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David Wilkinson's edited version
of A.C.'s typescripts and his
commentary on The Book of The Law

The work was commissioned by A.C.
and published by Karl Pearson
in the States from his typescript
after A.C.'s death
1/5.

THE COMMENTARY TO
LIBER AL VEL LEGIS
INTRODUCTION-FACING SHEET-
'TITLE' AND PART ONE

NAME

NOTES - CORRECTIONS

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Commentary on The Book of The Law

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THE COMMENTARY TO
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Title.

In the first edition this Book is called L. L is the sacred letter in the Holy twelvefold Table which forms the triangle that stabilizes the Universe. See Liber 418. *) L is the letter of Libra, Balance, and 'Justice' in the Taro. This title should probably be AL, 'El', as the 'L' was heard of the voice of Aiwaz, not seen. AL is the true name of the Book, for these letters, and their number 31, form the Master Key to its Mysteries.

CCXX is the number of verses in this Book. It is 22 x 10, the 22 letters with the 10 numbers, and 10^{22} is the modulus of the three universes within our range; the stars, the animals, the atoms.

LXXVIII. The Number of Aiwass, the Intelligence who communicated this Book. Having only hearing to guide me, I spelt it ~~OXIX~~, referring it to Mezla, the Influence from Kether. But in An XIV there came unto me mysteriously a Brother, ignorant of all this Work, who gave me the spelling ~~IX~~ which is 93, the number of Thelema and Agape, which concentrate the Book itself in a symbol. Thus the Author secretly identified Himself with this Message.

But this is not all. Aiwaz is not as I had supposed a mere formula, like many angelic names, but is the true most ancient name of the God of the Yezdis, and thus returns to the highest antiquity, the rediscovery of the Sumerian tradition.

DCLXVI. The main points of this number are as follows: -

1. From the earliest childhood I have identified myself with the Beast of the Apocalypse.
2. 666 is the full number of the Sun, lord of my Ascendent. (Also see 6 x lll; 6, Sol, on the Grand Scale.)
3. To Mega Therion adds to 666; this is my Mystic Name in the A... A... as a Magus.
4. The Brother previously mentioned knew me only as 'Therion' by my writings. Now in An XIV I was in converse with a certain Wizard named Amalantrah, in the Spirit, and it occurred to me to ask if I could use an Hebrew transliteration of my Name for the Qabalah. He said yes. I made several attempts, none of any value. But at the very time of my asking the question this Brother was writing a letter which gave the true answer 11111
= 666.

Note added by
Gurnea

*) Liber 418 = "The Vision and The Voice", reprinted with Introduction and Commentary by Thelema Publishing Co., Hampton N.J.

Should really be written META OHPION (Lund)

Note and text for a page on reverse of title page: -

Chapter III, v.40: "But the work of the comment? That is easy; and Hadit burning in thy heart shall make swift and secure thy pen."

I had made several attempts of which this is one: none satisfactory. Anything but 'easy'; my pen far indeed from 'swift and secure'. Then, one night in Tunis, in despair about it all, I woke up of a sudden and dashed off

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.
The study of this book is forbidden. It is wise to destroy this copy after the first reading.

Whosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril. These are most dire.

Those who discuss the contents of this Book are to be shunned by all, as centres of pestilence.

All questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself.

There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

Love is the law, love under will.

The priest of the princes,

ANKH-F-N-KHN^{ON}SU

I recognized this instantly as the 'Comment' and it has been printed as such after the text in all subsequent editions.

THERION.

A Footnote ought to be inserted on page one, line 3, after the word "discarnate" *)

*) Not necessarily. One of the strongest proofs of his power and intelligence is the discovery (not until 1917-1918 !) through Mr. Samuel Jacobs of New York, that Aiwaz is a not uncommon name among Assyrians. Aiwaz was spelt to add to 78 in the first published edition of the Book of the Law, and corrected to 93 in the light of this. - A.C.

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Introduction to the Abridged Commentary of the Book of the Law.
By Louis Wilkinson. *This introduction by Louis Wilkinson*

In this Commentary on the Book of the Law it is told how the Book came to be written; or, rather, communicated to the man who wrote it down.

"There is a Being called Alwaz, an intelligence incarnate, who wrote this Book of the Law, using my ears and hand. His mind is certainly superior to my own in knowledge and in power, for He has dominated me and taught me ever since".

But the writer from this dictation was not, at the time, in sympathy with this 'intelligence'. Alwaz, in fact, was dictating to a hostile scribe; to one who was forced to write against his will. "I see thee hate the hand and the pen; ~~stronger~~ stronger." To the scribe this experience is the surest and the most significant reality of his life.

I am myself persuaded that there are intelligences and powers not normally accessible to any of our senses, and that in the last hundred years such forms of energy have been discovered, or re-discovered. Study of the text of this Book has confirmed my belief that in certain rare circumstances communication between such intelligences and human beings is possible. The same study may well lead others to the same conclusion. I would direct the readers attention to one of the most striking indications of the validity of these communications: the Commentary on verse nineteen of the third Chapter.

One of the first and most important points to be noted is that the whole Book of the Law rests upon a mathematical basis. It makes no partial appeal: it does not depend upon religious theory or racial tradition. One who knows far more than I ~~could upon the evidence of the~~ ~~præter-natural character of this~~ ~~of both of mathematics and~~ of mysticism, has thrown a clearer light than I could upon the evidence of the præter-natural character of this Book. He writes: *(p. 14)*

"The Qabalists conceal the value of Π in the name of ALHIM, which is God considered as the co-operative forces of Nature, and by taking the significant figure in the conventional value of these letters you obtain the number 3.1415. But this is incorrect. In the Book of the Law (ch 3 v 47), this circle squared in its failure is a key also". By 'in its failure' is implied, as Alwaz knew, that the figures were not fully correct. But in the concealed collocation of letters on that page is found the figure 3.141593, which is the correct value of Π to six places of decimals. (This figure is obtained by taking the Hebrew value of the letters crossed by a line slashed diagonally across the page in the original manuscript.)

"It will be noted that this figure begins with 3I-the 'secret key of it all'-and ends with 93, the esoteric key of the whole Book. The squaring of the circle is an age-long traditional symbol of the accomplishment of the Great Work.

"It may be added that from this starting point many other Qabalistic mysteries are to be found-so numerous and so significant that no human mind such as we know could possibly have woven the whole series into this Book, which was dictated and scribbled at lightning speed.

"There is doubtless a further key to be found which will in the end elucidate the whole Book and make manifest the extremely elaborate nature of its pattern" (Note. The paragraphs between inverted commas

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Therapist and follower of A.C.

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The Book of the Law, however, is not only for mathematicians and mystics. In some one phrase or other of the Book there is a direct message for every human being. The best way for the layman to approach this Book is to regard it as a letter written directly to himself. Even though he may not be able to understand some parts of the letter, he is sure to find other parts that are unmistakably addressed, in an intimately personal sense, to him.

It is because the thought expressed in this Book of the Law was sometimes not easily intelligible to the transmitter that he wrote a Commentary upon it. He wished to explain, so far as he could, the messages that he had received. After some lapse of time he wrote a second Commentary, which superseded the first; so I have not included the first in this volume. And there is a good deal of the second that I have not included. Sometimes the understanding of the Commentary involves mathematical or philosophical or scientific or magical knowledge such as the general reader cannot be assumed to possess: and this edition of the Commentary on the Book of the Law is, for the general reader. It is intended as a primer; it is for the layman. I am a layman myself, as regards special knowledge of the kind that I have just indicated, so in one way my task has been simplified. I have gone on the principle of omitting from the Commentary anything that I cannot myself understand. I have not, however, left out a single word of the Book of the Law itself; following the strict and, without doubt, the right injunction that this should not be done.

"My scribe... shall not in one letter change this book; but lest there be folly, he shall comment thereon..."

The Law itself must, therefore, stand wholly as it was transmitted: every sentence of it is integrated with every other: any omission might falsify or weaken the whole, however little aware the editor might be of the effect of his editing. In this volume I have allowed certain passages from The Book of the Law to stand by themselves without comment; for it has sometimes seemed better to leave the reader to make what interpretation he can of his own than to risk confusing him and delaying his apprehension of the message of the Book as a whole.

The Book of the Law has already been published without a Commentary: but, if it is to reach and influence a wider public, a Commentary, which must often be detailed, is indispensable. The values of the Book, its application to our lives, to the questions of our time, must be explained. I believe that those values are great; and that the more widely the principles of The Book of the Law are adopted, the better chance there will be for our escape from a renewal, on a more disastrous scale, of the calamities of the past quarter of a century. If those principles come to be generally adopted, I believe that mankind will issue triumphantly from the evils of its past. A veritable "New Order" will be set up, bringing with it a general realisation of what the "Good Life" means, and operating with a veritably "revolutionizing" effect beyond the most sanguine dreams of any one of those very heterogenous groups of modern revolutionaries and reformers. This may not happen soon: the sceptic will say that, if it ever happens, it will be in the far future.

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In the hand of Karl Gorman

more necessary it will be surely appear that ~~a~~ ^{beginning} should be made. Consider present discontents, present deprivations, physical, moral, and spiritual; consider present urgent vital needs. These are too palpable and too widely recognized to need specification. Well, then, is it foolishly sanguine to anticipate that a new way of thought, a new ~~morality~~ religion and a new morality, will be rapidly succeeded by rapid growth? This growth may be as phenomenally swift and operative in its creative force as the evil growths of the present century have been phenomenally swift and operative in their force of destruction.

We today need The Book of the Law for our guidance, for our strength for our happiness and fulfilment. It is because I am convinced that we need it, and need it very badly, that I have made this attempt to abridge the Commentary upon it by removing passages likely to present obstructive difficulties to the general reader, to the layman like myself. I have aimed at making an abridgement that the general reader of intelligence and good will can assimilate, and by which he will powerfully gain. But I do not pretend that he will understand this book and make it his own without any difficulty at all: it is only charlatan works that can be so quickly and easily grasped as that. It is impossible to write revelingly on such matters as religion, death, sex, the conduct of life, and at the same time to make no more than a slight and simple demands on the reader's brain. Unless he makes the effort not only to attend but to cooperate, no one can gain anything of importance from any book.

The gain that the reader will get from this Book will be primarily religious. For the "Law" is in its essence a religious Law; its sanctions, its injunctions, and its prohibitions are religious. At the same time it is not a dogmatic religion in the sense in which most religions are dogmatic; it is a Faith for the individualist, as is clearly shown by its central text, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law". "Discover your own true will", is the meaning of this; "and then act in harmony with it to the utmost of your powers". The aim of the Commentary on The Book of the Law is to guide the reader along the path of the discovery of his own true will, in accordance with which, and only in accordance with which, he can rightly think and act. This is why "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law". Only by so doing will you be shown your own true thought and life.

Every man and every woman is a star. "A separate star; and indeed is a sense which is explained in this Book, a separate god. The herd-instinct defiles and destroys the godhead in man. "Democracy", at least in some of its contemporary influences, blasphemes against this godhead. In certain aspects it has shown itself to be an arch-enemy of the soul of man. Long ago Henrik Ibsen declared that "mere democracy cannot solve the social question". He might have added that there are many other questions that it cannot solve. But he implied this when he said that "an element of aristocracy must be introduced into our life. Of course I do not mean the aristocracy of birth or of the purse or even the aristocracy of the intellect. I mean the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind. That only can free us". It is the full achievement of real freedom, by such means, that will be compassed by the adoption of the religion of The Book of the Law.

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The gain that the reader will get from this Book is religious. For the "Law" is in its essence a religion, its injunctions, and its prohibitions are same time it is not a dogmatic religion in the sense religions are dogmatic; it is a Faith for the individual clearly shown by its central text, "Do what thou wilt whole of the Law". "Discover your own true will", is this; "and then act in harmony with it to the utmost". The aim of the Commentary on The Book of the Law is reader along the path of the discovery of his own accordance with which, and only in accordance with which think and act. This is why "Do what thou wilt shall be the Law". Only by so doing will you be shown your own true life.

"Every man and every woman is a star." A separate sense which is explained in this Book, a separate instinct defiles and destroys the godhead in man. "In some of its contemporary influences, blasphemes against the head. In certain aspects it has shown itself to be

more necessary it will be surely appear that ~~a~~^α beginning should be made. Consider present discontents, present deprivations, physical, moral, and spiritual; consider present urgent vital needs. These are too palpable and too widely recognized to need specification. Well, then, is it foolishly sanguine to anticipate that a new way of thought, a new ~~morality~~ religion and a new morality, will be rapidly succeeded by rapid growth? This growth may be as phenomenally swift and operative in its creative force as the evil growths of the present century have been phenomenally swift and operative in their force of destruction. ✓

We today need The Book of the Law for our guidance, for our strength for our happiness and fulfilment. It is because I am convinced that we need it, and need it very badly, that I have made this attempt to abridge the Commentary upon it by removing passages likely to present obstructive difficulties to the general reader, to the layman like myself. I have aimed at making an abridgement that the general reader of intelligence and good will can assimilate, and by which he will powerfully gain. But I do not pretend that he will understand this book and make it his own without any difficulty at all: it is only charlatan works that can be so quickly and easily grasped as that. It is impossible to write ~~rewardingly~~ ^{rewards} on such matters as religion, death, sex, the conduct of life, and at the same time to make no more than a slight and simple demands on the reader's brain. Unless he makes the effort not only to attend but to cooperate, no one can gain anything of importance from any book.

The gain that the reader will get from this Book will be primarily religious. For the "Law" is in its essence a religious Law; its sanctions, its injunctions, and its prohibitions are religious. At the same time it is not a dogmatic religion in the sense in which most religions are dogmatic; it is a Faith for the individualist, as is clearly shown by its central text, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law". "Discover your own true will", is the meaning of this; "and then act in harmony with it to the utmost of your powers". The aim of the Commentary on The Book of the Law is to guide the reader along the path of the discovery of his own true will, in accordance with which, and only in accordance with which, he can rightly think and act. This is why "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law". Only by so doing will you be shown your own true thought and life.

"Every man and every woman is a star." A separate star; and indeed in a sense which is explained in this Book, a separate god. The herd-instinct defiles and destroys the godhead in man. "Democracy", at least in some of its contemporary influences, blasphemes against this godhead. In certain aspects it has shown itself to be an arch-enemy of the soul of man. Long ago Henrik Ibsen declared that "mere democracy cannot solve the social question". He might have added that there are many other questions that it cannot solve. But he implied this when he said that "an element of aristocracy must be introduced into our life. Of course I do not mean the aristocracy of birth or of the purse or even the aristocracy of the intellect. I mean the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind. That only can free us". It is the full achievement of real freedom, by such means, that will be compassed by the adoption of the religion of The Book of the Law.

Further, this Book gives a new illumination of death, of the

meaning of death. With death all religions have of course been much concerned; but the extent to which the various Christian sects have succeeded in dispelling the fear of death can be judged by the prevailing attitude towards death of the great majority of professing Christians persons. When they are not refusing to think about it, they are terrified of it. They speak of one who has died as "poor", which must mean that they regard him as having suffered a calamity. The old Christian conceptions of life after death as either eternal combustion or eternal harp-strumming are no longer at all generally believed; indeed, it may be questioned whether they ever were seriously believed except by a fanatical minority. Christianity-popular Christianity, at least-has never had anything better to offer than this everlasting torture for the damned and everlasting boredom for the saved. Or-but somewhat heretically-"rest". Well, rest is better than torment or ennui; and "May he rest in peace" is, it would seem, the best that Christianity can do by way of hope for the "departed". "Rest"; not activity of any valid kind on some further plane of being.

This Book will also illuminate that extremely important human concern of what is now usually known as "Sex", a concern which Christianity has always, to put it mildly, rather obscured than illuminated. Christian "morality" is in its essence anti-sexual or "sexophobic": here, most evidently, "the praxis of the Church is inimical to life". The great majority of men and women do not now believe that in the flagrant absurdity that the impulse ~~to~~ by which alone life is continued ~~in~~ our planet is sinful, and that its influence sinfulness can be expunged only if it is directed towards- by a husband towards his wife and by a wife towards her husband. The creation of this artificial "sin of sex", the attachment of a sense of guilt to a basic natural function, had brought about a disastrous perversion of sane moral feeling. It has destroyed or numbed our awareness of what is ~~only~~ the only real sin, of what alone should cause a sense of guilt in us: that is, obstruction or denial of our true will, or of the true will of another. The acceptance of, or the deference to these malignant sex-tabus, has done incalculable harm and is still doing it. A sane, a natural and creative view of sex, is of the first importance: for a destructive and distorted view, a Christian view, generates an evil pus which overflows upon the whole field of human thought and human activity, infecting with one malady after another. Sex-repression, sex-frustration, as Freud has truly told us, breed war-makers and war. They and their cousin germane, malevolent interference with individual freedom of thought and man's natural right to all the pleasures of life, breed also social discontents and social ills. In the strictest sense, such persecuting manias are anti-social. The true will of humanity is against them and against their offspring. That will is not for wars, it is not for the "moral" filth of sexual frustration or for the frustration of anything that is needed for the creative fulfilment of individual life.

Until the old twilight tabus have been killed there is no certain hope for the future. The Book of the Law deals with them and their issue a mortal blow. It sets in their place a gospel which, it is true, makes high demands, but which is valid for the achievement of the heart's desire; for the satisfaction of our dolorous and aching needs; for the building of a true and enduring City of God.

Reverend