

## New Aeon Initiation

By IAO131



### o) Introduction

*"In the name of the Lord of Initiation. Amen."*

- "Liber Tzaddi," lines 0 & 44

A New Aeon was proclaimed and begun in April of 1904 with the reception of *The Book of the Law, Liber AL vel Legis*. A New Aeon implies a new paradigm or a new point-of-view with which to view the world. According to "Liber Causae," "In all systems of religion is to be found a system of Initiation, which

may be defined as the process by which a man comes to learn that unknown Crown." If Initiation is common to "all systems of religion," then how is Initiation to be understood in this Aeon of the Crowned & Conquering Child? What are the paradigm-shifts which characterize the point-of-view from this New Aeon?

I intend to outline the basic views of New Aeon Initiation in this essay. There will be as little recourse to esoteric jargon as possible; ideally, an individual who has never encountered Thelema should be able to grasp many of the ideas explained here. It should be noted that the various ideas & formulae which are still valid in this New Aeon, i.e. those ideas that are "superseded" and not "abrogated," will not be mentioned (as nothing has changed in these cases from the Old Aeons).

The basic ideas surrounding New Aeon Initiation are: death/attainment as non-cataclysmic, the True Self contains both good and evil, an embracing of the world, the self as redeemer, and no perfection of the soul. All of these points will be treated in turn, and each will be exemplified by a central quotation from the corpus of Thelema.

## **1) Death/Attainment as Non-cataclysmic**

*"...There is that which remains."*  
*-Liber AL vel Legis II:9*

The basic idea associated with the last, Old Aeon is an obsession with death. The symbolic proponents of the Old Aeon paradigms - Osiris, Dionysus, Jesus, Adonis, etc. - are all bound by the central motif of a (painful) death. Death is seen as catastrophic and a ritual act must be performed for the dead to be resurrected (or avenged). The cosmological parallel with this initiatory viewpoint is the idea that the Sun dies each night and the priesthood must perform a ritual for the Sun to rise again in the morning. Crowley often writes of the switch from the Old Aeon to the New Aeon view as paralleling the switch from a geocentric to a heliocentric view of our Solar System. Now we know that the Sun does not "die"

each night, nor does any priest need to perform any kind of ritual for the Sun to rise in the morning. We know the Sun is constantly shining and it is only the turning of the earth which creates the succession of day and night: the apparent sight of the Sun "dying" and being "reborn" each night has changed to the understanding that the Sun is never born nor dies. Frater Achad, or Charles Stansfeld Jones, encapsulated this idea in his essay "Stepping Out of the Old Aeon Into the New,"

*"You know how deeply we have always been impressed with the ideas of Sun-rise and Sun-set, and how our ancient brethren, seeing the Sun disappear at night and rise again in the morning, based all their religious ideas in this one conception of a Dying and Re-arisen God. This is the central idea of the religion of the Old Aeon but we have left it behind us because although it seemed to be based on Nature (and Nature's symbols are always true), yet we have outgrown this idea which is only apparently true in Nature. Since this great Ritual of Sacrifice and Death was conceived and perpetuated, we, through the observation of our men of science, have come to know that it is not the Sun which rises and sets, but the earth on which we live which revolves so that its shadow cuts us off from the sunlight during what we call night. The Sun does not die, as the ancients thought; It is always shining, always radiating Light and Life."*

Crowley reiterates this view and explains the spiritual significance in *The Heart of the Master* where he writes,

*"...When the time was ripe, appeared the Brethren of the Formula of Osiris, whose word is I A O; so that men worshipped Man, thinking him subject to Death, and his victory dependent upon Resurrection. Even so conceived they of the Sun as slain and reborn with every day, and every year. Now, this great Formula being fulfilled, and turned into abomination, this Lion came forth to proclaim the Aeon of Horus, the crowned and conquering child, who dieth not, nor is reborn, but goeth radiant ever upon His Way. Even so goeth the Sun: for as it is now known that night is but the shadow of the Earth, so Death is but the shadow of the Body, that veileth his Light from its bearer."*

Assimilating this idea of the Sun, in reality, never setting goes a long way to help the aspirant understand the spiritual truth of Thelema that this mirrors. In short, **death (both of the ego and of the body) is no longer seen as**

**cataclysmic in the New Aeon.** This is because of two connected ideas: Death is complementary with Life, and Death is actually Change ("life to come").

Let's start with the first idea that Death is complementary with Life. "Death is the apex of one curve of the snake Life: behold all opposites as necessary complements, and rejoice" (*The Heart of the Master*). Life and death are the two complements that constitute existence, and all things are formed from the interplay of Life and Death. All things in the universe, including the mind and body of the aspirant, are subject to Life and Death. One might visualize existence as an undulating serpent, where the crest of a wave is Life and the trough is Death (which is the image Crowley uses above in *The Heart of the Master*).

This leads into the idea of Death as Change. We often think of Life as constituting change and Death as constituting stagnation: death implies a stop or an end. **The New Aeon views Death not as an end but as the possibility for new Life.** Just as the Winter brings "death" to plant life, it also gives nutrients to the soil to allow for the inevitable new Spring. (As a note, "Death" refers to the death of the physical body, but more importantly to the "death" or "dissolution" of the ego which can and does occur during an individual's life). Chapter 18, "Dewdrops," of *The Book of Lies* explains this idea that Death is Change very succinctly:

*"Verily, love is death, and death is life to come. / Man returneth not again; the stream floweth not uphill; the old life is no more; there is a new life that is not his. / Yet that life is of his very essence; it is more He than all that he calls He."*

The succinct idea that "death is life to come" is expounded here along with the idea that in the life that arises from death, we become "more ourselves." The Life which arises from Death "is more He than all that he calls He." This is because "all that he calls He" is his ego and in the death of the ego, we come to identify with the True Self which contains both Life and Death (and is therefore Eternal and Infinite). This death is not cataclysmic, but even equated with "love." In the Tarot, which symbolically mirrors the initiatory paradigm of its age, traditionally has "Atu XIII" (or the 13th Trump) as "Death." In the New Aeon, we

may understand this card not as "Death" but "Transformation" or "Change." In *The Heart of the Master*, Crowley writes short, poetic stanzas to describe each Tarot card. For "Atu XIII: Death" he writes, "The Universe is Change; every Change is the effect of an Act of Love; all Acts of Love contain Pure Joy. Die daily. Death is the apex of one curve of the snake Life: behold all opposites as necessary complements, and rejoice." This is the fundamental paradigm-shift of the New Aeon: not only is Death actually Change (and "life to come"), but it is a form of Love, and "all Acts of Love contain Pure Joy." There is no trace of cataclysm, sorrow, or suffering in this conception of Death in the New Aeon.

Symbolically, this means **Initiation (the myth-drama of each individual's Path) is no longer portrayed as "The Man performing Self-Sacrifice" but as "The Child Growing to Maturity."** On this Crowley writes, "What then is the formula of the initiation of Horus? It will no longer be that of the Man, through Death. It will be the natural growth of the Child. His experiences will no more be regarded as catastrophic. Their hieroglyph is the Fool: the innocent and impotent Harpocrates Babe becomes the Horus Adult by obtaining the Wand" ("Liber Samekh"). The idea is one of coming to maturity, specifically of "obtaining the Wand" which represents the creative, generative power: this experience constitutes "spiritual puberty" for the individual, one might say. The process is not a cataclysm that needs rectifying (although puberty often seems cataclysmic!) but a natural process of growth and fulfillment of human potential.

Each person must destroy their ego self and come to identify with the True Self. Every man and woman must "break down the fortress of thine Individual Self, that thy Truth may spring free from the ruins" (*The Heart of the Master*). This necessarily involves the death or dissolution of the ego ("thine Individual Self") to which many people are strongly attached. This is why death is seen as catastrophic: people view losses as catastrophic and the greatest loss to people is the loss of their ego. In both the Old and New Aeons, the ego must experience death in process of Initiation. The difference is the view of this phenomenon: **the Old Aeon views death as a cataclysmic event whereas the New Aeon views it as a necessary step in the progress of Growth.** As Crowley

explains, "The Ego fears to lose control of the course of the mind... The Ego is justly apprehensive, for this ecstasy will lead to a situation when its annihilation will be decreed... Remember that the Ego is not really the centre and crown of the individual; indeed the whole trouble arises from its false claim to be so" (Commentary to "Liber LXV" I:60). Before the individual personally experiences the dissolution of their own ego, they must assimilate this New Aeon idea that "there is that which remains" after this death. Each person then must come to directly experience and even embody this truth - that is, each individual must come to know this truth through their own experience. "Faith must be slain by certainty," as Crowley wrote (*The Book of Thoth*). We might even say that each person is psychologically stuck in the Old Aeon paradigm until they have this experience of the death of the ego. Only then can they be "freed of the obsession of the doom of the Ego in Death" (*Little Essays Toward Truth*, "Mastery"). Only then can the individual identify with "that which remains," which transcends but contains both Life and Death. In the New Aeon, each person "Let[s] the Illusion of the World pass over thee, unheeded, as thou goest from Midnight to the Morning." (*The Heart of the Master*). The New Aeon is the Aeon of the Crowned & Conquering Child: Horus, Heru-Ra-Ha, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and many other names. Horus is a symbol of the True Self which transcends Life and Death just as the Sun is a symbol of that which constantly shines even though day (Life) and night (Death) pass on earth, and just as the Child is a symbol of that which contains but transcends both mother (Life) and father (Death). In the "1st Aethyr" of *The Vision and the Voice*, Horus himself says of his nature:

*"I am light, and I am night, and I am that which is beyond them.  
I am speech, and I am silence, and I am that which is beyond them.  
I am life, and I am death, and I am that which is beyond them.  
I am war, and I am peace, and I am that which is beyond them.  
I am weakness, and I am strength, and I am that which is beyond them.  
...And it shall be unto them a grace and a sacrament, and ye shall all sit down together at the supernal banquet, and ye shall feast upon the honey of the gods, and be drunk upon the dew of immortality --- FOR I AM HORUS, THE CROWNED AND CONQUERING CHILD, WHOM THOU KNEWEST NOT!"*

As mentioned in later sections, in the New Aeon we view each individual

as God Him/Herself. Therefore **the work of each person is the release of identification with the ego and the consequent identification with Horus, That which transcends Life and Death (and all dualities)**. This is expressed symbolically by Frater Achad (and Crowley) by the idea of switching one's perspective from Earth (the geocentric viewpoint where we experience day/life and night/death; the perspective of the ego) to the perspective from the Sun (the heliocentric viewpoint where experience perpetual shining through day and night; the perspective of the True Self).

This paradigmatic change from Old Aeon to New, in the sense of no longer seeing Death as cataclysmic, is captured symbolically in Crowley's changes to old "formulae" to conform with the New Aeon point-of-view. Specifically, the change from IAO to VIAOV and the change from AUM to AUMGN that Crowley speaks about in *Magick in Theory & Practice* (chapters 5 and 7, respectively) exemplify the paradigm shift from Old Aeon to New Aeon.

On the formula of IAO, Crowley writes, "This formula is the principal and most characteristic formula of Osiris, of the Redemption of Mankind. "I" is Isis, Nature, ruined by "A", Apophis the Destroyer, and restored to life by the Redeemer Osiris" (*MIT&P*, chapter 5 which should be consulted for a more full examination of VIAOV). The basic idea is that I = Life which is ruined by A = Death/Chaos which must then be redeemed by O. Existence is therefore a process of endless cataclysms which require redemption from this point-of-view. How is this view changed from the point-of-view of New Aeon Initiation? Crowley writes, "THE MASTER THERION, in the Seventeenth year of the Aeon, has reconstructed the Word I A O to satisfy the new conditions of Magick imposed by progress." Now, no one would deny that all things change, that "all things must pass," but from the point-of-view of physics, energy is never created nor destroyed. It is simply transformed into different forms. If we identify with any of these partial phenomena which inevitably must be transformed, we are subject to death. If we "die daily" to our ego-self, to our sense of division or separateness from the world, then we come to identify with the Whole Process. "The many change and pass; the one remains" ("Liber Porta Lucis," line 20). The All contains all opposites within itself, it is the symbol of the Serpent itself whose undulations

are Life and Death, and therefore is eternal. This True Self, the All which knows no division, is Horus and "that which remains." It is with these ideas in mind we can understand why, in the New Aeon, IAO has become VIAOV. Basically, IAO has been surrounded by two "V"s (these refer to the Hebrew letter "Vav" or the Greek letter "Digamma" for various reasons which can be investigated in chapter 5 of *MIT&P*). What does this mean?

Essentially, the "V" represents "that which remains." There may be processes of creation, destruction, and reconstruction (IAO) but there is always "that which remains." The "V" remains unchanged through the various "IAO processes" one might say. Even though the phallus of the father must "die" in ejaculation, it is a necessary step for new Life - the Child - to emerge... And the Semen, the Quintessence, remains unchanged ("that which remains") throughout the entire process. This symbolic process exemplifies the ideas of the New Aeon, especially because the "death" in this case is ecstatic: the death is literally orgasmic. Further, Crowley writes in *The Book of Lies*, "the snake is the hieroglyphic representation of semen" and so the semen which is "that which remains" is identified with the snake or serpent which, as explained above, represents That which contains the complements of Life and Death (being the crest and trough of His undulations).

There is another interesting idea which this symbolic formula, VIAOV, conceals: One might consider the original "V" as ignorant man, i.e. man as ignorant of his True Self/his identity with All Things, and the final "V" as man conscious of his own Divinity. It is through the process of IAO, or death of the ego, that each individual becomes consciously aware of him or herself as Horus, "that which remains," for since all things are contained in the All-Self, it cannot be created or destroyed. Also, the "V" or the True Self was always there, except the individual was simply ignorant of this fact: "The series of transformations has not affected his identity; but it has explained him to himself" (*MIT&P*, chapter 5). Crowley explains, "...the 'Stone' or 'Elixir' which results from our labours will be the pure and perfect Individual originally inherent in the substance chosen, and nothing else... the effective element of the Product is of the essence of its own nature, and inherent therein; the Work [then] consists in isolating it from its

accretions" (*MIT&P*, chapter 20). As Crowley writes in "Liber LXV," "Thou wast with me from the beginning."

Moving onto AUM becoming AUMGN, Crowley writes,

*"The word AUM is the sacred Hindu mantra which was the supreme hieroglyph of Truth, a compendium of the Sacred Knowledge... Firstly, it represents the complete course of sound... Symbolically, this announces the course of Nature as proceeding from free and formless creation through controlled and formed preservation to the silence of destruction... We see accordingly how AUM is, on either system, the expression of a dogma which implies catastrophe in nature. It is cognate with the formula of the Slain God."*

*(MIT&P, chapter 7 which should be consulted for a more complete examination of AUMGN)*

The formula of AUM therefore suffers from the same attitude problem as the formula of IAO: nature is catastrophic. Moving beyond this idea of existence as catastrophic is, as explained above, one facet of New Aeon Initiation. Crowley explains,

*"The cardinal revelation of the Great Aeon of Horus is that this formula AUM does not represent the facts of nature. The point of view is based upon misapprehension of the character of existence. It soon became obvious to The Master Therion that AUM was an inadequate and misleading hieroglyph. It stated only part of the truth, and it implied a fundamental falsehood. He consequently determined to modify the word in such a manner as to fit it to represent the Arcana unveiled by the Aeon of which He had attained to be the Logos. The essential task was to emphasize the fact that nature is not catastrophic, but proceeds by means of undulations."*

The essential idea appears in the final sentence. As we have gone over above, the New Aeon point-of-view conceives existence as a Serpent whose undulations are Life and Death. The word AUM ends in "M" which symbolizes the fact that, "the formation of the individual from the absolute is closed by his death" (*MIT&P*, chapter 7). Again the idea is one of Death as a stop or an end instead of "life to come" or one instance of Change. Now, how would "GN" be added to the end of AUM "fix" the word? Crowley writes, "The undulatory formula of putrefaction is represented in the Qabalah by the letter N, which refers to Scorpio." Both of these (the letter N and Scorpio) are traditionally attributed to

"Atu XIII: Death" in the Tarot which was spoken of above (when it was suggested it might be more accurately titled "Change" or "Transformation"). Basically, "N" represents the idea that, "Death is life to come;" that is, Death is not an end but one apex of the curve of endless undulations. Crowley continues, "Now it so happens that the root GN signifies both knowledge [gnosis] and generation combined in a single idea, in an absolute form independent of personality." The idea is basically that AUM does not accurately describe the course of nature because existence does not end in cataclysm. Therefore, by adding "GN" to AUM to form "AUMGN," we assert that the process of nature is not cataclysmic. In fact, it does not end at all but instead "proceeds by means of undulations:" Death is not the end but simply one trough of the endless winding of the Serpent of the All-Self.

Essentially, "all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains" (*Liber AL vel Legis* II:9). It is the work of each individual to dissolve and de-identify with the ego-self and identify with "that which remains," the True Self which transcends all division (especially between Life and Death) in that it contains All. The death of the ego is not cataclysmic because we know the Sun of the True, All-Self which "is more He than all that he calls He" (*The Book of Lies*, chapter 18) is always shining regardless of our ignorance (our "darkness"). In short, in the New Aeon we give the advice, "If you are "walking in darkness", do not try to make the sun rise by self-sacrifice, but wait in confidence for the dawn, and enjoy the pleasures of the night meanwhile" (*The Law is For All*).

*"With courage conquering fear shall ye approach me: ye shall lay down your heads upon mine altar, expecting the sweep of the sword. But the first kiss of love shall be radiant on your lips; and all my darkness and terror shall turn to light and joy. Only those who fear shall fail."*

*- "Liber Tzaddi," lines 16-18*

## 2) The True Self contains Good & Evil, Upright & Averse

*"My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells."*

- "Liber Tzaddi," line 40

Initiation in the New Aeon is "the Child Growing to Maturity" by the slaying of the ego-self whose "death is life to come" for the True Self. But what is the nature of that True Self? Essentially, the True Self transcends dualities. Specifically, the True Self transcends the moral duality of Good and Evil.

People have a common tendency to imagine their goal as their "Higher Self" which they imagine as Absolute Good, caring, benevolent, etc. In short, many people construct an ideal or an abstraction of their highest ideals and believe that to be the goal. Crowley asserts in *Magick Without Tears*, "He is not, let me say with emphasis, a mere abstraction from yourself; and that is why I have insisted rather heavily that the term 'Higher Self' implies 'a damnable heresy and a dangerous delusion.'" The term "Higher Self" is a delusion because the aim of Initiation in the New Aeon is to bring the individual to identify with the "Total Self" or "All-Self," not the "Higher Self" (or "Lower Self"). We must explore and conquer both the "good" and "evil" sides of ourselves: in terms of modern psychology, we cannot neglect our own Shadow. As Crowley advises, "every magician must firmly extend his empire to the depth of hell" (*MIT&P*, chapter 21). As Nietzsche says, "The great epochs of our life are the occasions when we gain the courage to rebaptize our evil qualities as our best qualities" (*Beyond Good & Evil*, Aphorism 116).

Much of Thelema's imagery may be seen as "sinister." Examples include the "Beast" and "Babalon" from the Book of Revelations (where they do not appear in a favorable light), the experience of divinity as "evil kisses corrupt[ing] the blood... as an acid eats into steel, as a cancer that utterly corrupts the body" ("Liber LXV" I:13, 16) and "poison" ("Liber LXV" III:39 IV: 24-25 V:52-53, 55-56), "the concealed" within oneself wherein "all things are in thine own Self" (*Liber Aleph*, "De Libidine Secreta") is called Hell or Satan (who is identified with the Sun in "Liber Samekh"), etc. These could all be considered as attempts to

bring the psyche of the individual to acceptance of both the upright and averse aspects of existence. One might even say it is the "darker" side of the self emerging because of its neglect in Old Aeon systems which focus on Good, Virtue, Grace, etc. and exclude their opposites. **In the New Aeon we assert that the True Self contains (and thereby transcends) both Good and Evil.** "Less than All cannot satisfy Man" (William Blake, "There is No Natural Religion").

This idea of the True Self as containing both Heaven and Hell, Good and Evil, Upright and Averse, is captured succinctly in "Liber Tzaddi," lines 33-42:

*"I reveal unto you a great mystery. Ye stand between the abyss of height and the abyss of depth. In either awaits you a Companion; and that Companion is Yourself. Ye can have no other Companion. Many have arisen, being wise. They have said "Seek out the glittering Image in the place ever golden, and unite yourselves with It." Many have arisen, being foolish. They have said, "Stoop down unto the darkly splendid world, and be wedded to that Blind Creature of the Slime." I who am beyond Wisdom and Folly, arise and say unto you: achieve both weddings! Unite yourselves with both! Beware, beware, I say, lest ye seek after the one and lose the other! My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells... Thus shall equilibrium become perfect."*

As mentioned in the last section, the True Self transcends the duality of Life and Death. In this section we see that the True Self transcends the duality of Upright and Averse, Good and Evil. The True Self is even "beyond Wisdom and Folly." We must unite both with the Upright, "the glittering Image in the place ever golden," and with the Averse, "that Blind Creature of the Slime." Only thereby may man come to knowledge of his true Self: otherwise the individual will have a lopsided perspective of the self. One must remember that it is only because of its roots deep into the dark ground that a tree is able to produce fruit. As the psychologist Abraham Maslow noted, "Man's higher nature rests upon man's lower nature, needing it as a foundation and collapsing without this foundation" (*Toward a Psychology of Being*, 1968).

**The method of Initiation in the New Aeon is therefore one of Union of Opposites and Equilibrium.** The equilibrium is not that of moderation, the Middle Path of Buddha (or the Doctrine of the Mean of Aristotle), where we seek to avoid extremes and remain in the center. The

equilibrium of New Aeon Initiation is understood as the balance attained by pushing to both extremes of any duality. "Go thou unto the outermost places and subdue all things" ("Liber LXV" I:45). We don't take the upright ("white light") or averse ("satanic") of the Upright/Averse duality and aim for that alone, we aim for both the heavens and the hells. One might say, symbolically, the Old Aeon is like a pole or a tree, where the vertical section is straight and narrow, avoiding extremes. The New Aeon is then like a large building or a pyramid where the base is expanded horizontally. This symbolically shows that, by pushing towards the extremes (expanding the base horizontally in this metaphor), we enlarge our foundations which thereby allow us to withstand the "winds" of experience better. As it says in *The Book of the Law*, "Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. Be not animal; refine thy rapture! ...But exceed! exceed! Strive ever to more!" (II:70-72). William Blake also enigmatically stated, "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom."

Again, we can look again to Horus (with the Infinitely Contracted Core of Flame as His Heart and the Infinitely Expansive Space as His Body) as a symbol of That which transcends the dualities of Good and Evil, Upright and Averse. In uniting with both the "glittering Image" and the "Blind Creature of the Slime," we come to know ourselves as the All which contains but transcends both: "For two things are done and a third thing is begun... Horus leaps up thrice armed from the womb of his mother" ("Liber A'ash," line 8). As Horus says in *The Vision and the Voice*, "I am light, and I am night, and I am that which is beyond them. I am speech, and I am silence, and I am that which is beyond them. I am life, and I am death, and I am that which is beyond them." We might add, "I am good, and I am evil, and I am that which is beyond them." **Horus, the Sun, is a symbol of That which contains & transcends dualities, an image of our True Selves, identical in essence yet diverse in expression for each individual;** other cognate symbols include the point in the circle (the Solar glyph), the Rose-Cross, semen and menstrual fluid combined (two live, generative fluids combined into a third which "is one substance and not two, not living and not dead, neither liquid nor solid, neither hot nor cold, neither male nor female" -*MIT&P*, chapter 20), the Heart Girt with the Serpent (see "Liber

LXV"), the cross in the circle, the circle squared (*Liber AL* II:47), the Sun and the Moon conjoined (called "the Mark of the Beast" in "Liber Reguli" and "the secret sigil of the Beast" in the 1st Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice*), the Lion and the Eagle, the word ABRAHADABRA, and infinite others. In a certain ritual where the individual comes to identify with Horus ("Liber XLIV: The Mass of the Phoenix"), we proclaim our transcendence of the moral duality: "There is no grace: there is no guilt: / This is the Law: DO WHAT THOU WILT!"

*"For Perfection abideth not in the Pinnacles, or in the Foundations, but in the ordered Harmony of one with all."*

*- "Liber Causae," line 32*

### 3) Embrace of the World

*"Enjoy all things of sense and rapture..."*

*- Liber AL vel Legis II:22*

We found the True Self which we come to identify with in Initiation is beyond the duality of Life and Death (part 1) as well as the duality of Good and Evil (part 2). Now we unite yet another divide with an embrace of the physical, "mundane" world. Another common dichotomy (at least in the West) that has split the psyche of man is Spirit versus Matter, or Sacred versus Profane.

In the ancient and medieval world, the predominant conception of the universe was of an earth below and the heavens above. People conceived the law of the Heavens as perfect and the Earth as degraded. Isaac Newton was one of the main figures who helped bridge the gap between Heaven and Earth. He said that the same force which makes objects fall on earth is the same force which makes the celestial objects in heaven move in their orbits: gravity. Symbolically and literally, Newton said the heavens and earth do not have separate laws but abide by one law. Also, we now know that the heavens are not above us but surround us on all sides. There is no separation between the "mundane" Earth and the "spiritual" Heavens: Earth is literally immersed in the Heavens.

In the New Aeon we assert that "Every man and every woman is a star" (*Liber AL* I:3). On the physical level, we are all literally made of star-stuff (or "stardust"), as Carl Sagan was fond of noting, but there is a more important meaning here. Nuit - who says of herself, "I am Heaven" (*Liber AL* I:21) - is a symbol of the Infinite Space in which we are all immersed. **Each star - each individual - is the center of self-awareness & expression of Heaven on Earth.** Crowley writes, "Know firmly, o my son, that the true Will cannot err; for this is thine appointed course in Heaven, in whose order is Perfection" (*Liber Aleph*, "De Somniis [delta]"). In an important sense, this asserts that we too are in a perfect course through Heaven just as the celestial stars are. In the New Aeon there is an "unveiling of the company of heaven" (*Liber AL* I:2): every man and

every woman. We are each Gods, Stars going their unique Ways in Heaven. Crowley comments, "[The] Pantheism of AL: The Book of the Law shows forth all things as God" ("Djeridensis Comment") and "The 'company of heaven' is Mankind, and its 'unveiling' is the assertion of the independent godhead of every man and every woman!" (*The Law is For All*).

From all these considerations its easy to see that in the New Aeon, not only does the True Self transcend the duality of Heaven and Earth/Spiritual and Mundane, but there is essentially no distinction between them at all. **The Earth is not a prison, but a Temple where the sacrament of Life may be enacted; the body is not corrupt, but a pulsing and thriving vessel for the expression of Energy; sex is not sinful, but a mysterious conduit of pleasure and power as well as an Image of the ecstatic nature of all Experience.**

In fact, the embrace of the world, and even an ecstatic embrace of the world, naturally comes from cosmological perspective of the New Aeon. "Existence is pure joy" (*Liber AL* II:9) in the New Aeon (and not pure sorrow as some old hypochondriac and many pessimists since have suggested). We are also told, "the Truth of the universe is delight" (*The Vision and the Voice*, 17th Aethyr). This is because **the Cosmological Picture of the New Aeon is that all Experiences are acts of Love between Infinite Forms ("Nuit") and Infinite Forces ("Hadir").**

*"Hadir, who is the complement of Nuit ["the infinite in whom all we live and move and have our being"]... is eternal energy, the Infinite Motion of Things, the central core of all being. The manifested Universe comes from the marriage of Nuit and Hadir; without this could no thing be. This eternal, this perpetual marriage-feast is then the nature of things themselves; and therefore everything that is, is a crystallization of divine ecstasy."*  
- "Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty"

Therefore, in the New Aeon we see every experience as the joyful union between Form and Force, Infinite Space and Infinite Motion. The world itself is an expression of Divinity, and therefore there is no reason to retreat from it in New Aeon Initiation. Just as we must transcend the dualities of Life & Death and

Good & Evil, we must transcend the duality of Heaven & Earth, Sacred & Profane. We are told in the 19th Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice*, "Worship all things; for all things are alike necessary to the Being of the All." This idea of worshipping all things, and not making a distinction between "spiritual" and "mundane" leads to the Formula of the Scarlet Woman.

"The Formula of the Scarlet Woman" refers to a certain attitude to the world. The Scarlet Woman is traditionally associated with the image of a whore, who symbolically represents "that which allows anything and everything into itself." The opposite image is that of a chaste woman who shuts herself up and does not allow any intimate contact with anything around herself. Crowley writes, "The Enemy is this Shutting up of things. Shutting the Door is preventing the Operation of Change, i.e. of Love... It is this 'shutting up' that is hideous, the image of death. It is the opposite of Going, which is God" (*The Law is For All*). The whore is an image of Change and the embrace of all things without distinction, and the chaste woman is an image of Stagnation and the separation from all things. The chaste woman is also therefore an image of the ego which refuses to give up its claim to be "King of the Mountain" (the True Self is the rightful "King" and the ego its minister, but the ego insists on claiming this title). Just like a chaste woman will not "let herself go" to have intimate relations with others, the ego will not "let itself go" to dissolve in the non-ego, the rest of the world, so that the individual may become One (beyond dualities). As mentioned in part 1, the work of we mentioned that "the work of each person is the release of identification with the ego and the consequent identification with Horus, That which transcends Life and Death (and all dualities)." We are therefore a "chaste woman" if we refuse to release identification with the ego and insist on a world of division (i.e. a world of ego vs. world or non-ego). This is another example of the "averse" or "sinister" symbolism that is often used in the New Aeon: the symbol of stagnation is a chaste woman (chastity being a "virtue" in the Old Aeons) and the symbol of growth & change is a whore (promiscuousness/sensuality being a "vice"/"sinful" in the Old Aeons). In summary: **the Formula of the Scarlet Woman applies to every individual (not just females) and refers to the attitude of accepting all things into oneself, refusing nothing, and**

**growing through their assimilation.** Crowley writes, "[this is] a counsel to accept all impressions; it is the formula of the Scarlet woman; but no impression must be allowed to dominate you, only to fructify you; just as the artist, seeing an object, does not worship it, but breeds a masterpiece from it" (*The Book of Lies*, chapter 4). Therefore, we accept all things but we do not thereby become a passive, lifeless receptacle which is buffeted by external forces; instead we must allow all things "to fructify" us. We all accept all things but we also turn these things towards the accomplishment of our Wills. Here is an illustration of this point: a musical composer does not neglect C# as "profane" or "not worthy" but accepts all notes as worthy and beautiful in themselves, but that does not mean his song will consist of hitting all the keys at once. On the contrary, he selects among the possible notes, arranges them in accordance with his vision, and produces a particular composition. The same idea is true for the Scarlet Woman, for the Formula of the Scarlet Woman is the acceptance of all things no matter if they are "unclean" or "mundane." Crowley insists, "I urge you to beware of the pride of the spirit, of the thought of anything as evil or unclean. Make all things serve you in your Magick [causing Change in conformity with Will] as weapons" ("Djeridensis Comment").

In short, in the New Aeon we do not avoid the things of the world or the world itself in fear of it being "un-spiritual," "profane," or "mundane." On the contrary, each individual is immersed in Heaven itself, as a Star among Stars. In the New Aeon, each individual proclaims, "All things are sacred to me" ("Liber A'ash, line 29), and enacts "the Formula of the Scarlet Woman," refusing nothing and accepting all. Thereby does each individual come to embody the union between (and the fruit of) Heaven and Earth.

*"Behold! these be grave mysteries; for there are also of my friends who be hermits. Now think not to find them in the forest or on the mountain; but in beds of purple, caressed by magnificent beasts of women with large limbs, and fire and light in their eyes, and masses of flaming hair about them; there shall ye find them. Ye shall see them at rule, at victorious armies, at all the joy; and there shall be in them a joy a million times greater than this."*

– *Liber AL vel Legis, II:24*

#### 4) Self as Redeemer

*"There is no god but man"*  
- "Liber OZ"

One common attribute of the Old Aeon systems is their insistence on the baseness, sinfulness, and helplessness of humanity. In this view, mankind is naturally in a state spiritual blindness, deafness, and dumbness; we don't know what is best for ourselves, and we're aimless when left to our own devices. This often translates into the necessity of giving oneself up to a higher power outside of oneself: to the priest class, to the guru, to God, and (most recently) to the State. **In the New Aeon, we place no faith on the grace of any god or guru; we assert no need to become Initiate beyond oneself.**

As was mentioned in the last section, each person must unite with both the "lower" ("the abyss of depth," "that Blind Creature of the Slime") and "higher" ("the abyss of height," "the glittering Image") Companion - those "Upright" and "Averse" aspects of themselves beyond the current awareness of the ego, which must be released, explored, and assimilated. A very important facet of this "great mystery" is that, "that Companion is Yourself. Ye can have no other Companion" ("Liber Tzaddi," lines 34-35). Although we seek to unite with those abysses beyond our selves (insofar as "self" is here considered as the ego-self), those abysses are parts of Yourself. In terms of psychology, they are the unconscious aspects of the human psyche, which isn't just "below" the ego (i.e. just "lower," "animalistic" drives, the "Qliphothic" in Qabalistic terms; "that Blind Creature of the Slime") but is also "above" (insofar as it contains the "higher," "divine," the "Neschamah" in Qabalistic terms; "the glittering Image"). **We realize then that Initiation does not consist in "coming to God" or receiving "the grace of God" insofar as we consider a God separate or "above" ourselves, but rather, in the New Aeon, each person coming to a fuller, truer understanding of the Self is what constitutes Initiation.** This is because "Initiation means the Journey Inwards" (*Little Essays Toward Truth, Mastery*), and the Godhead we seek is not something other than our True

Selves. As Crowley writes, "Behold! the Kingdom of God is within you, even as the Sun standeth eternal in the heavens, equal at midnight and at noon. He riseth not: he setteth not: it is but the shadow of the earth which concealeth him, or the clouds upon her face" ("De Lege Libellum"). Again, we assert that this Self is always present, even at the beginning of the Great Work of coming to know it, although we normally function in and revert to the state of identifying with our minds and bodies (i.e. our normal ego-conception of the self).

This Work of coming to reveal and identify with the True Self does not require the blessing of priests, the empowerments of gurus, the presence of a "Master," the grace of God, or the funding of the State. Each person must "Lift up thyself!" (*Liber AL* II:78). In one sense, it is only by the individual's own courage, persistence, and hard work that the Great Work can ever be accomplished. In another sense, Truth - the realization of one's True Self beyond dualities - cannot be communicated.

It is as futile to try to communicate the experience of Unity with All Things as it is describing red to a blind person. We can use metaphors or analogies but they will never actually understand until they have experienced it themselves. As Crowley says, "all real secrets are incommunicable" (*Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 9), and this is because "truth is supra-rational" and so it is therefore "incommunicable in the language of reason" ("Postcards to Probationers"). Therefore, if there is any "faith" it is the confidence conferred by the "consciousness of the continuity of existence" (*Liber AL* I:26). **This perception of Truth can only be partially communicated in poetics, metaphors, symbols, and analogies: it is the direct, individual experience of the True Self which brings real understanding of the Truth as That which is beyond dualities.**

One can imagine the perception of Truth as a flower unfolding in the heart of every man and every woman: it is something inherent in the individual which is revealed. Humanity is not sinful, degenerate, empty or untrustworthy but rather each individual is a Star, each a fountain of Godhead, and each inherently Divine. It is the work of the individual to realize this Divinity in themselves, coming to know themselves not as the ego but as the True Self which transcends

all opposites: "ye [shall] look upon yourselves, and behold All Things that are in Truth One Thing only" ("De Lege Libellum"). This "consciousness of the continuity of existence" is no supernatural, extraterrestrial, supra-mundane, posthumous fantasy: each person can attain to this awareness here on earth, during this life.

*Every man must overcome his own obstacles, expose his own illusions"*  
- "Liber Causae," line 4

## 5) No Perfection of the Soul

*"The soul is in its own nature, perfect purity, perfect calm, perfect silence... This soul can never be injured, never marred, never defiled"*  
- "The Soul of the Desert"

This idea is related strongly to the ideas in the last section of the Self as Redeemer. We assert there is no reliance on God, guru, priest, or any external authority, but it is a misnomer to say we "redeem" ourselves for there is nothing to redeem. Crowley writes, "Redemption is a bad word; it implies a debt. For every star possesses boundless wealth; the only proper way to deal with the ignorant is to bring them to the knowledge of their starry heritage" (*The Book of Thoth*). The "soul" does not need to be redeemed for it is perfect and pure in itself, it only is because of ignorance of our own Divine Birthright that we think ourselves imperfect and transient. This "soul" isn't the personality of the individual - the ego-self which identifies with the mind and body - but rather the Self which is coterminous with All Things.

**The True Self never dies as it is beyond all limitation, containing all things and relations within Itself.** The body along with the mind surely will expire but it is only through the mysterious mechanisms of this mind and body that the Self, beyond all limits and opposites, may become self-aware and consciously experience the rapture of existence. This Self does not need to be redeemed or perfected: there is no Fall of Man to be rectified (Abrahamic religions) nor a Wheel of Suffering to be liberated from (Dharmic religions). There is even no sense of the soul incarnating to attain to higher and higher "spiritual states" or towards "enlightenment." In the New Aeon, the "starting point" is not a fallen, suffering, and sinful state, but rather we are all Royal and Divine, Divinity-made-manifest, and "existence is pure joy" (*Liber AL II:9*) if it is seen with eyes that "Bind nothing!" (*Liber AL I:22*) i.e. eyes that see the unity underlying apparent dualities. As it is said, "Since all things are God, in all things thou seest just so much of God as thy capacity affordeth thee" (*The Vision and the Voice*, 17th Aethyr). **The essential symbol-metaphor is that the Star of Unity is always shining, potentially conscious, but we identify with the**

**ego-self and are therefore mired in duality and limitation (once you identify with the ego, you are immediately not the non-ego or the world and therefore the world becomes Two instead of One).** Crowley writes on this imagery in *The Law is For All*:

*"We are not to regard ourselves as base beings, without whose sphere is Light or 'God.' Our minds and bodies are veils of the Light within. The uninitiate is a 'Dark Star,' and the Great Work for him is to make his veils transparent by 'purifying' them. This 'purification' is really 'simplification'; it is not that the veil is dirty, but that the complexity of its folds makes it opaque. The Great Work therefore consists principally in the solution of complexes. Everything in itself is perfect, but when things are muddled, they become 'evil'."*

The important point is that "everything in itself is perfect" but our minds inevitably "muddle" the situation which ends with us identifying with the ego instead of the True Self. **Because all things are perfect in themselves, we obviously do not need any kind of God or guru to bestow redemption, liberation, or initiation upon us: the aspirant need only clear away the cloud-veils of ignorance around her Star, and the True Self will leap up within her awareness and burn away all division and limitation.** As Crowley explains in *The Law is For All*,

*"This 'star' or 'Inmost Light' is the original, individual, eternal essence....we are warned against the idea of a Pleroma, a flame of which we are Sparks, and to which we return when we 'attain'. That would indeed be to make the whole curse of separate existence ridiculous, a senseless and inexcusable folly. It would throw us back on the dilemma of Manichaeism. The idea of incarnations 'perfecting' a thing originally perfect by definition is imbecile. The only sane solution is as given previously, to suppose that the Perfect enjoys experience of (apparent) Imperfection."*

In the New Aeon we go even further than one might expect: the "ignorance" of duality is not inherently evil or bad at all either. In short, duality is "ignorance" for one who still identifies with the ego, but once one has dissolved the ego and identified with the True Self one recognizes duality as the necessary means for self-awareness. For the individual mired in duality and identification with the ego, "coition-dissolution" is her formula, but one who has dissolved the

ego and identified with the True Self has the formula of "creation-parturition" ... and "The All, thus interwoven of These, is Bliss" (*The Book of Lies*). **The body and the mind, with its inherently dualistic conceptions, are a prison of ignorance for the uninitiate and a temple for performing the Sacrament of Life for the initiate.** It may take the experience of the dissolution of the ego to overcome the morbid fear of death and accept duality not as the condition of our suffering but as the opportunity for us to rejoice in the uniting of diverse elements (self and world in each experience, along with the Supreme Union of ego and non-ego/subject and object). The world is both "None... and two" (*Liber AL* I:28)... None, the continuous, is "divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all" (*Liber AL* I:29-30). In this conception, duality and the "creation of the world" as we know it (i.e. the normal dualistic world which we commonly inhabit) is actually the condition of "the chance of union." Only if two things are separate can they unite and have the possibility of "the joy of dissolution" wherein the self becomes "all." Crowley explains, "Nuit shews the object of creating the Illusion of Duality. She said: The world exists as two, for only so can there be known the Joy of Love, whereby are Two made One. Aught that is One is alone, and has little pain in making itself two, that it may know itself, and love itself, and rejoice therein" ("Djeridensis Working"). Thereby does one embrace both unity and multiplicity (duality) in a higher Unity.

This perception of "the consciousness of the continuity of existence" (*Liber AL* I:22) is not something given by a god or a guru but a natural birthright of each individual. It is, as described in the first part, a natural step of Growth towards psychological-spiritual Maturity. And this also leads us to the final point: even this is a step along the Path. It may be the "End" in one sense (the end of the dominance of the ego, for once thing) but it is also the beginning, for "death is life to come" (*The Book of Lies*). One still has to live one's life. One might say, "Before initiation: work, live, and play; after initiation: work, live, and play," for coming to identify with the True Self doesn't mean the end of one's mind and body along with their normal needs. In fact, the mind and body - the ego-self - are not

destroyed permanently but rather they are reborn with renewed energy, the veils of ignorance (of duality as well as the falsity of the doctrines of the Fall of Man and the inherent Suffering of the world) having been torn away. One does not suddenly obtain the earthly power of a king or have the intellectual power of Einstein, but the change is something largely "internal" or psychological, for in initiation, "nothing is changed or can be changed; but all is trulier understood with every step" (*Little Essays Toward Truth*, "Mastery"). It is this understanding of our True Selves, beyond the veils of mind and body, which we each strive to attain so that we may more effectively and joyfully manifest our wills in the world. The task is then simple yet difficult: each individual must dissolve the ego and their identification with it to identify with the True Self, always shining though we are unaware, which is beyond dualities and all limitation. In the end, "All you have to do is to be yourself, to do your will, and to rejoice" ("The Law of Liberty").

*"No star can stray from its self-chosen course: for in the infinite soul of space all ways are endless, all-embracing: perfect."*  
-*The Heart of the Master*

## ∞) Summary

### 1) Death/Attainment as Non-cataclysmic

- "...There is that which remains." -*Liber AL vel Legis II:9*
- Death (both of the ego and of the body) is no longer seen as cataclysmic in the New Aeon.
- The New Aeon views Death not as an end but as the possibility for new Life.
- Initiation (the myth-drama of each individual's Path) is no longer portrayed as "The Man performing Self-Sacrifice" but as "The Child Growing to Maturity."
- The Old Aeon views death as a cataclysmic event whereas the New Aeon views it as a necessary step in the progress of Growth.
- The work of each person is the release of identification with the ego and the consequent identification with Horus, That which transcends Life and Death (and all dualities).
- "*With courage conquering fear shall ye approach me: ye shall lay down your heads upon mine altar, expecting the sweep of the sword. But the first kiss of love shall be radiant on your lips; and all my darkness and terror shall turn to light and joy. Only those who fear shall fail.*" -*Liber Tzaddi*, lines 16-18

### 2) The True Self contains Good & Evil, Upright & Averse

- "*My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells.*" - *Liber Tzaddi*, line 40
- In the New Aeon we assert that the True Self contains (and thereby transcends) both Good and Evil.
- The method of Initiation in the New Aeon is therefore one of Union of Opposites and Equilibrium.
- Horus, the Sun, is a symbol of That which contains & transcends dualities, an image of our True Selves, identical in essence yet diverse in expression for each individual
- "*For Perfection abideth not in the Pinnacles, or in the Foundations, but in the ordered Harmony of one with all.*" - *Liber Causae*, line 32

### 3) Embrace of the World

- "*Enjoy all things of sense and rapture...*" - *Liber AL vel Legis II:22*
- Each star - each individual - is the center of self-awareness & expression of Heaven on Earth.
- The Earth is not a prison, but a Temple where the sacrament of Life may be enacted; the body is not corrupt, but a pulsing and thriving vessel for the expression of Energy; sex is not sinful, but a mysterious conduit of pleasure and power as well as an image of the ecstatic nature of all Experience.
- The Cosmological Picture of the New Aeon is that all Experiences are acts of Love between Infinite Forms ("Nuit") and Infinite Forces ("Hadit").
- The Formula of the Scarlet Woman applies to every individual (not just

females) and refers to the attitude of accepting all things into oneself, refusing nothing, and growing through their assimilation.

- *"Behold! these be grave mysteries; for there are also of my friends who be hermits. Now think not to find them in the forest or on the mountain; but in beds of purple, caressed by magnificent beasts of women with large limbs, and fire and light in their eyes, and masses of flaming hair about them; there shall ye find them. Ye shall see them at rule, at victorious armies, at all the joy; and there shall be in them a joy a million times greater than this." – Liber AL vel Legis, II:24*

#### 4) Self as Redeemer

- *"There is no god but man" - "Liber OZ"*
- In the New Aeon, we place no faith on the grace of any god or guru; we assert no need to become Initiate beyond oneself.
- We realize then that Initiation does not consist in "coming to God" or receiving "the grace of God" insofar as we consider a God separate or "above" ourselves, but rather, in the New Aeon, each person coming to a fuller, truer understanding of the Self is what constitutes Initiation.
- This perception of Truth can only be partially communicated in poetics, metaphors, symbols, and analogies: it is the direct, individual experience of the True Self which brings real understanding of the Truth as That which is beyond dualities.
- *Every man must overcome his own obstacles, expose his own illusions" - "Liber Causae," line 4*

#### 5) No Perfection of the Soul

- *"The soul is in its own nature, perfect purity, perfect calm, perfect silence... This soul can never be injured, never marred, never defiled" - "The Soul of the Desert"*
- The True Self never dies as it is beyond all limitation, containing all things and relations within Itself.
- The essential symbol-metaphor is that the Star of Unity is always shining, potentially conscious, but we identify with the ego-self and are therefore mired in duality and limitation (once you identify with the ego, you are immediately not the non-ego or the world and therefore the world becomes Two instead of One)
- Because all things are perfect in themselves, we obviously do not need any kind of God or guru to bestow redemption, liberation, or initiation upon us: the aspirant need only clear away the cloud-veils of ignorance around her Star, and the True Self will leap up within her awareness and burn away all division and limitation.
- The body and the mind, with its inherently dualistic conceptions, are a prison of ignorance for the uninitiate and a temple for performing the Sacrament of Life for the initiate.
- *"No star can stray from its self-chosen course: for in the infinite soul of space all ways are endless, all-embracing: perfect." - The Heart of the Master*