The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

Agapé

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Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A.

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Agapé

The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

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From the Executive Editor

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

Introduction to the New Series

With this issue, *Agapé* returns to a paper format and will now be distributed annually on the September Equinox. This new series will focus more on articles, essays, rituals, poetry, reviews, and art, and less on news and announcements, which are now being provided online via blogs, website updates, and forums.

The Magician's Disease

People get into occultism for many reasons, not the least of which is a desire to exceed limitations. We wish to expand our understanding of the universe, and to extend our powers and abilities, beyond the human limitations that are generally assumed by society at large.

This desire can be inspired by simple curiosity, but also by a sense of powerlessness in circumstances that seem overwhelming. We feel restricted, and even oppressed, by forces beyond our control. Some of these forces will likely always be beyond our control as long as we occupy human bodies (gravity and entropy, to name two). Nevertheless, we wish to transcend what limitations we can, to reach higher than others do, to achieve things that we have been told are impossible or fantastic. And along this path, we typically find at least some success. We break through limitations that are, in fact, illusory. At this point, we may begin to face certain trials, for which we may or may not be entirely prepared.

One of these trials involves our sense of identity and our place in the natural order. We realize that we have opened the gate of the walled garden and stepped outside, leaving the crowd behind. We feel *special*. We feel expansive, and powerful. But despite our new-found sense of power, our trials do not

The rituals presented in Agapé, unless stated otherwise, are original rituals created by individual members and are not official O.T.O. rituals.

stop—and we may begin to wonder what is holding us back. Our wonder may turn to suspicion. Has our progress been *noticed,* and are we now being thwarted? By whom?

By *reality,* most likely, and by our own blind spots and egotism—but if we are not ready to face *that* fact, we may well externalize our opposition as rivals or *enemies*. We infect ourselves with the germs of paranoia—a disease that can obsess us and lead us off our path into a world of delusion, stagnation, and isolation.

Paranoia, aside from any consideration of psychological diagnosis, can be thought of in simple terms as a pattern of thinking characterized by two intertwined factors, (1) grandiosity (an exaggerated belief in one's own importance relative to other humans), and (2) a persecution complex. These two factors tend to reinforce each other, and once set spinning, can end up building a mind prison.

In group situations, paranoid thinking can grow and subvert the legitimate aims of the group. Many occult, religious, political, and magical organizations (including ours) claim a mythic history, in which the modern organization claims to be the descendent—or continuation—of famous historical movements, and/or the heir to the legacy of various heroic individuals. There may or may not be some tenuous historical connection with these entities of the shadowy past. From a skeptical standpoint, these claims are merely attempts to create interest and attract members. From a more charitable standpoint, they help define and ground the organization's symbolic framework and foster a sense of camaraderie among the members. In either case, such claims, if taken too seriously, can help push the members of the group towards paranoid thinking and an "us versus them" complex.

A group that shares such bonds of paranoid, conspiratorial thinking is a group that is highly susceptible to manipulation and irrational herd behavior. It is wise for occultists (especially those who are members of organized groups) to be on their guard for such thinking patterns, in themselves as well as in others, and to maintain a healthy skepticism regarding grandiose claims. It is (believe me!) quite possible to enjoy productive fellowship in a group that claims descent from Templars or Druids, or even Aleister Crowley, without becoming delusional about it, or being drafted into waging magical warfare with perceived enemies.

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally,
Sabazius



The Unity Mass

Anonymous

This ritual is designed for two people to celebrate a short eucharistic ritual together. We drew inspiration from The Mass of the Phoenix. Our intent with this ritual can be summed up with the final line: "We are one, we are none." Partners may use this ritual for a shared intent, or brethren might use it to repair strained bonds.

Setup

A circular altar with an appropriate altar cloth covering it. Upon the altar is a goblet of wine and a paten with a Cake of Light. An additional goblet and a bell adorn the altar. There are two officers: Yoni and Lingham.

Ritual

Yoni: For I am divided for love's sake…

Lingham: …for the chance of union.

Y: *[strikes eleven times upon the Bell 333 – 55555 – 333, holds Cake of Light up]*

O Thou white hand of Creation, that holdest up the dying head of Death! I adore Thee, Evoe! I adore Thee, IAO!

[returns Cake of Light to Paten]

L: *[strikes eleven times upon the Bell 333 – 55555 – 333, holds goblet of wine up]*

O Thou red rose of the Morning, that glowest in the bosom of the Night! I adore Thee, Evoe! I adore Thee, IAO!

[returns goblet to altar]

Y: *[breaks the Cake of Light in half]*

For he is ever a sun…

L: *[pours half the wine into their goblet]*

…and she a moon.

[returns Yoni's goblet to the altar]

Y: *[eats their half of the Cake of Light]*

But to him is the winged secret flame…

L: *[eats their half of the Cake of Light]*

…and to her the stooping starlight.

Y: *[locks arms with Lingham, drinks their glass of wine]*

For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.

L: *[drinks their glass of wine]*

The Perfect and the Perfect are one Perfect and not two; nay, are none!

[Both return their glasses to the altar.]

Y: *[strikes eleven times upon the Bell 333 – 55555 – 333]*

I am above you and in you. My ecstasy is in yours. My joy is to see your joy.

L: *[strikes eleven times upon the Bell 333 – 55555 – 333]*

Come! Lift up thine heart and rejoice! We are one, we are none.

[end]

The Problem of Vanity

Soror AVO

Vanity is one of those personal development issues that we often ignore. It's such a vague notion, and most of us are convinced that it has little or no application to ourselves. However, vanity is a sly demon of sorts. It shows up in the least likely places, and eats away at our self-esteem, and our spiritual life, without us ever knowing what we're dealing with.

To understand the problem, we must first define it. Merriam-Webster has several definitions including a bathroom cabinet, a knick-knack, and a woman's handbag, to name a few. However, it's their first two definitions that we are dealing with here today. Those are:

> *1: inflated pride in oneself or one's appearance : CONCEIT*
>
> *2: something that is vain, empty, or valueless (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)*

The first definition seems obvious. We tend to think of this as someone who spends a lot of time admiring themselves in a mirror, right? Yes and no. People nowadays do spend a lot of time in the mirror and taking selfies, but it's not necessarily vanity. According to Jeff Grabmeier of Ohio State University (Grabmeier, 2023), people who take lots of selfies aren't necessarily vain. It has more to do with attempting to capture the moment. What separates attending to looks and taking selfies versus vanity has to do with the key word in the definition: *PRIDE*. Having appropriate hygiene and doing things like getting tattoos, wearing make-up, or dressing nice is only vanity if it becomes a way to separate yourself from others. In other words, you place importance on it because you want to be better than or stand apart from others.

Now this doesn't apply to making oneself more attractive for a job interview or finding a mate. What this applies to is something that psychologists refer to as "Downward Social Comparison" (Krauss Whitbourne, 2014) This term describes the process of looking down on others to make oneself feel better. If by sporting tattoos, for example, you see yourself as being better than someone else because you were tough and sat through the pain, or had money to get one in the first place, then that is vanity. Getting a tattoo because it has a magickal or personal significance to you is something altogether different. It's the intention of what you're doing that matters. Downward social comparison is something we all do to some degree. We humans love to categorize! But the difference between vanity and making distinctions for the sake of reference, is that vanity requires a certain degradation of someone or something else so that the person making the distinction gains a sense of self-importance. Some examples of downward social comparison include wearing expensive clothing to separate yourself from the poor, calling people "apartment dwellers" to distinguish yourself as a homeowner, driving expensive cars even when you can't really afford them, to make yourself appear wealthier, even using terms like "white trash", "lards" (referring to unemployed), and "nomies" (referring to single moms), are big red flags for vanity. By criticizing people who are less fortunate, we gain a sense of superiority and feelings that perhaps things really aren't so bad.

How often do you look at someone and say, "Well at least I don't look like that!" or "At least I'm not using a cane/walker/wheelchair, etc."? To some extent, it's normal. We are all humans living in a society that caters to those kinds of thoughts. Our commercials and ads are replete with images and messages that play on vanity and our need to feel good about ourselves. I had an encounter with this very idea on the bus today. The driver and another passenger were making fun of a woman who was standing in the parking lot at the local supermarket holding a sign asking for help with paying her bills, including daycare. When they asked my opinion, they got an answer that they didn't like. I told them that we had no business looking down our noses at the woman because we didn't know what hell she'd been through that brought her to that point. With soaring costs for daycare, most single moms are struggling to make ends meet. Who were we to sit in our comfortable seats and judge? Clearly, even if she was as lazy and shiftless as they made her out to be, something was horribly wrong in her life to bring her to the point where she would humiliate herself holding that sign. There was an obvious need for assistance in some form, whether financial, mental, or otherwise. The passenger near me was furious at my response. Seeing the cross she was wearing, I calmly asked her what she thought Jesus would do if he came across that woman based on his interactions with others. She thought for a

moment, then lowered her head and said nothing. I was being harsh, yes. But sometimes, love comes in the form of thorns, not roses.

The opposite of Downward Social Comparison is Upward Social Comparison. We see this a lot in the idolization of the rich and famous, at work in the form of viewing our superiors as "better than" or "smarter than" etc. Those who engage in Upward Social Comparison do so because they have low self-esteem or are attempting to improve themselves in some way so that by looking to others who appear more skilled or better off in some way, they form a basis for attainment. The problem with this is that by looking to others for inspiration, we forget to look at our own capabilities and strengths first. We lose a bit of ourselves by doing this and potentially set ourselves up for failure by looking at goals that may be unattainable for us. For example, if a young person looks to a prominent figure skater as someone they want to emulate, they may set themselves up for disappointment or failure if they can't afford the lessons, or if their personal stature or physical health prevents them from achieving that level of fitness. Other examples include trying to become a rock star when you don't know how to play a guitar or your voice sounds like a dying frog. It's not that you couldn't learn those things, but if your voice is horrible to begin with, chances are, you'll never sound like Adele or Pavarotti.

But looking down on (or up to) others and spending a lot of time looking in the mirror aren't the only aspects of vanity that we need to look out for. Another big one is over-achievement: the need to attain high status in a particular area, regardless of the cost. There's nothing wrong with wanting to excel. In fact, in Thelema, it's encouraged. The difference is the importance we place upon it. Devoting time and effort to excel in a sport or occupation is good, but when it interferes with relationships, one's health, or the ability to spend time working toward K & C, then it's a problem of vanity, not an admirable goal.

As Thelemites, however, we have an obligation to avoid vain behavior. In his fictional story "Diary of a Drug Fiend" (Crowley, 2019), Aleister Crowley touches briefly on the subject with the line, "How can vanity co-exist with the spiritual life?" This line sums up the whole of the problem succinctly. How indeed! To avoid vanity, we must first begin with our view of others. We are ALL a "Star in the Company of Stars" after all! If we can't see others as wholly equal to ourselves and for the beautiful, amazing individuals they are (even when they piss us off), then we are missing the point entirely. We are all the same, from the same source, and we are all going to end up back at that same source together someday. Consider the line from the Mass:

> *"I believe in one earth, the mother of us all, and in one womb wherein all men are begotten, and wherein they shall rest. Mystery of Mystery, in her name, Babalon."* (Crowley, 2016)

To see ourselves as the same as everyone else, we must first realize the importance of the idea of selflessness. We ourselves are but one small part of the cosmos. Our personal importance pales in comparison to the whole of the universe and space beyond. That is not to say that we aren't valuable. What it means is that our value as individuals lies not just in what we do for ourselves, but in what we do for others and the world around us.

Union with the Divine can only happen when we realize that we are simply a part of it, and that every living and non-living thing in the universe is part of it also. We are all of that, and none of that because once we connect, we realize that there is no difference between us and it at all. Suddenly, our need to wear designer clothes or see ourselves as separate from others becomes unimportant. We realize that when we see others through the lens of unity, we are in fact important because each piece, like parts of a moving machine, has its contribution. The whole can't work if the parts don't work together. And that is the key to solving the problem of vanity. Strive, achieve, do; but do it not for yourself. Do it for the good of the whole, which brings us to the second definition. If we are doing, striving, and achieving, but we're doing it for vain reasons, then anything that we earn or achieve becomes empty and useless, which is part of the very definition of vanity. It's only when all of our work is for the good of others in some way that it has meaning. Divinity can't truly be any other way.

But suppose you're working a job you hate because you have to pay the bills? What then? Is that vanity? The answer is all in how you look at it. What is your goal? Paying bills means that your creditors can pay their bills, and perhaps the salaries of their employees. So, you are contributing to the whole. Your taxes go to (hopefully) educate the young, make roads safe, and keep first responders employed, so you're helping there too. What's more

is that by taking personal responsibility and taking care of yourself, you aren't burdening others with your care. Now some people can't work because of a disability. Again, it's what you do that matters. Are you building others up? Doing what you can to take care of yourself by keeping medical appointments, keeping yourself as healthy as you can by eating right and following doctor's advice? What about your contributions to others by helping with things that you CAN do? Unless you are in a coma, there is almost certainly some way for you to make a valuable contribution. Just look at Steven Hawking!

The bottom line is this: vanity is separateness. When you see yourself as separate, and you participate in downward (or upward) social comparisons, when you work only for your own reward, you are engaging in vanity. It's OK to strive for something good, to drive a nice car, to wear make-up and nice clothes, but only IF you're doing it for the right reasons and with the good of others in mind. You may need to drive a good car so that you can get back and forth to work. That's OK. You may need to wear nice clothes or make-up (yes, this is a thing, though I wholeheartedly despise it) for work, so that you can pay your bills. It's even OK to do it sometimes just for fun. But remember that the "WHY" is what's important. If you're doing things to separate yourself from others, rather than to unite with them, it's vanity, and vanity has no place in Thelema.

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"... in my dreams"

by Jubal Eunice

Sweet Babalon comes in my dreams.
She dances a dervish in silver moonbeams.
The sweat of her body, it seems,
Perfumes my soul as she permeates me,
And loosens the thread of my seams.

Sweet Babalon comes in my dreams.
Her bow and sharp arrow in soft moonlight gleams.
She kneels down beside the cool stream
Patiently hunting the feral Beast inside of me.

Sweet Babalon comes in my dreams.
The liquor I pour her is ruddy and steams.
Its flavor is copper and cream.
She'll drink 'til she's drunk as a harlot and screams
In the violent throes of ecstasy.

Sweet Babalon comes in my dreams.
She whispers sweet nothings which inspire me.
I waken in golden sun beams,
Nourished again by the love of the Mother supreme.

A New Alchemical Wedding

by Sr. AVO

I was inspired recently by a video that Lon Milo DuQuette put together regarding balance and justice. (Check it out here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIIOY92qvTw&t=17s)

Ironically, it came just one day following a conversation I had with some truly wonderful siblings about the nature of balance. It got me thinking about the upcoming Equinox, and how I might celebrate that considering my new-found insights. It occurred to me that a ritual about balance would be perfect, though a Mass would be better. Then that peanut butter-in-my-chocolate or chocolate-in-my-peanut butter moment happened (for those of you young folks, that was from a commercial sometime in the late 70's early 80's) and the idea of a Mass-like ritual complete with eucharist created specifically about balance would be cool. So, I wrote one called Novae Nuptiae Alchemicae. I had two goals in creating it. The first is to show how

we as individuals are flawed, and how we might overcome those flaws and help our siblings too. We see this in the ego of the Priest, and in the insecurity of the Priestess initially. The second goal is to celebrate the balanced energy of the Equinox with a ritual that is precisely about balance. In the ritual, you'll see that although the forces are represented by a Priest, Priestess, Deacon and Children, just like in the Gnostic Mass, they work much like an atom: The Positively charged Proton that is the Priest and one of the children, the Neutral Deacon, and the Negatively charged Priestess with the second child. Not sure if that combo is on the periodic table, but it works for our purposes. You'll also note that where the Priest and Priestess begin on one side of the Temple, after they are raised (AKA: shared a few electrons), they emerge on the opposite side, as shinier happier altogether different elements. You'll also note some sacred geometry mixed in as well.

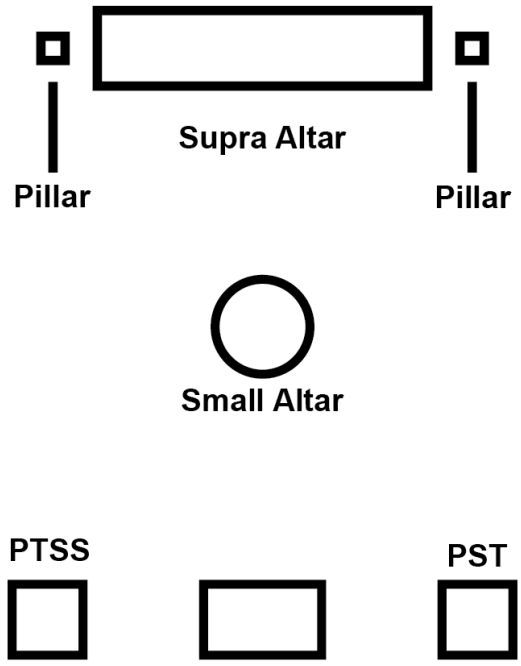
Hopefully, you'll enjoy it. If you use it, I would love to hear about your experience!

With much love,
93!
Soror AVO

Novae Nuptiae Alchemicae

Part I: The Temple and Officers

The Temple:
In the East (Direction of Boleskine) is the supra-altar, as in the Gnostic Mass. In addition to the usual setup, there is a crown and mantle set upon the altar for the Priestess. (The mantle should be large enough to also fit the Priest.) A paten with bread and a Graal filled with wine should also be on the supra-altar. The supra-altar forms the apex of an equilateral triangle, the base of which is in the west, in the form of two small tombs on either side of the temple. Between the two smaller tombs is a third slightly larger tomb which forms the apex of a second equilateral triangle, the base of which is formed by the two pillars on either side of the supra-altar. In the center of these is the small altar. On the small altar is The Book of the Law, a bowl of water, a cask of incense, a white pillar candle, and a hand-held mirror.



Note that two additional triangles are formed by the small altar as the apex of each. These two triangles represent the balance of forces and together create the hourglass symbol representing the DNA spiral. The two larger triangles interlace to form the 6-pointed star. The whole creates a square with a circle in the center, representing the foundation of matter. Additionally, though my drawing is admittedly not the best, the two pillars and the left and right tombs create the left and right columns of the tree of life, with the small altar, supra-altar, and third tomb creating the middle pillar.

The Officers:
The Priestess (PTSS) is clad in a black robe that is open down the front. This is tied closed at the beginning. She should be naked underneath. Her head is veiled with a black veil and around her neck is a heavy chain.

The Priest (PST) is clad in a scarlet robe also open down the front (This too is tied closed at the beginning, and he should also be naked underneath. On his head is a gold crown. Note: this is NOT the Uraeus crown of the Gnostic Mass, but instead is a gold circlet which may be ornate or not according to the taste of the Priest.

The Deacon (D) is clad in white representing the third alchemical element of Mercury. Style and adornment are at the discretion of the Deacon, providing the clothing is plain white and jewelry is colorless (metallic gold and silver in this instance are considered colorless, because they are not part of the color wheel. However, gray, and yellow are part of the wheel, and should not be worn.)

The children are (as in the Gnostic Mass), countercharged in black and white. As with the deacon, style and adornment are at their discretion (once again, devoid of color save the black and white), however, they should mirror each other exactly, so agreement is necessary.

Part II: The Opening

The Children are standing beside each of the pillars, according to their charge. The Priestess is veiled behind the small tomb on the left, and the Priest is veiled behind the small tomb on the right.

D: Standing at the small altar, facing the supra-altar, the Deacon takes The Book of the Law and (as in the Gnostic Mass), walks to the east, kissing it three times, places it on the supra-altar. The Deacon then turns to the West and declares: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I proclaim the Law of Light, Life, Love and Liberty in the name of IAO" The People: "Love is the law, love under will."

PST: emerges from his tomb, lance erect and says, "I am the Lord, the Sun. I am life and the giver of life! Who dares to declare *MY* nature?"

D: Takes the mirror and makes a circle about the small altar, and then goes to the tomb of the Priest, and facing him, holds up the mirror facing the Priest and says, "Yet therefore is the knowledge of thee, the knowledge of death! The light that nourishes is also that which destroys, lest it be tempered."

The Children walk toward the tombs and stand beside the Priest. The Negative Child removes the Priest's robe and crown, while the Positive Child has him kneel. (The negative child places the crown on the small altar, but places the Priests mantle on the supra-altar, the positive child mirroring). They return to stand beside the Deacon.

D: Once the children return to stand beside the Deacon, the Deacon picks up the bowl of water and stands before the Priest. The Deacon dips his hand in the water and makes three crosses on the Priest: Right shoulder, Left shoulder, and head (symbolizing the upright triangle), then says, "Let the salt and the water that are the tears of Nuit, and the waters of the womb, temper thy passions and still thy mind that thou may be purified. Thou may not pass, save through the stillness of the Earth." The Deacon raises the Priest and brings him to stand just before the small altar on the right.

The Children move on either side of the small altar while the Deacon replaces the bowl of water and picks up the cask of incense and the mirror. The Deacon moves to the tomb of the Priestess, and says, "O thou Lady of the East, arise from thy tomb of Earth, that thou may bring thy wisdom and understanding to others."

PTSS: Emerges from the Tomb and says, "My earth is scorched, my womb is barren. I am alone, there is no light where I am. I am not worthy of guiding others. The Positive Child removes the chain and veil from the neck and head of the Priestess, and the Negative child removes her robe.

D: The Deacon holds the mirror to her face and says, "Think you so? See the strength of the mountains within you! See the power of the Ocean within you! See the beauty of all that lives within you!" The Deacon makes three crosses on the Priestess, Left shoulder, Right shoulder, and pubis, forming a downward facing triangle, saying, "Let the fire and the air enlighten your mind (the Positive child places the crown on her head) and enkindle your spirit (the Negative child places the mantle about her shoulders). Thou may not pass, save through the fire of my light." The Deacon brings the Priestess to stand just before the small altar on the left. The Children return to their former positions on either side of the supra-altar.

Part III: The Adorations

D: The Deacon walks to the front of the supra-altar and facing the people, raises hands, and says, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

People: "Love is the law, love under will"

Deacon: lowers hands and says, "None can remain in darkness and live truly. Rise, O thou Priest of the Sun and let thy light fulfill us!"

PST: Walks deosil about the small altar, making one complete circle, and then continues to the front and left of the small altar, facing the Deacon.

D: Faces the Priestess and says, "Come forth O Thou Priestess of the night sky, and let thy stillness bring us to birth and regeneration."

PTSS: The Priestess walks widdershins about the small altar, making one complete circle, and then continues to the front and right of the small altar, facing the Deacon.

PST: Picks up the candle from the small altar and faces the Priestess saying: "O thou Great Lady of infinite space, I am but a tiny spark in the vastness of your embrace! Yet I feel your loneliness and the agony of the weight of the world upon your shoulders. Therefore, I offer you my light, that you may be filled with love and passion. Let light ease your burden!" (Priest hands the candle to the Priestess) then kneels and kisses her belly (between the navel and pubis) eleven times, then says, "Be the Priestess, glorious among us!"

The People: "So mote it be!"

PTSS: The Priestess takes the candle and says, "O thou Great Lord of light and life, I am but a shadow in the vastness of your brilliance! Yet I feel the sting of your fires and the burden of war that it can bring. Therefore, I offer you the mantle of my Earth, that you may find stillness and love. May your burden be lessened by the comfort of embrace!" Priestess hands the candle to the Deacon and removing her mantle, places it about the shoulders of the Priest and places his crown on his head. She kneels and gently strokes his lance 11 times, saying, "Be the Priest, glorious among us!"

She rises and the Deacon then returns the candle to her.

D: The Deacon motions for the people and children to kneel in flame pose, and giving the hailing sign, says, "Lord of Light and Life, be thou our inspiration! Let thy light guide us in darkness and fulfill us of rebirth."

The People: "So mote it be!"

D: "Lady of Stillness and Peace, be thou our comfort and armor! Let thy darkness clothe us and fulfill us of wisdom and understanding."

The People: "So mote it be!"

D: "Let the great Wheels of the Universe within and without continue to turn ever with us, that we may accomplish our Great Work."

Augmn, Augmn, Augmn.

The People: "So mote it be!"

Part IV: The Marriage

The Priest and Priestess walk hand-in-hand (can be raised for greater effect) to the supra-altar and stand in front of it, facing each other. The Deacon remains at the small altar but turns to face them.

The Priestess picks up the paten and says, "Let thy light make fertile the earth, sustain our bodies and nourish our minds."

The Priest holding the paten together with the Priestess, genuflects and touching the lance to the bread and says, "Thus let this bread be the body of the Divine."

The Priestess replaces the paten on the supra-altar and takes the cup (which is covered) and holding up high, says, "Let the Womb of the Great Mother be open to all who seek wisdom, peace and happiness." The Priestess lowers the cup and uncovering it, offers it to the Priest with her left hand. He genuflects and breaks the host into three pieces. He eats one, places the second piece in the mouth of the Priestess, and places the third on the tip of his lance. Together, they lower the tip of the lance into the cup, saying, "HRILIU!"

The Priest lowers his lance. He drinks half the wine, and she drinks the rest. Together with the Priestess, hold the cup up high and say, "For this is the path to rebirth and enlightenment!"

The Deacon and People: "So Mote it be!"

Part V: Conclusion

The Priest and Priestess then sit on the supra-altar (or stand in front of it if it can't hold their combined weight) while the congregants communicate.

When done, the Deacon faces the people and says, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. Let all who seek find Light in darkness, Joy in Life, Unconditional Love and Restraint in Liberty, and may all accomplish their Great Work."

The People: "Love is the law, love under will"

The Deacon closes the veil over the Priest and Priestess, and walks to the tomb in the center, accompanied by the Children who enter the tombs on their respective sides. This symbolizes the great cycle of life, with the children to be raised as Priest and Priestess someday.

[1]The Priest and Priestess may wear a simple white robe underneath if they are unable to be naked, but they must match in this. Either they both must wear the white robe, or they both must be naked. In the case where one is uncomfortable or unable to be naked, then the other MUST comply and wear the robe. No one can be forced to be naked. That would be very un-Thelemic.

Love Chants

by Sr. Maryam

N U I T
I AM the Holy Queen of Heaven!
Eternal matter is my name.
The veiled star, the crowned eleven.
These are my soul, as thou my flame,
O winged globe of serpents twined,
O Sun of glory in my skies!
O subtle spirit of my mind!
O ardent rapture of mine eyes!
Thou secret center, motion, rest: –
Come to my breast! Come to my breast!

H A D I T
I AM the Lord of Heaven, and I
Am secretly arrayed and robed
In all the azure abyss of sky
By serpents winged, wound, and globed.
Thou art the Infinite Queen of Space,
Thou the blue-lidded daughter of air!
I burn to kiss thy exultant face,
To grip thy body bent and bare.
O music! to my silence be!
I come to thee! I come to thee!

Invocation of Sutekh – The Black Flame

for Day (Night) of Set(h)'s Rebellion

by M.∴A.∴B.∴U.∴S.∴



The Oath

1 – Thee I invoke, Destroyer of Obstacles.
2 – Thee, that didst instruct discernment of the subjective from objective Truth.
3 – Thee, that didst teach the secrets realized and yet to be revealed.
4 – Thou who art the rebellion against the spiritual death.
5 – Thou art Seth, ruler of the west bank of the Nile River.
6 – Thou who art the canine, the jackal, and the pig!
7 – Thou who art Set, God of the sky and Lord of the Desert.
8 – Thou who creates order within Chaos.
9 – Thou who art the Master of storms and combat.
10 – True protector of Re in the prow of his bark.

Hear my name! Magisterium Ascensu Beo Ultima Summum

For it was I that never left!

Magnify, sanctify, and self-deify!

Antinomian though divinity of the Self!

Beast in man, Set-heh – Come into Being!

Unveiler of illusions, protector of the dawn…

Self-created One! Isolate consciousness.

1 – I am He! The holder of the shadowed flame. With mine eyes I see wisdom whilst reason destroys obstacles.
2 – I am He! The slayer of illusions!
3 – I am He! The apocalypse to idealism that strippeth away individual liberty and freedom.
4 – I am He, that silences the roar of ignorance!
5 – I am He, from whom is the secret center and Being.
6 – I am He, whose lips kiss the mouth of desire.
7 – I am He, the creator of mine own Light!
8 – I am He, The destructive force against tyranny and oppression!
9 – The Master of my destiny and Truth!
10 – I am Become! I have come into Being!

Come thou forth and walk with me. Make my truth visible to myself, so that I might Become my best Self! So that I may find the suitable and most fruitful years ahead. I have Come Into Being, and by the Process of my Coming Into Being, the Process of Coming Into Being Is Established.

Xeper Xepera Xeperu

Thelemic Muddles and 15 Bean Soup

by Sr. AVO

I must confess that most of my journey into Thelema has been a muddle. Not a little muddle, mind you: a whopping mess of a muddle. I would read, put the book down, feel frustrated, pick it back up and find bits of brilliance so profound I would all but leap from my seat, then repeat the process over again. One tiny problem for me, was that as brilliant as the man was, Crowley was unapologetically sexist. He was, however, a product of his times, and knowing that made it possible to overlook that particular flaw. But that was only a small part of my muddle. The biggest parts for me were the constant references to God, and Christianity, and my own personal flaws (which are embarrassingly many).

I recall a moment when after reading Magick in Theory and Practice, I put the book down with a huff of frustration and sought out the guidance of some of my siblings. I asked questions like, "Are we a secret Christian cult?" (yes, I was really that stupid) and "Can one be a Thelemite and NOT be a Christian?" Seriously. Looking back, I'm embarrassed and a bit horrified that I even asked, but at the time, it seemed to make sense, and I was overwhelmed by it. I had horrible experiences with Christianity, both growing up and as an adult, which caused me a tremendous amount of pain. I wanted nothing whatsoever to do with anything that resembled it. Just the references to anything resembling Christianity were enough to send waves of revulsion through me. More than once, I found myself asking if Thelema really was the path for me. Yet even as I asked the question, I knew the answer; I was home. So why was I muddling?

The answer came one day when I was making a pot of 15 Bean soup. In this particular soup, you have to par-boil the beans for an hour or so before you start making the soup. The smell of the boiling beans isn't the most pleasant, and I joked with a friend who was visiting that it would be great if I could make the soup without the beans. She laughed and replied, "But then it wouldn't be 15 Bean soup!" After she left, I chuckled as I recalled her comment while cleaning up. And then it hit me: Thelema was just like soup! Yes, there were Christian bits and sexist bits, but those bits were just a minute part that made a much greater whole. Thelema is the delicious soup that is the result of all sorts of crazy and wonderful bits. The problem was me. If I was to remain sincere in my efforts, I would have some healing and a lot of work to do.

And that's the point, isn't it? We're here because we muddle, because we're striving to BE better, to DO better and to find healing and peace in a world seemingly hell-bent on destruction. It's the muddles

that drive us and make us question. And it's the answers we find because of the muddles that propel us forward and allow us to help others. In short, muddles are good for us, even if they're about as pleasant as a tetanus shot. They give us reasons to dig deep, to discover areas that we are weak in, and where we need healing and/or a reality check or two. But it's those things that make us stronger and allow us to ultimately find union with the Divine, however we define it, because we are that.

And so, my dear Siblings, muddle on! You're definitely not alone in your struggles. We're all there in some way or other. Like Thelema itself, we are the crazy and wonderful bits of a great fraternal soup.

KHAF

by M.·.A.·.B.·.U.·.S.·.



To be done when the sun is completely hidden behind the moon at any given solar eclipse, or when the path gets closest to the participant.



Let her greet the Sun at Eclipse, facing it (BOISE), giving the sign of Typhon. The Trident. And let her say in a loud voice: Hail unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy rising, even unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy Mystery, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the hiding of the Sun. Sutekh defendeth against Apep at the prow, and Ra-Hoor abideth at the helm. Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of the veil!

Originally performed 8/21 - 11:27 AM Boise Time - 1:27PM Eastern / 10:27 AM Pacific (Simultaneous Khephra Rising camp ritual) In the path of the last eclipse.

Contraction in Astral Travel: A Complementary Practice

by Sr. AVO

Donald Michael Kraig, in his book "Modern Magick" (Kraig, 1989), instructs us to "expand our consciousness" so that our subtle body grows beyond the room, and beyond. This practice has the effect of strengthening the subtle body so that we can function more efficiently on the Astral. For this article, I would like to propose that the expansion of consciousness can be enhanced by a complementary practice, called "contraction".

To adequately explain contraction, we must first begin with the human brain. There is a part of the brain that ancient cultures, including ancient Egypt, associated with mystical and religious experiences. It's called the Pineal gland and it's located on the "roof" of the third ventricle of the brain, which is responsible for producing and circulating cerebrospinal fluid (Arendt, 2022) (Bailey, 2019). A sagittal view of these structures looks suspiciously like the Eye of Horus and has been referred to as the "Cave of Brahma", the cavern of the brain where God dwells (Giri, 2024). This region houses and circulates cerebral spinal fluid. Activation of this area (particularly through Kundalini practices) is associated with Samadhi, near-death experiences, and other powerful religious or ecstatic experiences (Yvonne Kason, n.d.). The Cave of Brahma sits in what the Alternative Healing Community calls "The Golden Triangle". When looking at a frontal view of a person, it is situated in the center of the head, which sits directly in the center of a triangle formed by the crown of the head, at the top point, with the space just below the ears and above the tip of each shoulder as the base of the triangle. To activate this region requires the circulation of energy (particularly

Kundalini) which then activates the Pineal gland, which in turn, produces ecstatic experiences and allows one to travel astrally, at least hypothetically.

Crowley attempted to explain this by calling the current of energy "the Will" and the visualization process, the "imagination". The goal of the magician was to unite these two, will and imagination, in order to achieve a particular Magickal goal or to astral travel; "When, however, the two are conjoined-when the Imagination creates an image-and the Will directs and uses that image, marvellous magical effects may be obtained." (Mathers, 1987) However, many a magician, including Crowley, complained of feeling exhausted afterward, particularly when vibrating God names. In fact, he mentions this succinctly in Liber O, where he says, "It is a sign that the student is performing this correctly when a single "Vibration" entirely exhausts his physical strength." (Crowley, 2020). In terms of Astral travel, by imagining ourselves expanding outward, we are also dragging that current with us, or at the very least, using it as a propellant, which can be draining. That is where the practice of contraction can be valuable.

If the expansion of consciousness can help the Magician cross boundaries of time and space, amplifying it with its polar opposite, contraction, can add a powerful "punch" to one's work.

If you have ever seen an explosion, you may have noticed that at the point just before the actual explosion happens, air and other gases sometimes get "sucked in". This is a fitting example of contraction: It is the pulling inward before an explosive release. Think of an orgasm. Before it happens, tension builds. Your muscles contract and tense up, then afterward, you relax. Contraction is precisely like that. You draw energy inward, until it becomes so tense and small that you can barely hold it, then you let it go, and allow the built-up pressure to function as a battery for your astral body. Once you are fully charged, you can then use that extra energy to further your Astral exploration and any other magickal endeavor you embark on.

Contraction can be used as a valuable tool for other purposes as well. It can be used to control anxiety, anger, and stress, and can also be used before beginning a yoga or exercise practice. In fact, the results are quite similar to PMR (Progressive Muscle Relaxation), which is now being hailed as an essential tool (Klajner F., n.d.) in treating addiction, anxiety, depression, and so on.

While I have had a modicum of success with it, the real proof comes from replication. So I encourage you to try and see if it works for you. I'd love to hear about your experience! In any case, if you're like me, the fun lies not in the proof, but in the experimentation! To that end, I hope this has given you some food for thought and maybe even some ideas for your own practice.

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— Liber LII

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