to come to terms with it. This is the way of the Hermetic arts. There is also a great deal more to ourselves than can be explained by conventional psychology. We have a higher or superconscious self with which pursuit of the Hermetic arts will bring us consciously into touch.

Yet the Hermetic arts are considerably more than a form of personal psychotherapy. Their pursuit over the course of time will stimulate the growth of psychic and mystical awareness, a germination process of the seed of higher consciousness. In this process the personality learns to recognize and to handle powers and influences from the formless worlds. These are the dynamics behind what is traditionally known as the Veil of Isis.

Contact with this world beyond the Veil, if done so aright, should bring about a marked improvement in the stability and efficiency of the personality. However this also brings about an obligation. It puts us in the way of service to others. Not necessarily in terms of charitable works, although these retain their importance, but as bridge builders between the worlds, bringing light and love and power and wisdom to where darkness, fear, weakness, and folly existed before. And into areas where only the "star walker" can tread.

Mitch and Gail Henson:

It's tempting to just state that the question is self-evident and leave it like that. On reflection, that is simply not true and the question deserves something better than a flip answer or what amounts to no answer at all.

One of the books I was originally exposed to was Bardon's *Initiation into Hermetics.* As I recall, at the time I read it, I did not have the faintest idea of what Hermetics was or how it related to magic; the topic I was really trying to get a handle on. Bardon's book wasn't much help, but it did give me the lead to explore Hermetics in a more generally defined context. The clue to Hermetics is contained in the accepted definitions of magic as an art, and more especially as a science.

Today's hard science owes as much, if not more, to the Hermetic arts than to the venerable tradition of magic. For these arts include: astrology, from which is derived astronomy and the astro-physical sciences; alchemy, from which we get metallurgy, chemistry and psychology; and Qabalah, from which some of the great philosophical questions are, at least, given some consideration.

These same traditions become blended into a whole for today's magician. Astrology is used to define the best times and locations for ritual. Alchemy gives us the transformational approach that is so important to magical exercise, and Qabalah acts as our map, guiding us on our quest for universal knowledge.

It is certain that without Hermetics there would be no magic as either an art or a science.

What science has discarded, after transmuting the essence to its highest level of physical manifestation, is what today's magician uses for an inner level of transformation.

During those historical periods that saw the development of the sciences of astrology, alchemy, magic, divination and Qabalah, there was no separation in the approach that was taken to reach both a physical and a spiritual goal. Today, in a material and unenlightened fashion, the established scientific community has taken only the most physical properties of these systems, leaving behind the greater key to spiritual unity. It is up to those of us who seek a truer understanding of our place in God's grand scheme to find for ourselves the Summum Bonum, the Quintessence and the Philosopher's Stone.

Fran Holt-Underwood:

In my opinion, there is no modern (Western) magick without the Hermetic arts. Whether each of our respective systems explains what the Hermetic arts are or are not, those arts form the foundation from which flows the wisdom of which we all partake. For example,

Masonry does not overtly teach the "magical" part of the craft, at least not at the Craft or Blue Lodge level. In fact, many "regular" or segregated Masons would deny that Masonry is a form of ceremonial or ritual magick. Yet anyone participating in Masonic ritual cannot but recognize that the Blue Lodges that portray the building of Solomon's Temple exemplify older roots and other influences, as clearly portrayed in the ritual. Those influences come directly from the Hermetic arts. Once one is initiated into the "higher" bodies or the "Side degrees" (Scottish Rite or York Rite), the parallels become much more obvious. The progressions through the rituals spinout those parallels for the initiate in much greater detail than Blue Lodge rituals do. The really affluent Lodges even costume the participants in each ritual according to the period represented. And, as watered down and "Christianized" as some of the masculine Masons have tried to make them, the influence of East and of Egypt shine clearly through the modern attempts to obscure them. Fortunately, there are some contemporary writers (mainly European or from the UK) who recognize symbols and their import. Therefore, material linking Masonry and today's magician does exist.