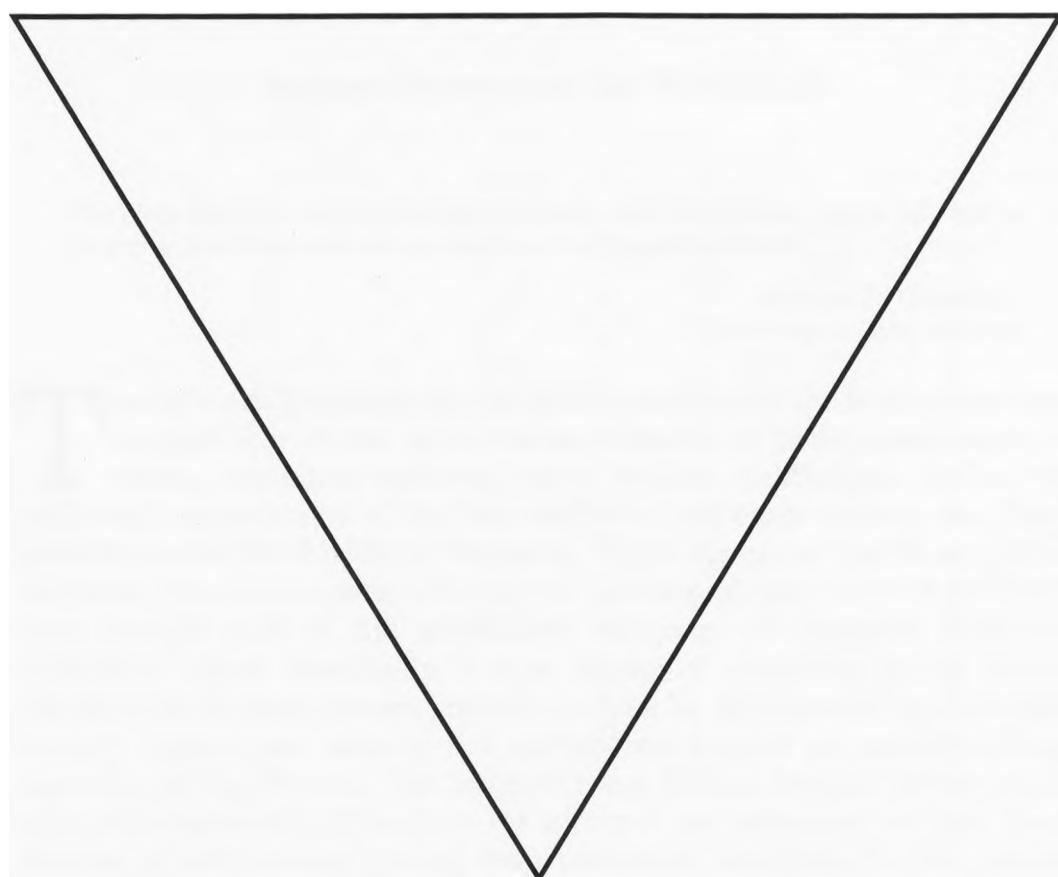


# The Ophidian Sabbat



Daniel Schulke

# The Ophidian Sabbat

## Serpent-Power and the Witch-Cult

*The Holy Spirit of the Serpent-god pervades and lies hidden within all that is.  
Its many heads betoken the perception of all possible worlds.*

Andrew D. Chumbley  
*The Dragon-Book of Essex*

The Sabbatic Tradition may be broadly defined as the body of rites and magical lore of the witch-cultus, material or phantasmal, some of whose attributes achieved early written codification during the witchcraft persecutions of the late medieval and early modern era. Such concepts as the Witch's Mark, Nocturnal Flight, Agapae of the Wise<sup>1</sup>, poison unguents, the consumption of the corpse, and sexual congress with the Devil have become part of the established reliquary of European Sabbath-symbolism. More specifically, it is a stream of sorcerous gnosis, orally-transmitted through precise initiatic vectors to the present day, wending through history and bearing the spectral markers of the medieval High Assembly of the Witches. The magical order *Cultus Sabbati* serves as the actuated cross-roads of the Cult, for within it are subsumed various lineal streams of witch-power tracing their sorcerous patterning to this ancient liminal reverie. Within its atavistic coffers, a retinue of bestial totemic forms is also co-located: half-human theriomorphs and creatures typically nocturnal in nature, such as the owl or bat; or the Host of the Venomous, such as the spider and toad. Amongst the grand retinue of gods, beasts, shades, and astral emanations which haunt the circle of the Witches' revels, the Serpent-Power or Ophidian Genius assumes an exalted role.

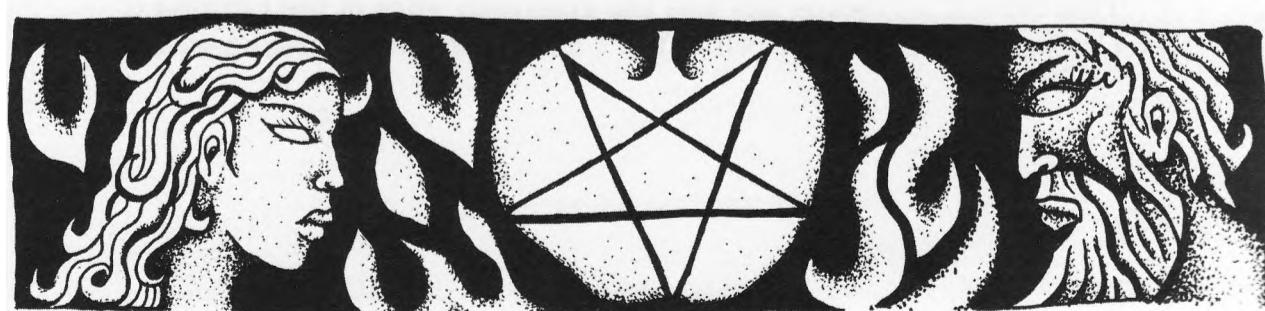
1. The Sabbatic *orgia*.

One such power is the atavistic transvocation of the Snake within the flesh of man. In the *Cultus Sabbati*, one witchcraft-lineage from the south-west of England has historically held the Serpent in high veneration. In this magical stream, whose known history dates to at least 1880, a sovereign spell is taught whereby witches go forth by night to 'borrow the power' of the Great and Holy Serpent. The use of the term *borrow* is curious, as it implies a peculiar view of the Formulae of Atavistic Assumption. Implicit as well in the term is the phantasmal power of the Fetch and Famulus, unto whose totemic reservoir the 'borrowed' power must be returned. In North America, this English practice finds a magical corollary with the dreaded witchcraft of the Navajo Skin Walker or *yee naaldlooshii*, whose rites in some cases resemble the features of the Sabbath. Using a totemic animal hide, often a magical heirloom passed down from initiator to initiate, the Skin Walker assumes the astral or physical form of the animal and goes forth by night, usually to prey upon the weak or wreak havoc upon enemies. The power and efficacy of these witches is legendary, and still dreaded in Navajo communities.<sup>2</sup> Though the present-day activities of this cult are for the most part considered malefic — and thus, in Native terms, witchcraft — elders relay that there was a time when these powers were mainly used for hunting and not maleficia. These sorcerous contacts make use of possessive atavistic formulae, a feature common to serpent-power, and one characterized by obsession to the exclusion of all else. As Kenneth Grant, who has described a number of magical formulae and atmospheres of the Sabbath Current, writes:

*The Sabbath is a form of mass hysteria which releases almost unlimited quantities of preconceptual energy ... The magical formulae implied in Sabbatic symbolism involve the invocation and redirection of preconceptual energy downwards and backwards to the required atavism.<sup>3</sup>*

The frenzies which often obtain under such circumstances will test the mettle of even the most experienced medium, and a foundational practice for regular strengthening of the aethyric vessel must needs be in place. Prior to initiation into the lineages of Sabbath Witchcraft, I had encountered ophidian spirit-forms in the *mange loa* and *bembe* of the spiritist cults of Umbanda and Macumba. The presence which regularly manifested for me in these rites was Simbi, serpent-loa associated with waters, and sometimes sorcery. In my own work,

2. Teller, J. *The Navaho Skinwalker, Witchcraft, & Related Spiritual Phenomena: Orientation to the Evolution of the Circle*.
3. Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God, Skoob Books, 1992 (1973), p.134.



descent of trance-possession by the spirit consisted of a sublime and undulating ecstasy wherein cognitive awareness became kinesthetic. I have since noted that a number of entities of the Sabbatic Spirit-retinue bear similar contours in the dominion of Ingress. More germane than the revelatory power these spirits provided was the experience gained as the Steed of the Great Rider, which was later invaluable for the work of the Nocturnal Assembly.

An additional ophidian power germane unto the Witch's Art is the lore of venoms and poisons — the dominion of the *veneficus* or magical poisoner, an area of long-time study and personal practice. In certain Welsh forms of Craft, the exteriorised snake-atavism is the *gwiber* — the font of venom — and may refer to either the Dragon or the personage of the European Adder (*Vipera berus*). As a formulaic spell its usage is primarily for attack, but also "to know". This dual aspect of gnosis and poisoning recalls the Pentecostal snake-handling cults of Appalachia, who, in concert with the teachings of Christ, "take up Serpents" in their religious frenzies, suffer the bites of vipers, and drink strychnine.

When Ophidian Gnosis is expressed in venefic praxes, certain rites of Witch-power make use of 'The Serpent's Graal' — a draught of the *Vinum Sabbati* prepared according to various formulations. Where its making is Lunar-vibratory in nature, its composition is the sexual emission of Eve and the Serpent. Where Solar, it frequently employs the prepared root of *mandragora*, the Mandrake or 'Man-Dragon'. Other formulations are known; the Arcanum may manifest along differing trajectories but all are united in the Admonition of the Snake: *Take, Eat, and Be Wise*.

Within the Sabbatic Tradition, a potent body of lore and sorcerous praxis has emerged in the past two decades in the form of the Rites Draconian. This secret corpus of magical practices, rightly exacted, remains among the most rigorous magical work of all the Western Esoteric Tradition, and has come to greatly empower the Cultus, both as individual practitioners and as a whole. Variously empowered by traditional lineages of Petro Voudon, Sufism, and varied Tantrik streams, as well as precise astronomical arcanae, the emergent body of work sought a harmonic reification of the witch-mysteries of Essex Craft, with the goal of resonating Ophidian power within the body of the Initiate.

This cycle of sorcerous foci was the emergent work of the *Column of the Crooked Path*, an inner cell of the *Cultus Sabbati* consisting of four

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initiates under the leadership of Andrew Chumbley.<sup>4</sup> The personnel of the group changed over time, and others also practiced these rites in solitude. The collective reification of the work was set forth in Chumbley's *Dragon-Book of Essex*, begun in 1992 concurrent with the exaction of the rites, and completed in 1997; copies were distributed only to those initiates practicing the work.<sup>5</sup> The *Dragon Book* was described in its own pages as "A Book of Witchskin, with pages beyond mortal count or scope of Mind, bound in the shifting pelt of the Serpent and written in the blood of all whom have walked the Circle's round."

The work was conceived as the second volume of Chumbley's 'Trimagisterion' grimoiria, the first being *Azoetia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft* (1992) and the third *Auraeon* (unpublished). From this period of work, Chumbley formulated 'Crooked Path Sorcery' as a trans-historical magical model, operant in a number of systems of sorcery, most notably in the witchcraft of his native Essex. The Crooked Path may be seen to mirror the zootype of the snake, wending between such magical antipodes as blessing and cursing, honour and treachery, Tabu and its breaking.<sup>6</sup> Its quintessential nature is transgressive, and through this apostasy, the illuminant fire of the Serpent descends. As Chumbley wrote:

*The Magical Quintessence is realised in the moment of gnosis. The Crooked Path is realised in the deeds which reveal the Quintessence; it is the ever-deviating way which connects moment to moment in a continuum of initiatory consciousness.<sup>7</sup>*

The work of the Draconian corpus is primarily votive-gnostic-theurgic, however, the arduous nature of the rites incepts a magical crucible wherein the Initiate himself is tested, tried and refined by the most severe means possible. Thus, when rightly exacted, all applications of the practitioner's Art are improved. The rites from this Corpus also have thaumaturgic applications, specifically for the

4. Chumbley, Andrew D. 'The Golden Chain and the Lonely Road', *The Cauldron* no. 94, November 1999. Some details were also discussed briefly in Chumbley's unpublished 2002 essay 'A History of Crooked Path Teachings', recently published in *Opuscula Magica* Volume 2, Three Hands Press, 2011.
5. Further additions were made by Chumbley to the work in 1999, 2000, and 2002. Publication of *The Dragon-Book of Essex* is planned by Xoanon Limited.
6. Often artificially-described by Western practitioners as "Left and Right Hand Paths".
7. *A Spark From the Forge*, privately published. We may also consider the Crooked Path in light of the convolutions of the surface of the brain: coiled and recursive structures create greater surface area, thus greater capacity for chemical interactivity.

accumulation of select Ophidian powers within the body of the sorcerer and their exteriorisation at will: for example, the enshrinement of astral venom within allied corporeal zones, which may then be projected outward. As one of the goals of the work is aligning the Draconian powers to the flesh of the sorcerer himself, this is not surprising.

The Enfleshment of the Snake also takes the form of the Serpent-fire of Kundalini. A considerable portion of the Rites Draconick are sexual in nature; and within the Ophidian Sabbat, the male and female generative potencies are classed as Black and Red Serpent-Fire, respectively allied with Shaitan and Lilith (Ob and Od, the Serpents Twain). Their connubial unity is enfleshed in the Stang of the Magister, the Staff of the Two-horned or *Dhul'Qarnen* - the Infernal Caduceus and emblem of Witch-authority. This mirrors the witchcraft-teaching that the manifestation and authority of the Black Man (or Devil) of the Sabbat is derived from the orgiastic *congressus* of the Assembled Host. Beyond this, the transcendental extrapolation of the Arcanum conceals within it a potent teaching for any Seeker, regardless of gender.

The modern renewal of Sabbatic arcanae was also greatly nurtured by Austin Osman Spare, whose formulae of the Witch's Art relied heavily on both sexual and atavistic formulae — two of the chief characteristics of Serpent Power. Amidst his magico-artistic reveries he observes:

*The Sabbath is neither black nor white but a highly colourful affair. Sex is used as the medium for a magical act, and for a divertive conation on a mass scale. It is the death posture formula applied en masse, but instead of being rehearsed astrally it is enacted physically for the generation of great power.<sup>8</sup>*

The Draconian Corpus was formally incepted in the United States in 1998 and has been on-going since that time; today the Column's activities continue within the *Cultus Sabbati* under my own direction. Many of these rites have been exacted in monuments of remote antiquity, being remnants of the ancient Ophidian cultus or bearing atavistic resonance with the Serpent-Atavism, there to seed telluric resonances in harmony with stellar ones. In 2003, rites from this Draconian corpus were performed by myself and a fellow initiate at the Serpent Mound in Ohio, and at other ancient earthworks among the Amerindian complex known

8. As quoted in Grant, Kenneth. *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, 2003 (1975), p. 24. For further reading of Spare's Sabbatic exegesis see also *The Witches' Sabbath* (Fulgur Limited, 1992).



collectively as the Effigy Mounds. The rites have also been performed by brethren in other far-flung locations world-wide, including, most recently, sites of the ancient Shinto Dragon-shrines in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond these historical trajectories, there is a more personal and obscure current which has come to inform the Sabbatic-Ophidian corpus. Traditional British witch-lore carries a number of teachings directly related to Serpent-Power, primarily the bequest of (i) sorcerous power; (ii) gnosis; and (iii) tutelage, from Samael, the luminous sentience and celestial emanant of Forbidden Wisdom, often glossed as a 'Fallen Angel'.<sup>10</sup> The *Cultus Sabbati* is founded upon an ophiolatrous lineage taking a Serpent as its bestial totem; in at least two other streams of power operant within the Cultus and dating to the late 19th century, the Snake plays a prominent role as a force of deadly poison and atavistic revelator.<sup>11</sup>

Of preëttrence amongst these is the reverence for Cain as first sorcerer or the Father of 'Witch-blood'; the Ophidian Lore of the Sabbath has come to embody an important sphere of Cainite Gnosis. The paternity of Cain originating with the Serpent-angel Samael, through demonic intercourse with Eve, is attested in Rabbinic and Kabbalistic lore, for example the Babylonian Talmud known as *Abodah Zarah* or 'strange worship'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in Sabbatic lore, initiates are sometimes known as the 'Brood of the Serpent'.

Aside from esoteric Judaism, the notion of Serpent-heredity is also familiar among the Khmer of Cambodia, the offspring of the *Nagas* or holy serpents, and from the ancient Scythian peoples, who claimed descent from a *drakhaina* or half-snake, half-woman genetrix.<sup>13</sup> However, unlike the apocryphal lore of the Serpent of Eden, these Asian

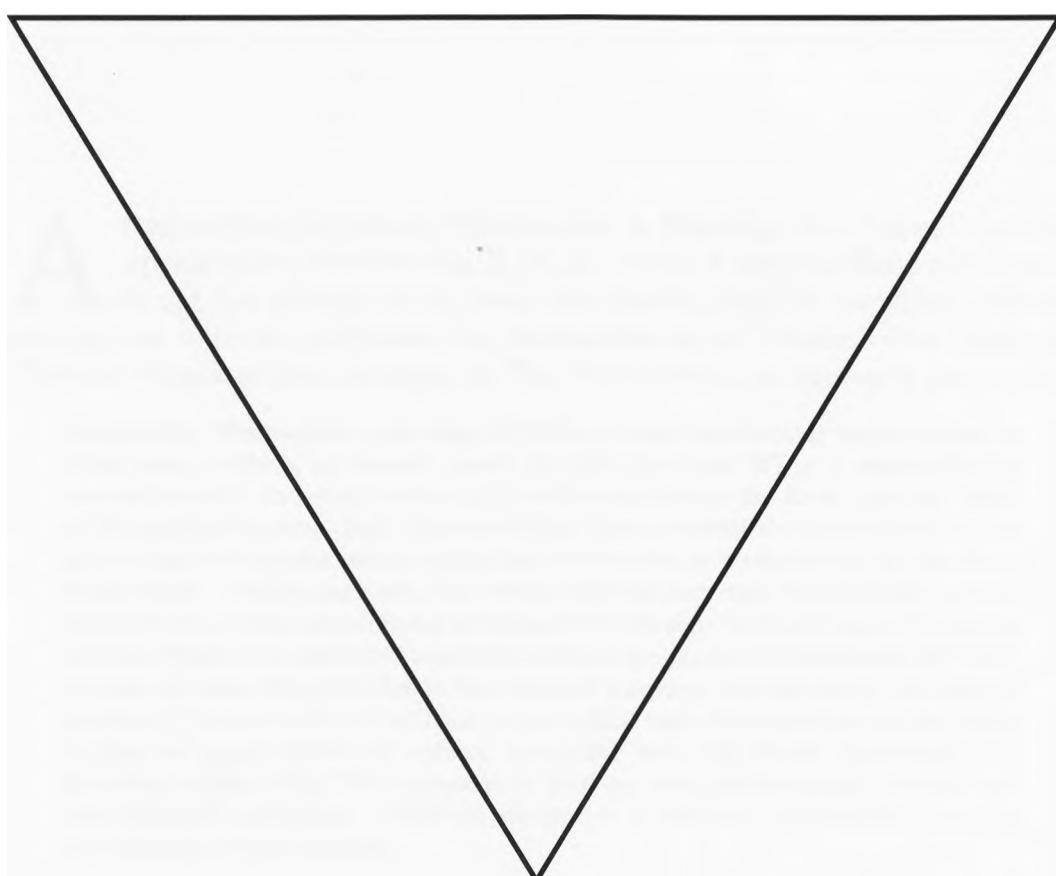
9. The *Cultus* is indebted to Fra. A.\ of *The Companie of the Serpent-Cross*, for this work and permission of reference.
10. The subject of the Great Serpent as Illuminator is among the concerns of my recent book *Lux Haeresis*, treating the Sabbatic Mysteries of Light-Emanation, Vision, and Image (Xoanon Limited, 2011).
11. In America, mention must also be made of *Our Lady of Endor Coven of the Gnostic-Ophite Cultus*, which operated in Ohio in the 1940s by Herbert Sloane. Though this obscure group has been adopted as a patron spiritual ancestor by some modern Satanists, its work appears to have a greater commonality with the work of Michael Bertiaux and the dual-faith observance of certain lineages of the *Cultus Sabbati*.
12. *BT Abodah Zarah* 22b; *Zohar* I 148a-148b.
13. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4.9.1. Also notable is the Scythian races' horsemanship and equestrian culture, linked to Cain, regarded by the Romanies and the Society of the Horseman's Word as the First Horseman.

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sources hold snake-ancestry in veneration, wherein serpents may take deific forms and are given *Naga Puja*. In the few British witchcraft-lineages I am familiar with having both the presence of the Serpent and the ritual patterning of the Sabbat, devotional-propitiatory rites to the god are also present, for its power both as a bringer of gnosis and as the Master of Poison.

But what of the Circle of Midnight itself, the Tradition wherein the Snake makes its home, and about which it is coiled? The Eternal Rite of the Sabbath may rightly assume the ophidian glyph as the embodiment of its affective power. Wending through aeons, religions, and the temporal vessels of flesh which bear its hidden power, it devours and transmutes *numen* wherever encountered. It is this hidden stream, more than that which is carried along by its current, that endures as its defining power, the invisible yet radiant body of Samael.

# Maranatha and Beyond



Stephen Dzikiewicz

## Maranatha and Beyond

**A**fter writing my essay ‘Maranatha: a Blessing or a Curse?’ (which appeared in *Starfire Vol.II No.3*), I sent a copy to Kenneth Grant to get his opinion of it. I was also hoping that he would be able to provide me with the reference for Maranatha in A.E Waite’s *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* that he cited in *The Ninth Arch*. In his reply, he wrote:

Concerning ‘Maranatha’, my copy of Waite’s tome mentioning same seems to have gone walkies, so cannot quote at this juncture. What I remember in connection with the word is that A.C. had a kink about the Book. [i.e. his ‘Book of Abramelin Squares’. S.D.] As you will no doubt remember, I mentioned it\* in connection with books remaining in his possession at ‘Netherwood’ at the time of his death. I might mention that when alive he kept this book locked up in a cabinet in his room and refused to discuss it with me. However, upon his death all his effects were gathered together and a large portion of them sent off to K. Germer in New York. Whilst in the stage of packing, and knowing the people involved, I took a look at that book in particular and discovered, attached to its fly-leaf a square piece of vellum inscribed with the word Maranatha in Enochian script. Why? Your guess is as good as mine. At the time - which was one of ‘speed’ and stress - I did not wonder at it, but your mention of it recalls my memory of the occasion.

(\* ‘Remembering A.C.’ p.55 — handwritten in the margin).<sup>1</sup>

Grady McMurtry also had his own experience of the ‘kink’ which Crowley had about this particular book. When he was serving in the U.S. Army and stationed in England during the Second World War, he visited Crowley at 93 Jermyn Street on several occasions during late 1943 to early 1944 e.v. He described how, on one of these, when Crowley went to

1. Letter from Kenneth Grant dated 7 Jun ’04 e.v.

make tea in the kitchen, he could not resist examining the book shelves and taking out a certain volume which drew his attention. He was puzzled by its contents which consisted of matted squares containing large Enochian letters: very black and very perfect, yet evidently painted on. He was about to touch and test, when Crowley returned, saw what he was about to do and yelled at him not to do it. He concludes the incident by saying:

I looked up in considerable surprise, closed the book rather gently and handed it back to him. He said, quietly, "You have no idea what forces you could have set in motion!" It was the only explanation he ever offered, and the incident was never mentioned again.<sup>2</sup>

Before considering the implications of these two reminiscences, it might be better to get a more complete idea of the book that we are dealing with here. The most detailed description of Aleister Crowley's 'Book of Abramelin Squares' has been given by Frater Shiva in 2007 e.v. He had access to it for some considerable time and made practical use of its contents. As the current whereabouts of the book, or indeed its continued survival, are not known, Frater Shiva's account is probably the best that we are liable to get and I can do no better than to quote his description of its contents:

Inside it was really more of a photograph album than a "book". The pages were made up from very heavy paper, like "card-stock", that had sixteen, forty-five degree slits in each page, so cut as to hold the four corners of the "photographs", which were, in this case, Abramelin talismans. There were four talismans to a page. There was neither a Table of Contents, an Index, nor any other labelling that identified the talismans. One had to actually know what they were doing, as well as possess access to the Enochian alphabet designations, in order to figure out which one was which. However, to make matters easier, they were arranged in the same order as found in their original sourcebook, *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.

The talismans had been constructed in the traditional manner, that is, they were square pieces of vellum (fine parchment), approximately three inches to one side, upon which the Enochian letters had been inscribed in (presumably) Indian ink.<sup>3</sup>

These magic squares are evidently the very same ones that Crowley describes as copying out in the breakfast room at Boleskine House where, despite the light and cheerful aspect of the room: "The sun could not penetrate the murk that gathered about those talismans". Regarding their source, *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, he

2. *O.T.O. Newsletter* Vol.II No.5, June 1978 e.v.

3. *Inside Solar Lodge - Outside the Law*, The Teitan Press, 2007; p. 163.

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states that "It is the best and the most dangerous book ever written ... by far the most convincing medieval magical document in existence" and goes on to add: "The talismans work automatically They are as easy to explode as Iodide of Nitrogen, and a sight more dangerous". These brief citations are taken from his essay 'The Revival of Magick' published in *The International* in 1917 e.v. and written with a certain amount of hyperbole to suitably impress the American public, but they do reflect his very sincere opinion on the matter. And it certainly explains the 'kink' or reaction that he demonstrated when his young disciples showed what he regarded as a dangerously casual curiosity about the book.

So far, so good; but what is the significance of 'Maranatha' in all of this? Eventually, I tracked down that reference from *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* on the internet. Vaughan mentions the word in his treatise entitled *Magia Adamica, or The Antiquitie of Magic*, published under his pseudonym of Eugenius Philalethes in 1650. In this he declares:

Now, that the learning of the Jewes, I mean their Cabala, was chimicall, and ended in true physical performances, cannot be better proved than by the Booke of Abraham the Jew, wherein he layd down the secrets of this Art in indifferent plaine termes and figures, and that for the benefit of his unhappy country-men, when by the wrath of God they were scattered all over the world.  
This book was accidentally found by Nicholas Flammel, a French-man, and with the help of it he attained at last to that miraculous Medecine which men call the Philosopher's Stone. But let us hear the *Monsieur* himself describe it.

There fell into my hands (saith he), for the sum of two florins, a gilded Book, very old and large. It was not of paper nor parchment, as other books be, but it was made of delicate rindes (as it seemed to me) of tender young trees, The cover of it was of brasse, well bound, all engraven with letters of strange figures, and for my part, I think they might well be Greek characters, or some such ancient language. Sure I am, I could not read them, and I know well they were not notes, nor letters of Latine, nor of the Gaule, for of them I understood a little.... Upon the first of the leaves was written in great capitall letters of gold: *Abraham the Jew, Prince, Priest Levite, Astrologer, and Philosopher, to the nation of the Jewes, by the wrath of God dispersed among the Gaules, sendeth health.*

After this it was filled with great execrations and curses (with this word Maranatha, which was often repeated there) against every person that should cast his eyes upon it, if he were not sacrificer or scribe. He that sold me this booke knew not what it was worth, no more than I when I bought it. I believe it had been stolen, or taken by violence, from the miserable Jewes, or found hid in some part of the ancient place of their habitation.<sup>4</sup>

4. *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* (ed. A.E. Waite), Theosophical Publishing House, London 1919; pp.170-172.

Here, Vaughan is quoting in large part from another work, *Nicholas Flammel - His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures*, translated and published by Eiranaeus Orandus in London in 1624, and previously published in Paris in 1612. Essentially, for our purposes, it is describing an ancient, mystical book, attributed to Abraham the Jew, which is protected from the uninitiated reader by “execrations and curses” of which the most notable is the word MARANATHA.

In his introduction to his translation of *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, “Bequeathed by Abraham unto Lamech his son”, S.L. MacGregor Mathers asks “Who then was this Abraham the Jew?” and goes on to speculate that he may have been a descendant of that very same Abraham the Jew who wrote “the celebrated Alchemical work” acquired by Nicholas Flamel almost a century earlier than the translation from Hebrew and publication of the *Sacred Magic* in 1458. He notes that his author, sometimes referred to as Abraham of Worms, was supposed to have been born in 1362, and would therefore have been, to some extent, a contemporary of Flamel, whose traditional dates are given as circa 1330-1418. In this duplication of actual or apocryphal Abrahams, among a profusion of individuals bearing the epithet of Abraham the Jew’ in all probability, it is not surprising that they become identified as being one and the same.

Crowley, familiar as he was with Thomas Vaughan’s works and the infamous biblical curse of *Anathema Maranatha*, could not have chosen a more suitable curse to place inside the fly-leaf of his own particular recension of the ‘Sacred Magic of Abramelin’. Was it truly intended as an effective guard against prying eyes, or was it merely an affectation to emulate an historical predecessor? There is not really any way of knowing; perhaps to some extent, it depends on when he placed it there.

Finally, this brings us back to Kenneth Grant’s *The Ninth Arch* and his comments on the word ‘Maranatha’, forming as it does the text of ‘The Book of the Spider’, verse 859-22 (page 495):

“Maranatha” is the great curse set to guard against profane delvers into the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage. It applies in this instance, and cogently, to the *Grimoire* of Clan Grant.

While there is no doubt that the word ‘Maranatha’ embodies a magical formula of some significance, it becomes increasingly clear that it actually constitutes a memory. *Liber 29 (OKBISh)* is replete with verses that are memories: rememberances of things past, of magical names and artefacts, of books and images, of places and encounters, of sounds and sensations, and of stray, half-forgotten lines of poetry. For this reason it is a much more diffuse and subjective text than the *Wisdom of S’lba*,

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that exceedingly intense and cogent Typhonian transmission. In many ways 'The Book of the Spider' can be regarded as a magickal autobiography, a history of inner plane contacts and focal triggers. "Book 29 is concerned primarily with opening the Gateways", Grant states in his introduction. There are certainly gateways of the imagination to be found in those dreaming spaces that exist between experiences in the past and our selective remembering of them; but Kenneth Grant held the firm conviction that the text concealed a fully functional grimoire, a workable magickal praxis. Indeed, there are many densely cryptical passages and unusual sigils in the book that have yet to yield their secrets. He stated in his letter:

I always find your expressions extremely interesting and am always glad of any insights you may care to air - especially concerning OKBISH, which is proving a very hard nut to crack, although I have received several interesting letters on the subject, which, rather sadly, only raise more questions than they answer. However ... fire away ...!<sup>5</sup>

While taking account of those curses and blessings that may guard Grant's grimoire, therefore, let us go beyond them and examine its opening words.

*Phulkamezameza Phulk aliz.*

'The Book of the Spider' opens with a response in an unknown tongue to an invocation of Qulieifi, Guardian of the Twenty-ninth Tunnel of Set in which this *Book OKBISH* was, in the greater part, revealed.

(*The Ninth Arch*, page 53)

If this is transliterated into Hebrew/Aramaic it gives the following results:

PhVLKAMHZAMHZA = 243 = GMR, to complete; complete, perfect.

243 = GRM, bone; strength, substance.

PhVLK ALIZ = 136 + 48 = QVL IVBL, a voice of protracted sound.

136 + 48 = OIVN KVKB, contemplation of a star.

136 + 48 = OIVN KDKD, contemplation of a sparkling gem.

PhVLKAMHZAMHZA PhVLK ALIZ = 427 = HVIVTh,  
Havayoth: essences, or existences.

5. Letter from Kenneth Grant dated 7 June '04 e.v.

The key to the interpretation of this gematria is that the word PhVLKAMHZAMHZA has thirteen Hebrew letters. There is the strong suggestion of a formula relating to the Thirteen-rayed Star of Manifestation, by means of the thirteen letters of the word MANIFESTATION, represented as the thirteen-angled Star Sapphire and Star of Perfection (which are discussed at length in the commentaries of *The Ninth Arch*).

I cannot supply a translation of this opening statement. The phrase is a phonetic rendition of the words heard by the skryer. Is it in a magical language? Verse 23 complicates matters by breaking the long word into three segments:

*Phul Kameza meza*

The phrase has all the appearance - and the vibratory sound - of a magical incantation. The Greek Magical Papyri are a rich source of similar, long 'barbarous names' and magical formulae. They derive not only from Greek and Egyptian, but also from the Hebrew, Chaldean and Assyrian; it is not always possible, or very useful, to seek out their original meanings, but in the papyri they are always written in Greek characters. A careful search through available sources has not identified anything closely resembling the phrase, but the following transliterations have produced significant results.

*Phoulkamezameza* = 1133

1133 = *anaspao* = I pull out, I draw up - the precise method by which a spider spins the thread to weave its web.

1133 = *episkiazo* = I overshadow - the way in which the informing Intelligence of Akavaysh the Spider (OKBISh) influenced the mind of the seer.

*Phoulk aliz* = 1068. Nothing for this, but 1069 = *esotheren*, within, inwardly - giving emphasis to the preceding.

*Phoulkamezameza Phoulk aliz* = 2201. With such a large number it is justifiable to make use of what Grant termed the 'umbrella effect' in the interpretation of the correspondences. By this he meant that "a number preceding or succeeding a given number partakes of its influences, as an echo partakes of its source":

2200 = *typhonikon* = whirlwind-like, and presumably, typhonian.

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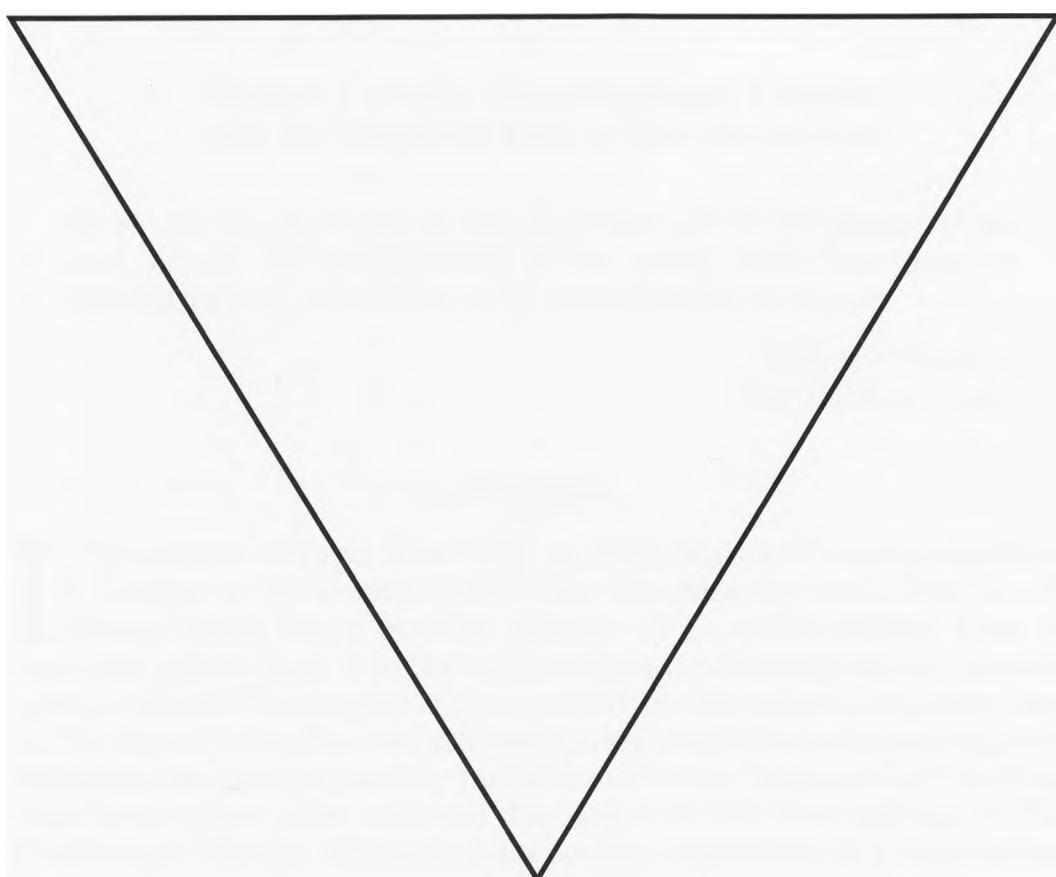
2201 = *phryasso* = I rage, I am furious.

2202 = *tas methodeias tou diabolou* = “the trickery of the devil” as the Epistle to the Ephesians, 6.11 would have us believe. But note that *methodos* more generally means ‘pursuit of knowledge’.

These correspondences confirm the inception of a potent current of Typhonian energy in the communication. It is almost as though the words said: “Welcome to the Typhonian vortex at the centre of the Spider’s Web”.



# From Aiwass to Lam



Richard Ward

# From Aiwass To Lam

## Aleister Crowley, Praeterhuman Contact, and the Magickal Path of the Divine Fool

*Of all the magical and mystical virtues, of all the graces of the soul, of all the attainments of the spirit, none has been so misunderstood, even when at all apprehended, as silence.*

Aleister Crowley,  
*The Book of Thoth.*

### Prologue

In Greenwich Village, New York, in 1919, Aleister Crowley exhibited a number of his works of art under the collective title *Dead Souls*. Among them was a curious portrait of an entity named Lam. It could be argued that it is the most enigmatic drawing which Crowley ever produced. The origins of the portrait are shrouded in mystery and unlike any of his other artistic works, although the enlarged egg-like cranium does bear a passing resemblance to an idealised self portrait that some years later adorned the cover of the first edition of *The Confessions*. Also in 1919, the Lam portrait appeared as a frontispiece to Crowley's *Liber LXXI*, entitled *The Voice of the Silence*, a Commentary upon a purportedly ancient work of Buddhist mysticism first published by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in 1889. Crowley omitted Blavatsky's notes, which he viewed as "diffuse, full of inaccuracies, and intended to mislead the presumptuous", replacing them with a commentary of his own intended to enlighten the text. The frontispiece portrait of Lam is accompanied with the following words: "Lam is the Tibetan word for Way or Path, and Lama is He who Goeth, the specific title of the Gods of Egypt, the Treader of the Path, in Buddhistic

phraseology. Its numerical value is 71 [by Hebrew Gematria], the number of this book." No further clues to the origin of the portrait are given, although as noted by Michael Staley, it is fairly certain that the drawing arose from the *Amalantrah Working* one year earlier (see Foreword to 'The Lam Statement' in *Starfire* Volume I Number 3, 1989). Crowley remarked many years later that the portrait was drawn from life (*ibid*), invoking thoughts of a potential full blown extra-terrestrial contact with what would later come to be viewed as a classic extra-terrestrial archetype within U.F.O. circles, and long before the experiences of Whitley Strieber *et al.*

As Staley also notes (*ibid*), the *Amalantrah Working* can be seen in many ways as a continuation of the *Abuldz Working* in 1911. Prior to that, Crowley's previous Working of great magnitude from a similar viewpoint had been the reception of *Liber AL* as dictated by Aiwass in 1904. Certainly, there are common threads connecting all three Workings. Each was obtained through the mediumship of a 'Scarlet Woman', Crowley's perceived living embodiment of Babalon; each Working included the performing of Crowley's favourite invocation, that of the Bornless One; each communication through the mediumship of the Scarlet woman had been imparted by some sort of discarnate entity, extra-terrestrial or not, depending on your viewpoint. There is also the matter of some sort of potential cycle taking place, in that each Working occurs in a year seven years after the previous one. I am not suggesting that there is any kind of exact seven-year gap (either in solar or lunar years) between each Working, as the period between each varies, being a little over six years in each case, but the chronology is worthy of note nonetheless. Each Working is also similar in that all give various Qabalistic keys, references to Crowley's writings (extant, projected, or, in the case of *Liber AL vel Legis*, a direct dictation), and other information pertinent to the cause and development of Thelema. To further understand the threads linking each, and in particular the role of the Path of the Magickal Fool as a commonality, each Working must be looked at in turn. This will not be in minute detail, however, but merely a recapitulation to highlight certain points that illustrate the journey from Aiwass to Lam.

#### **The Cairo Working, the current of the Divine Fool and the reception of *Liber AL***

The *Book of the Law*, the cornerstone of Crowley's cult of Thelema, was received in early April 1904, dictated by the intelligence known as Aiwass through the mediumship of the seer Ouarda (his then wife, Rose

Edith Kelly). This occurred over a three-day period in Cairo in early April, although the couple had arrived there in early February, and the period of invocation had begun on March 16th with the ritual of the Bornless One. The full account of the reception of *Liber AL* remained unpublished until 1936, when it appeared under the title *The Equinox of the Gods*. As far as the precise dating of the three-day period pertaining to the reception of *Liber AL* is concerned, this account contained certain irregularities. It doesn't help that the record is rather fragmentary, with some sections lost in entirety. On pages 1 and 108-109, the dates given are the 8th to the 10th April inclusive; but on page 87, Crowley wrote that "it must have been on the first of April that W. commanded P. (now somewhat cowed) to enter the "temple" exactly at 12 o'clock noon on three successive days, and to write down what he should hear, rising exactly at 1 o' clock." (*The Equinox of the Gods*, first edition, 1936). More recent reprints of the work have been edited to reflect the former dates in all cases and thus standardise the text. Whether the date of April 1st was merely an error on Crowley's part relating to the magical record, will no doubt always be a point of conjecture. Kenneth Grant argues in favour of the date of April 1st as the true starting-point for the reception of *Liber AL*, citing a suggestion by Frater Achad "that Crowley was not slow to foresee the inevitable jibes arising from an April Fool joke perpetrated on him by his wife Rose whilst on their honeymoon." (*Beyond the Mauve Zone*, p.34).

Crowley's own words in *The Equinox of the Gods* would seem to lend some credence to Achad's view: "I write this therefore with a sense of responsibility so acute that for the first time in my life I regret my sense of humour and the literary practical jokes which it has caused me to perpetrate." (p. 105) This is in a paragraph not long after enthusing about *Liber AL* thus: "I, Aleister Crowley, declare upon my honour as a gentleman that I hold this revelation a million times more important than the discovery of the Wheel, or even of the Laws of Physics or Mathematics." (p. 104). Certainly, it is obvious that Crowley himself regarded this communication as no joke, and was anxious to be sure it wasn't regarded as such. There has been talk of a shipping log showing that Crowley couldn't have still been in Cairo as late as the 8th of April, although no proof of this has been forthcoming. Whatever the truth, the controversy surrounding April 1st as a potential date for the genesis of *Liber AL* is certainly an interesting starting-point to study the place of the Fool in relation to Aleister Crowley and praeter-human contact.

The magickal current of the Fool is one that pervades many of Crowley's writings, coming to its most obvious manifestation within *Liber CXI, The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, which Crowley described as "an

extended and elaborate commentary on *The Book of the Law*, in the form of a letter from the Master Therion to his magical son.” (*The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, p.xiv). That it should be so is pertinent, as *Liber Legis* can arguably be viewed as the first obvious manifestation of the magickal current of the Divine Fool within the magickal life of Aleister Crowley. The son in question here is Charles Stansfeld Jones (Frater Achad), who pursued his own magickal path with particular reference to Parsifal, the Divine Fool and pure knight of the German grail cycles.

#### **Aiwass, the Divine Fool and Liber AL**

Aiwass gives a clue to identity within the first verse of *Liber AL* by stating: “it is revealed by Aiwass the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat” (AL 1.7). Hoor-paar-kraat, or Harpocrates (the Lord of Silence), is one of the archetypes associated with the Fool in *The Book of Thoth* (see pp.60-64), and therefore regarded by Crowley as a manifestation of the Divine Fool’s magickal current. That ‘old devil’, Pan, Crowley regarded as a fuller development of the Fool current manifested as the Beast and shown in Atu XV of the tarot. That the manifestation of *Liber AL* came through the combination of the forces of Crowley himself (self-styled as the Beast) and the mediumship of the Scarlet woman (i.e., a manifestation of Babalon) is pertinent, as Aiwass had dictated “Now ye shall know that the chosen priest & apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest the Beast; and in his woman called the Scarlet Woman is all power given.” (AL 1.15). This combination is also reflected thus in the personages of Nuit and Hadit: “I, Hadit, am the complement of Nu” (AL 2.2). Aiwass instructs that Crowley should align himself with the latter: “Be thou Hadit, my secret centre, my heart & my tongue!” (AL 1.6). That secret centre — analogous to the magician becoming the centre of his own universe, its Qutub, or Pole — is hinted at as serpentine in nature, analogous to the sexual current inherent between the Fool/Beast and Babalon: “I am the secret Serpent coiled about to spring: in my coiling there is joy.” (AL 2.26) This also relates to the Kundalini and the mysteries of sexual magick contained therein, a key point in Crowley’s magickal philosophy, and one to the further importance of which, in reference to the current examination, we shall later return.

Aiwass reveals that “Nothing is a secret key of this law. Sixty-one the Jews call it; I call it eight, eighty, four hundred & eighteen” (AL 1.46). Each statement may be seen as relating to the path of the Divine Fool and its allied sexual current, as nothing, Zero, is the number of the Fool in the tarot; sixty-one, the number of *Ain*, or ‘nothing’ by Hebrew Qabalah; the number eight by Hebrew Qabalah adumbrates the

pleasures of love (see *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley*, p.1 of *Sepher Sephiroth*); eighty adumbrates Union (*ibid*, p. 12); four hundred and eighteen adumbrates Parzifal — again the Divine Fool — and one of the enumerations of Aiwass. (see ‘The Comment’, in *Equinox of the Gods*.)

Before proceeding to examine both the Ab-ul-Diz and Amalanrah communications, it is necessary to investigate the nature of Aiwass and the key role of the rite of the Bornless One, as this forms the very genesis of Crowley’s praeterhuman contact with relevance to the path of the Divine Fool.

#### **Aiwass, Seth, the Divine Fool, and Liber Samekh**

The precise nature and identity of the entity Aiwass seemed to fascinate Crowley, who believed Aiwass was a God, Demon, or Devil with origins in ancient Sumer, and also a manifestation of his own Higher Guardian Angel (see *Equinox of the Gods*, p. 118). The latter is a logical assumption, given that the preliminary invocation of the Bornless One, undertaken prior to the reception of *Liber AL*, was intended to bring about contact with that part of the Higher Self; this is the primary purpose of Crowley’s later expansion of the text, entitled *Liber Samekh*. To further examine that aspect of the Divine Fool current, it is necessary to examine the text of the Bornless One itself; or rather the original text from which it was drawn, a fragment of Graeco-Egyptian magic that became known as *The Stele of Jeu the Heiroglyphist*. (See Betz, for example.)

In 1852, Charles Wycliffe Goodwin published a translation of *A Fragment of Graeco-Egyptian Magic* taken from a papyrus in the British Museum. The text is split into eight parts, the fourth of which was later added separately as a preliminary invocation to Mathers’ translation of *The Goetia*. This translation of the Goetia was published in 1904 by Aleister Crowley, who gave Mathers scant recognition for his efforts, citing the text as being “translated by a dead hand.” Given the antagonism between Crowley and Mathers at the time, Crowley was at least magnanimous enough to acknowledge that the translation was done very efficiently (see *The Goetia*, p.vi). By Crowley’s own admission, albeit some years later, he acknowledged that his contribution consisted of the following: “I added a translation of the conjurations into the Enochian or Angelic language; edited and annotated the text, prefixed a ‘Preliminary Invocation’, added a prefatory note, a magical square (intended to prevent improper use of the book) and ultimately an Invocation of Typhon when the First Magical War of the Aeon of Horus was declared.” (*Confessions*, p. 362). It cannot be said with any certainty

whether Crowley had access to Goodwin's work, separately translating the Greek text given by him; had access to another unpublished translation or transliteration, or managed to translate the original fragment itself. All these explanations are possible. Crowley described the text of the Bornless One as the most potent ritual extant and adopted it as his favourite invocation, later elaborately restoring the barbarous names and certain magical formulae that he saw as lacking from what remained of the original papyrus, and eventually evolving the work into *Liber Samekh*, a rite for the attainment of conversation with one's Holy Guardian Angel.

Within Goodwin's text, the magician first calls upon the "Headless One" to help drive away evil, before later in the text identifying him/herself with the headless spirit. The term *headless one* is a translation of the Greek *Akephalos*. Crowley kept the translation 'Bornless One', derived from the alternative meaning 'One without beginning'. In his definitive work on the subject, Karl Preisendanz clearly identifies *Akephalos* as the Egyptian god Seth, a line followed by many scholars including Jean Dorresee (see *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, p. 104.) This lends weight to Kenneth Grant's hypothesis that Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel is analogous with Seth. In the invaluable notes to *A Fragment of Graeco-Egyptian Magic*, Goodwin points out that similarly written magical texts, particularly within the *Leyden Papyrus*, are "addressed to the evil principle of the Egyptians." i.e, Seth (Goodwin, p. 40).

Grant sees the personification of Seth-Aiwass as a reflection of the original Draconian current of Ancient Egypt (see *The Magical Revival*). It is true that the constellation of Draco among the Egyptians was associated with Seth; but as Lockyer points out, the whole group of Northern circumpolar constellations was symbolised by Seth (*The Dawn of Astronomy*, pp. 149, 302), whereas Draco became the most obvious focus due to its central position as the first representation of the celestial Pole itself (see Massey, p.580). Massey lists the six still-identifiable stations of the celestial pole as Draco, the Lesser Bear, Kepheus, Cygnus, Lyra, and Herakles. Given Lockyer's argument, all six of these Northern constellations may well have an association with Seth. The stars at the point of the celestial pole, as we view them, change over time due to the phenomenon known as precession, marking a particular period of time, and analogous to the passing of the aeons within Thelemic tradition. According to Massey, Seth was the first-born of the Genetrix, the primal Great Mother (see Massey, both works, *passim*), and therefore associated with primal creation itself, the chaos from which came order. In the symbolism of the tarot, Draco is associated with Atu XIII, Death. Crowley

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sees this card as a culmination of the symbolism of the dying god begun in the previous two cards, and the subsequent demonisation of Seth (see *The Book of Thoth*, p. 100). This reflects the death of the old, and the subsequent birth of the new Aeon.

Grant also shows a connection between Aiwass and Bes (*The Magical Revival*, p.59). Lockyer has shown that Seth and Bes were synonymous in representing the powers of darkness, i.e. the stellar as opposed to solar powers, and includes a representation of Bes as “a buffoon”, obviously tying the deity once more to the current of the Fool, albeit in the mundane sense.

That Seth personifies the Fool in Ancient Egypt is a premise that many scholars of Egyptology have accepted, although some have viewed Seth as a Fool only in the mundane sense, citing the contending of Horus and Seth as the main example, in which the latter is continually outwitted by the former (see Goedicke, *Seth as a Fool*). The path of the magickal Fool is delineated by chaos, or rather the order of chaos, and pertaining to the order *in* chaos. Velde, in his seminal work *Seth: God of Confusion*, follows this higher premise and cites the work of P. Van Baaren in identifying Seth as the Divine Joker and the originator of confusion who sets order (Velde, p. 25). Van Baaren also sees a parallel between Seth and the voodoo *Iwa* Ghede, a connection I have previously explored with relation to the Divine Fool current (see *The Magic of Folly*). Like Ghede, Seth also embodies great virility and sexual power, another common trait of the archetypes of the Divine Fool (see Velde, p.54ff.)

In certain parts of Egypt, Seth and Horus were reconciled and worshipped as one single divinity with two heads, known in the *Book of Gates* as “he with two faces” (see Velde, p.69, and also Lockyer, p. 149). This Janus-like divinity, featuring a being with the falcon head of Horus and that of the classic Seth animal facing in opposite directions, is a typical form of the Divine Fool that later became reflected in the image of the Fool and his/her mirrored self (see *The Magic of Folly* for example). Like Horus, Seth was originally seen as a solar deity. This is shown in continuity within the appearance of Seth in later Roman curse tablets (*defixiones*), in which the god holds a solar disc. In his *Iconographical Notes Towards a definition of the Medieval Fool*, Gifford provides a valuable link between Seth, shown as an ass-headed deity, and the development of the image of the Divine Fool. The ass head, as one of the animal forms associated with Seth, appears as the ass-eared hat of the medieval fool. Gifford further sees the flail carried as developing into the wand or fool-stick of the jester, and the loose attire approximating to the typical dress of the thirteenth century fool (see *The Fool and the Trickster*, p.33 and figure 10). The solar orb can also be seen

in terms of an iconographical step in the development of the mirror of the Divine Fool that appeared in certain early tarot depictions (Willeford, plate 12, for example).

Despite the most prolific depiction of Seth's head as the long-snouted deity, variously identified as an Anteater, Giraffe or Okapi, he is also associated with a plethora of other animals (see Velde, p.7ff) including the snake. Certainly, the character of Aiwass is very serpentine in nature; and although the snake was more often seen in ancient Egypt as an ill omen, Velde sees that the animal may represent fate in general, encompassing both good and bad in the one deity. This is certainly the domain of the Divine Fool.

By nature, the Divine Fool is a Mercurial figure. This is ably demonstrated by Carl Jung in his treatment of Mercurius as a trickster figure (see Jung, p.255ff). Within the tarot, the Magus or Juggler personifies the stage on the Fool's journey relating to the mastering of the elements. In ancient Egypt, the planet Mercury was attributed to Seth (see Sellers, p.313). The Egyptian word for Mercury (*Sbg*) simply means 'unknown' (*ibid*), a suitable epithet in connection with the Bornless One, or 'one without beginning.'

Returning to Seth as an ass-headed divinity, there is a continuity through the divine names Iao and Sabaoth, other deities that are referred to within the *Stele of Jeu the Heiroglyphist*. The Gnostic Sabaoth is often shown as an ass-headed deity, and appearing very similar to the image of Seth as the Divine Fool within the *defixiones* (see King, p.230). Iao, often Iao-Sabaoth to the Jews, is also seen as ass-headed (see Massey, p.506 and also King). Massey also shows that Iao and Ieou are related spellings (*ibid*). Given that Jeou is an alternative spelling for Jeu (see Doresse, p. 105), and that within Hebrew, *Yod* is equivalent to both I and J in English, we return full circle and under new light to the now-accepted title of the papyrus that morphed into *Liber Samekh*. As Doresse points out, there is no quandary caused by the fusion of Jewish and Egyptian elements when looking at the papyrus, showing that Demotic manuscripts did indeed contain elements of both that make total sense from a Gnostic viewpoint (see Doresse, p. 105-6). In Egyptian, the related word for ass is *hiw*. This term is particularly associated with Seth as both ass and serpent, as it means both 'braying ass' and 'lie down, slither away.' (See Ward, W). Seth is therefore referred to as both the *HIW-Ass* and the *HIW-Serpent*. It would be too much of a stretch to link the former term with the name of Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, as the interplay between Egyptian and English is vastly different to that of Egyptian and Hebrew; but, as always when dealing with the path of the Magickal Fool, purely phonetic word-plays are interesting and worthy of note none the less.

### **The Gnostic Seth**

It was following the demise of the Hyksos, the so-called ‘Shepherd Kings’ who ruled Egypt from 2000-1500 B.C, that Seth lost his status as a supreme and favoured god amongst the Egyptians (see Mead, pp.58-9). Seth was, however, still highly regarded amongst certain Gnostic sects as a prime creative force of the universe, although the god is seldom named within extant texts. Within the so-called *Books of Jeou*, for example, he is referred to merely as the Jeou, ‘Invisible God’. The links between Jeou and Seth have already been explained. That this epithet may well refer to Seth is strengthened by the fact that a related text, the untitled *Bruce Codex*, refers to the supreme God as “the alone born” (see Mead, p.553), i.e, the Bornless One, or one without beginning. Furthermore, the Bruce Codex names the supreme god as Sethius, the logos creator (Mead, p.554). Mead is of the opinion that Sethius is synonymous with the Egyptian Seth, and that his worship survived amongst the so-called Sethian Gnostics (see Mead, p.213). Central to their belief system was the concept of the world egg fertilised by the first principal in the form of a strong wind. This wind was serpentine in form (one of the known zootypes of Seth), and characterised by its hiss (see Hippolytus, p.374). The account bears some similarity in nature to that of the sacred swan referred to within *The Voice of the Silence*, treated later in this essay.

### **The Wizard Ab-ul-Diz**

In the Autumn of 1911, Crowley travelled to St Moritz in the company of Soror Virakam (Mary d’Este Sturges), his new Scarlet woman. Virakam had told Crowley of a vision concerning a man calling himself Ab-ul-Diz, who they were told to contact one week later.

The first direct connection between this new Working and the Cairo Working was by way of strange synchronicity, the very essence of manifestation of the current of the Divine Fool through fate and destiny. This involved the fact that Crowley had brought with him only the magical weapons suitable for the proposed work, along with his magical robe used during the Cairo Working. To Crowley’s surprise, Vikaram had brought a robe, virtually identical to that worn by Ouarda in 1904, which helped convince Crowley of the validity of the enterprise (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.291). The proposed purpose of the Working was to help Crowley write what was to become *Book 4*. This was another similarity with the Cairo Working, which gave rise to *The Book of the Law*. After following a set of psychic clues, the pair finally arrived at the correct

location in which the Working would take place, the Villa Calderazzo. This was confirmed by its Qabalistic value of 418, the number of the magical formula of the Aeon.

The Working at the villa proceeded through late November and much of December and, as instructed by Ab-ul-Diz, began with the invocation of the Bornless One. A similarity in current revealed by Ab-ul-Diz to that of Aiwass had been shown qabalistically, in that Ab-ul-Diz revealed himself as 78 (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.301), the number Crowley had at that time attributed to Aiwass. Later, he revised the self-confessed error to enumerate the total 418, which also enumerates Parzifal, the Divine Fool of the Grail cycles.

On November 28th, Ab-ul-Diz mentioned the Key of 31 (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.307). This would come to fruition only much later through the work of Frater Achad around the time of the *Amalantrah Working*. Later that day, an allusion was made to *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, the work dedicated to Achad. Shortly after this, Ab-ul-Diz revealed the supreme importance of Zero (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.314), one of the main numbers of the Divine Fool. The shape of Zero is oval, approximating to the shape of an egg. The final instruction revealed to Crowley by Ab-ul-Diz was concerning an egg under a palm tree, the importance of which would be revealed much later in the *Amalantrah Working*.

#### The Wizard Amalantrah

On January 14th 1918, Aleister Crowley began the *Amalantrah Working* with the mediumship of the Camel (Roddie Minor). The most obvious symbol of continuity immediately apparent is that of the egg, the first session of the Working ending with the enigmatic words "It's all in the egg" as the Wizard stands with a child, a representative of Horus or Harpocrates, an archetype of the Divine Fool. On January 20th, the Wizard revealed to Crowley the true number of Baphomet, 729 by Hebrew Gematria, the equivalent value of Amalantrah. Crowley later noted in *The Book of Thoth* (p.67) that Baphomet had been seen as an ass-headed god by the Templars, and thereby associated with Set. As Baphomet was most often said to be an idol represented by a head of some form, with hindsight the picture of the egg and the head start to come together.

On January 25th, Crowley asked the Wizard when he could expect to see the fulfilment of *Liber AL vel Legis* chapter 3, verse 31. This verse relates to a rich man from the West who would bestow wealth on

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Crowley. The time-frame suggested by the answer, September 1918, was regarded by Crowley as doubtful. Certainly, a nugget of spiritual gold was revealed to Frater Achad in early October 1918, in the form of AL as the great key 31, though he did not transmit this to Crowley until the following year, despite various meetings of the two men in the interim (see *Liber Aleph*, p.xxii). *Liber Aleph* itself was completed in March 1918, during the process of the Amalantrah Working.

On March 31st, Crowley yet again employed the rite of the Bornless One as a preliminary invocation to the work. The Working continued until at least the end of the surviving record on June 16th 1918, resplendent with strange qabalistic keys and imagery, though the serpent symbolism so prevalent within *Liber AL* had given way to the symbolism of the egg laid by a bird, referred to by the Wizard as a “hen”.

### **Lam, the Divine Fool, Celestial Swan, and the Voice of the Silence**

As already noted, the portrait of Lam appears as the frontispiece to Crowley's publication of Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*, with his commentary replacing her own. The symbolism of the bird, as referred to by Amalantrah, appears here as the divine swan. It carries the divine word *Aum* upon its body (see Blavatsky, p.81), which is *logos*, the divine sound of creation and analogous to the voice of the silence itself. She regarded the bird as *Kala Hamsa* (see Blavatsky, p.82), the great swan of time and space of the Sanskrit mystics. Crowley recognised this, and further identified the voice of the silence with the silent babe Harpocrates (see *Liber LXXI*, p.763), already, as we have seen, a form of the Divine Fool. King shows a connection between the ineffable god-name Iao and that of the Hindu *Aum*, the latter giving rise to the former, and once again taking us back on the path of the Divine Fool (King, p.320).

In the introduction to *Liber LXXI*, Crowley refers to Blavatsky and the day of judgement, pointing out that that day had already come with the birth of the new Aeon of Horus in 1904 (see *Liber LXXI*, p.736). The traditional title of Crowley's Tarot card *The Aeon* was *The Last Judgement*, which by Kabbalists has been associated with the constellation of Cygnus the Swan (see for example Robson, p.34). On the Tree of Life, the card is positioned on path 31, the number of AL and the key revealed by Frater Achad as that unlocking *The Book of the Law*. One of the divinatory meanings of the card is inspiration from communion with the Divine (see Wirth, p. 148, for example). Following in the footsteps of Papus, both Hariette and F. Homer Curtiss attribute the

Hebrew letter *Resh* to the card, rather than the letter *Shin* attributed by Crowley. This is interesting from the point that it is therefore associated with the pineal gland or third eye, and also with the Auric egg as a point of communication with the higher planes (see Curtiss, p. 284). Papus simply gives the hieroglyphic meaning of *Resh* as "head of man" (see Papus, p. 182). The portrait of Lam seemingly connects these two attributions, being both an egg-shaped head, and containing the fiery flames of *Shin*.

In *The Cygnus Mystery*, Andrew Collins has demonstrated that the constellation of Cygnus as a celestial swan or closely related bird has been an object of veneration amongst many ancient cultures. Furthermore, he demonstrates that Cygnus X-3, a binary star system within that constellation, has been bombarding the earth with cosmic rays periodically through the millennia, and may well have had a significant impact on human evolution. Cygnus X-3 operates on a 71-day cycle, the number of Lam, and the constellation of Cygnus was certainly prominent in the heavens at the time of each of the three Workings undergone by Crowley that have been treated here (private communication with A. Collins). As already shown, Cygnus was another of the Northern constellations that at one time sat at the point of the celestial Pole, and therefore also potentially associated with Seth. Gerald Massey shows the constellation of the swan to the Greeks as analogous to the *Bennu* bird or phoenix of the Egyptians (see *The Natural Genesis*, volume 1, p.43), and therefore a powerful symbol of birth, death, and rebirth, containing the full cycle of creation. One of the most obvious archetypes of the Divine Fool symbolizing rebirth, as demonstrated within *The Book of Thoth*, is that of the Green Man, dying in winter only to be reborn in Spring. As Willeford notes of the Fool in folk tradition: "The outstanding characteristic of the folk fool is his power magically to revive himself and to propagate. He represents the most elementary biological wisdom, shared by men and animals alike." (Willeford, p.85; cf Swain, *Fools and Folly during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*.)

Seth, albeit rather obliquely, has also been associated with the symbolism of the egg. Frances Rolleston, in *Mizraim; or, Astronomy of Egypt*, links Set with a female figure within the planisphere of Dendarah that we know today as Cassiopeia. Although Seth is traditionally shown as a male deity, he is integrally linked to the divine feminine as one half of the primary duad with his Mother, Apt (*Ancient Egypt*, p.590). Following the hieroglyphic renderings of Mr Birch of the British Museum, Rolleston shows the signs of an oval or egg and a half-circle or hill connected with Set (see Rolleston, *Mizraim*, p.5) The hill

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may well represent the primal hill of creation, that which emerged from the waters at *Zep-Tepi*, the ‘first time’, or original point of creation itself. The egg symbolises that point of new birth. This is typified by Set, or Seth’s role as the order of / in chaos, from which life was born. Seth was most commonly associated within the planisphere at Dendarah with the constellations of the Great Bear, Draco, and Little Bear; known respectively as the wife of Set, thigh of Set, and Jackal of Set (see Lockyer, p. 146). Don Webb sees the seven stars of the Big Dipper (Ursa Major, the Great Bear) behind the constellation of the Thigh as a manifestation of Set in the objective universe. He further notes that with the introduction of Babylonian astrological ideas to Egypt, these seven stars came to represent symbols of fate (Webb, p.28), another key connection between Set or Seth, and the way of the Divine Fool.

On the ceiling of the tomb of Senmut in Egypt, the constellation known as the ‘ox thigh’ (Ursa Major) is being speared by a falcon-headed god. Collins has shown this god to be represented by the stars of Cygnus, and furthermore most probably representing the god Horus (see Collins, pp. 133-5.) This makes sense as a stellar representation of the typical contendings of Horus and Seth, a view supported by Jack Lindsay, along with the identification of Horus and the Cygnus connection. Lindsay has also shown that in times before Ramesses, the spear was in fact a cord extending from the arms of the falcon-headed figure (see Lindsay, p. 150) This could be seen as connecting the two figures and recalling the joint nature of Seth-Horus shown in the figure of ‘he with two faces’, rather than two warring gods.

Just as Aleister Crowley had announced the advent of the Aeon of Horus as revealed by Aiwass in early April 1904, Frater Achad spoke of the inauguration of the Aeon of Maat on April 2nd 1948, a time when the earth was in the grip of the first global U.F.O. flap, which brought the concept of extra-terrestrial intelligence to the masses as a distinct possibility. As Grant notes, “man in the mass became aware of the existence of Intelligence and Energies not of this earth alone” at this time (see *Beyond the Mauve Zone*, p.35). Kenneth Grant and Nema (Margaret Ingalls) have since spoken of the future aeon of Silence, the wordless aeon of *Zain* — rather pertinent in relation to the Voice of the Silence, Lam, and the Divine swan. The connection between Lam and Seth, and in particular the relevance of Lam to the twin deity of Seth-Horus, has been ably demonstrated within Kenneth Grant’s third *Typhonian Trilogy*. It seems very possible that Lam is a personification of cosmic interaction, of a current into which Crowley tuned through the use of magick whilst walking the path of the Divine Fool, understood in terms of praeterhuman contact through his Higher Guardian Angel, and

revealed to him as a Sethian gnosis born within the Draconian or Typhonian current.

The egg as so graphically depicted within the Lam portrait *is* one of the most primal symbols of creation, both as heralding the birth of the new aeon, and as representing the very point when the world came into being, as depicted by the egg-shaped mound of first creation so prevalent within the mythology of the ancient Egyptians and many other cultures. It is rather pertinent that Crowley himself links Lam with the Gods of Egypt within the accompanying words to the portrait at the beginning of *Liber LXXI*.

As already noted, each of the Workings here briefly examined exemplify the importance of the interaction between Crowley and his then Scarlet woman, that of the union of Babalon and the Beast. Crowley's use of sexual acts as a magickal tool is legendary. The sexual act is, at its most basic understanding, an act of creation, whether material, spiritual, or both. Creation is the fundamental action of beginning: a link with creation itself, its source. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the name of Crowley's egg-head shaped messenger is the same as the Sanskrit root letter pertaining to the Muladhara Chakra, the point from which the Kundalini serpent arises, a key factor within the rites of sexual magick.

Each aeon is born and later dies as it completes its passing. The mysteries of creation typified by the sexual act are therefore intrinsically allied to those of death. This is particularly evident within the current of the Divine Fool, most obviously personified by the Ghede spirits within the voodoo tradition in Haiti. The creative process of birth, death, and rebirth itself is perhaps best exemplified within alchemy. As previously noted in *The Magic of Folly*, the Divine Fool is represented as the *prima materia*, the totality of chaos from which the spiritual gold or wisdom is then obtained. The symbol of the swan in alchemy is that of rebirth, as the resurrected Hermetic Androgyn attains the wings of a swan to carry the *rebus* to new heights during the next stage of the *Great Work*, due to heavenly flight and divine sound (see Fabricius, p. 137). One of the illustrations given by Fabricius clearly shows stars depicted on the body of the flying swan (Fabricius, fig.255), and therefore further associating the alchemical swan of the philosophers with the constellation of Cygnus. That alchemy is very much a sexual creative process is well known, and one noted by Fabricius with particular reference to the swan (see Fabricius, p. 137).

Michael Staley has noted the image of the *ankh*, the Egyptian symbol of life, within the head of Lam (see Foreword, A Statement on

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Lam', *Starfire* Volume I Number 3). Lam can therefore be seen as a symbol of the creation of life, or rather a living image and manifestation of a cosmic gnosis stellar-born, connecting us to our very origins. This is something that has fascinated humankind since its earliest dawn, a time when our distant ancestors first lifted eyes towards the heavens in search of answers to life, the universe, and everything.

From the primal chaos of Seth-Aiwass, all was born from the silence. Every man and every woman is a star; and each is able, if they so choose, to tread that path, to embrace the cosmic gnosis transmitted from the stellar realm, to be reborn through a change in higher consciousness. For Lam is the Way, and Love is the Law, Love under Will.

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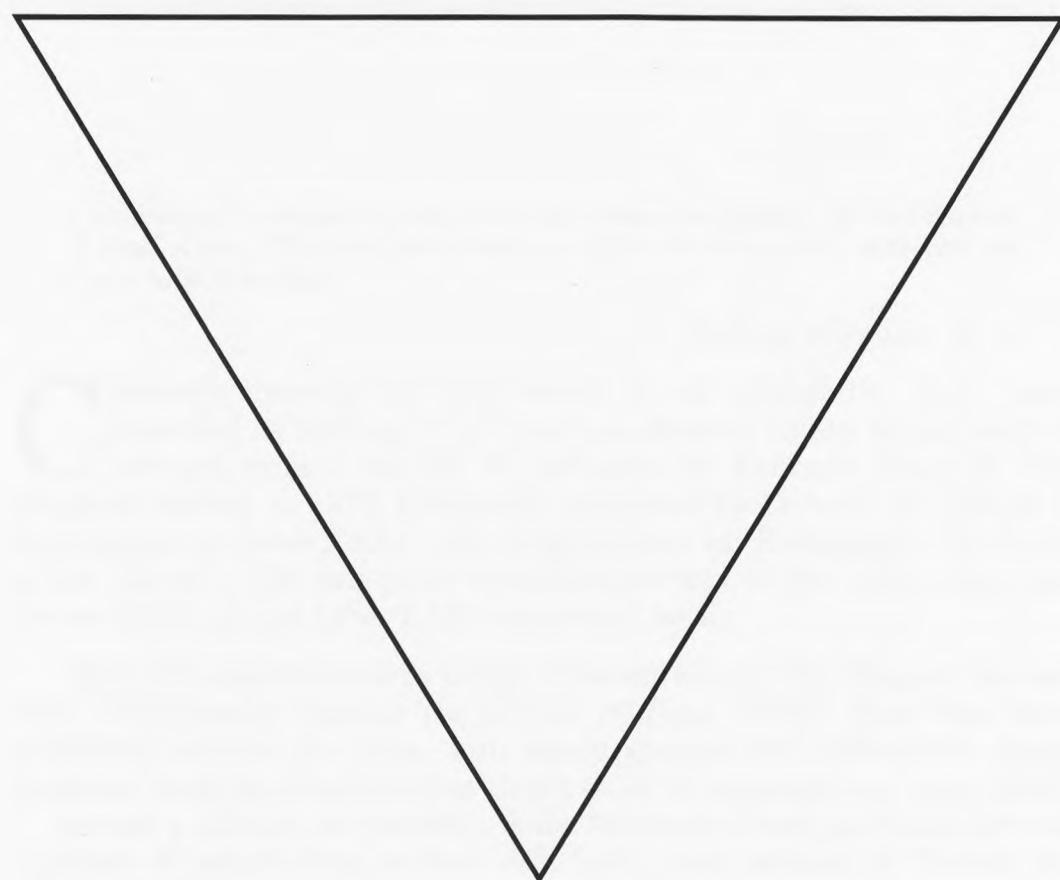
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# The Emergence of Lam



Michael Staley

## The Emergence of Lam

*I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned & dead. Amen. (This is of the 4: there is a fifth who is invisible, & therein am I as a babe in an egg.)*

*The Book of the Law, II, 49.*

Crowley's drawing of Lam would in all probability have been regarded as nothing more than an obscure oddity in his body of artwork were it not for its inclusion by Kenneth Grant in *The Magical Revival* in 1972. Originally published by Crowley in 1919 as a frontispiece to *Liber LXXI* - his Commentary on Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* - the only prior republication was in the 1960s when the Swiss O.T.O. issued *Liber LXXI* as a small book.

Since the republication by Grant of the drawing in *The Magical Revival* and subsequently *Outside the Circles of Time* (1980), there has been gathering interest in Lam, with many groups and individuals doing practical work focusing on what Grant — in *A Statement on Lam* (1989) — termed a *dikpala*, or guardian deity. Although Grant published several methods of establishing contact with Lam, most notably in *Outside the Circles of Time* and subsequently in *A Statement on Lam*, in all probability these groups and individuals are developing their own methods of contact through mystical and magical working. This is because Lam, far from being a singular entity, is the portal to a state of awareness which lies at the root of individualised consciousness where it emerges from collective consciousness; because of this there is an intimacy to the experience.

The portrait of Lam is undated, and Crowley commented neither on its origins nor when it was drawn. However, its origins almost certainly

lie in the Amalantrah Working, a series of communications with a praeter-human entity called Amalantrah which started in January 1918, in New York. Crowley had been living in America since the outbreak of the First World War. At the time the Working commenced he was employed as a contributor for a periodical called *The International*. In a wider context, Crowley saw the latter years of his stay in America as constituting his Magus initiation, the period of the initiation divided into a number of 'Chokmah Days,' each of 73 days duration.

Crowley was writing *Liber Aleph (The Book of Wisdom or Folly)* at this time, and was living with his mistress Roddie Minor. One night in January 1918 she was lying on the floor, having smoked opium. She began to have visions, and related them to Crowley, who suggested she take a more active part in her visions. They continued:

I began by asking for a vision containing a message. I first heard gurgling water and saw a dark farmhouse in among trees and green fields. The house and other things disappeared and a dark yoni appeared just where the house had stood. I then asked where will a message come from? Immediately soldiers with guns appeared lounging about the place, and a king on a throne where the house had stood. I then asked again for a message, and saw an egg in which were many many tiny convolutions of some flesh-like substance which would form something. The egg was placed in an oblong, as in a picture. Around it were clouds, trees, mountains and water, called the 'four elements'. A camel appeared in front of the whole picture. I next tried to find out who the king was. He looked more like Prof. Shotwell than any one else. That is, he was 'simple, democratic' and very learned and fine. He was certainly not a king belonging to any kingdom limited by a country's borders, but was a king of men, or a king of the world. I asked his name and the word 'Ham' appeared between the egg in the oblong and the soldiers around the king.

The king went out to one side and a wizard linked his arm in the king's as they disappeared. The wizard looked at me significantly as they left. It was a sort of look as if one would almost wink. He was an old man, with gray beard, dressed in a long black gown. He was infinitely wise. They seemed to go to a cave in the base of a low mountain on the shore of a large body of water. A spring of sparkling cool water bubbled up through a barrel near the mouth of the cave. I went into the cave and saw them doing something mysterious with a revolver. The wizard had the revolver. What they were going to do was a joke of some kind, but the wizard looked grim about it. At T.'s suggestion I went up to them and said, "I am Eve." This seemed to stop everything. They both disappeared with the cave. Very soon I saw the king sitting in a niche covered with a canopy, cut in the side of the mountain. In quite another place the wizard was sitting under a tree fanning himself. At T.'s suggestion I went up to him and asked him his name. I became very frightened and had the same sensation as when I spoke to him in the cave. It was a kind of shyness and awe. He only smiled at me and would not speak. It seemed that I did not know enough for him to speak with me. In order for him to say anything to me I should have to build a fire of sticks, which he showed me how to do. There was a baby in some way connected with the act of my building the fire which was

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like a ritual. Then a most beautiful lion was standing by the fire. The wizard was standing and still held one or two sticks in his hand. He smiled and said, "Child." I then saw a most beautiful naked boy 5 or 6 years old dancing and playing in the woods in front of us. T. asked how he would look dressed and when I saw him in conventional clothes he looked very uncomfortable and repressed. He looked as if he should be dressed in skins such as tigers'. To one side near the place where I made the fire was a large turtle, standing up as a penguin stands.

The wizard was very happy and satisfied looking. He sat down and reached out his hand to me and had me sit down beside him. As we watched the boy he put his left arm around me tenderly and placed my head on the left side of his chest near the shoulder.

He said, "It's all in the egg."

This passage from the initial vision has been quoted at length because it contains echoes of the drawing of Lam. For instance, the reference to "an egg in which were many many tiny convolutions of some flesh-like substance" suggests the surface of the head of Lam, whilst "The egg was placed in an oblong, as in a picture" suggests a portrait. The name 'Ham' may have sown the seeds for the subsequent name 'LAM' in Crowley's brief gloss accompanying the portrait when published in *The Blue Equinox*. The passage also contains elements which are echoed in subsequent visions in the Working.

Whilst Roddie Minor was relating her initial visions, Crowley's attention was caught by the mention of the egg, since the Abuldiz Working of some seven years previously had concluded with an instruction to go to the desert in search of an egg that was under a palm tree. Unfortunately the record of the Abuldiz Working that Crowley left behind is incomplete; we know this because the surviving typescript makes reference to an appointment for a subsequent seance, the record of which is missing. Because of this, the reference which Crowley here makes to an earlier Working cannot be seen in context. However, the recurrence here of the egg made him realise that the current which initiated the Abuldiz Working was now at work again. The significance of the egg will be considered later, following an account of the recurrence of the symbol throughout the Amalantrah Working.

These opening visions of Roddie Minor's led to a series of Workings in Crowley's apartment, the participants often being just Crowley and Roddie Minor. There was however a specific astral location for these Workings, which was described as a woodland scene. In Crowley's words:

We began a series of interviews with him [Amalantrah]. There was what I may call a permanent background to the vision. He lived in a place as definite

as an address in New York, and in this place were a number of symbolic images representing myself and several other adepts associated with me in my work. The character of the vision served as a guide to my relations with these people. More specifically there were three women, symbolized as three scorpions of the symbolic desert which I was crossing in my mystic journey.

It is not yet clear that I dealt with these women as I should have done. One was Eva Tanguay, the supreme artist, whom I hymned in the April *International*, one, a married woman, a Russian aristocrat in exile; and one, a maiden, to whom the Wizard gave the mystic name of Wesrun. This name can be spelt in two ways: one adding to 333, the number of Choronzon, Dispersion, Impotence, and Death; the other to 888, the number of Redemption. It seemed that it was my task to save her as Parzival saved Kundry. But as I say, I am not clear whether I did not fail completely in my dealings with all three women. I doubt whether I trusted the Wizard as I should have done. It may be that I made "a great miss", the result of which has been to ruin my work temporarily.

Various figures and images in the woodland scene symbolised Crowley and his colleagues — for instance, the head of the O.T.O. in South Africa, Thomas Windram, was symbolised as a turtle. Most seances were conducted under the effects of drugs, usually hashish, opium or ether. The seer would attempt to get *en rapport* with Amalantrah, and then find herself in the woodland scene with Amalantrah and his *entourage*.

In his *Confessions*, Crowley described this method as Amalantrah "throwing visions" at the seer. Only the seer was able to see this woodland scene; Crowley and others were dependent on her description of what was transpiring. Crowley would ask questions. Usually these would be spoken aloud; on occasions he would simply think the question; sometimes only the initial or final letters of each word would be uttered. In whatever way the question was posed, the answer came through the seer relating what she saw. This might be a vision of events; or she might be shown a number, a Hebrew word, or a tarot card. The answer would be analysed by Crowley, usually on the basis of gematria. Although Crowley got a lot of what he regarded as accurate and useful information, there were occasions when he could make nothing of the answers, and grew exasperated, sometimes to the extent of becoming enraged and breaking off the seance.

Throughout the series of visions which constitute the Amalantrah Working, it is striking just how often the image of the egg recurs. The conclusion is inescapable that the intelligence seeking to communicate through these Workings was using this symbolism as a mask through which to work.

In a long sequence of visions on 3rd February, there was the appearance of a man called Arcteon, who was described as caveman-like. There was another reference to the egg:

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Wizard looks away from me spiritually. On shelf where egg is, flaming lamp appears. Over the lamp is a peculiar light. In the light there is a peculiar large-headed, particularly large-eyed small bird. Also there is some strange kind of material, like drapery in folds. It is somewhat like metal made into decorative objects like ornamental mirrors, etc., and finally like convolutions in the egg.

In a number of seances over the period 9th - 11th February, again the image of an egg appeared: "I see all the usual ones at the Wizard's woodland place ... It's the same funny bird I often see ... I see a robin's egg in a nest or hole in the ground."

There were sometimes participants other than Crowley and Roddie Minor, and at a Working of 12th February a Mrs Elsie Lincke was present.

I see the Wizard standing up. The egg is there. The child is sitting under a tree with the roots showing where the rain has washed the dirt away. The lion, the turtle and the mountain path are all there. Also the remains of the charred fire sticks where I built the first fire with the Wizard. I greet the Wizard with *Salam Aleikum*.

Later, a toad appeared in the vision as a symbol of Mrs Lincke, who was given the magical name *Bazedon* by Amalantrah. Subsequently there were more references to the egg:

The egg is a work which must be done - the Great Work. By doing the work, we get to the key ... T. knows his work, his special work, and this is only the means of doing it, like speaking of the cosmos, but the egg is the special work ... I see growing grain and a fox among it. There are baskets of corn, an eagle, and an egg on the ground near the corn. The eagle watches the egg ... I see the path and something forming out of indefinite material, as in the egg of the first vision.

Roddie Minor is here linking elements of the present vision to her initial visions, quoted at the outset of this article.

There was another Working on 24th February, including a vision of Bazedon holding a parcel which turned out to be a baby boy. "All of these questions about the numbers and whether the baby is a boy or a girl were asked without the words being said. That is, the answer was for the question that was in T's mind." Later in the same Working: "I ask Amalantrah if he has a message for T. We come down from the mountain to the woods. I see a fruit packing house, a bin for tomatoes, some straw in the bin and an egg in the straw. T. must work for the egg?"

One of the most striking incidents in the Amalantrah Working had little or nothing to do with the egg; it is however worth considering in this account, since it delineates the deep and far-reaching forces which threw

up the Amalantrah Working. Crowley had for some time been trying to find a spelling of the Greek word *Therion* in Hebrew which would enumerate as 666. He had in fact written an article on the subject which he published in *The International* in November 1917. In the course of the Working of 24th February, therefore, Crowley asked Amalantrah how *Therion* was spelt in Hebrew: should he use all three words - TO MEGA THERION - or just the final word. Amalantrah indicated that it should be just the final word, and went on to offer a spelling in Hebrew which Crowley found wanting, largely because he could not enumerate it as 666. Shortly after, Crowley again received some answers of which he could make no sense, and terminated the session: "T is very enraged and expresses his anger which completely destroys all communications. Later we try to ask more questions, but it all seems to be of no use."

On the following Tuesday, Crowley went to his offices at *The International*. He found on his desk a letter left for him by the editor, Viereck. It was a letter to Viereck from a reader called Nahon Elias Palak, giving a Hebrew spelling of THERION that enumerated as 666. The letter was written on 24th February — the same day as the seance — and read as follows:

My dear Viereck!

I miss your plays in the Magazine: I mean those written by yourself, and yet no other publication furnishes anything half as good to feed my soul with — and I am not capricious a bit — or an idiot either — as there will be many others who will agree with me along these points as true: (1) That The Philistine, The Fra and The Phoenix were the only magazines that furnished food for brain until recently when can be found in *The International* hardly better stuff than the Pearson's does except Frank Harris' own stuff.

Please inform your readers that I, Shmuel bar Aiwaz bie Yackou de Shirabad, have counted the number of a man *Tau* = 400, *Resh* = 200, *Yod* = 10, *Vau* = 6, *Nun* = 50. Read from right to left.

666

Not only did this letter set out the Hebrew spelling for THERION for which Crowley had been searching; as if the date of the letter was not remarkable enough, Crowley was stunned by the name — Shmuel bar Aiwaz bie Yackou de Shirabad. Until then, he had not come across the name *Aiwaz* other than in the context of the Cairo Working. Subsequently he corresponded with the writer of the letter, and found that the name was quite common as a family name. This whole episode stunned Crowley; in his *Confessions*, he wrote: "This incident with its many ramifications is perhaps the most remarkable thing that has ever happened to anybody."

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On the 30th March, another participant was introduced to the Workings: Crowley's colleague and Magical Son, Charles Stansfeld Jones, Frater Achad. He was presented to Amalantrah, who gave him the name *Arcteon*, the name of a character who had appeared in the Working of 7th February. From now on, Frater Achad was a frequent participant at the Workings.

Despite what he regarded as some excellent sessions, Crowley sometimes became exasperated at the inconsistency of the Workings. In the Working of 13th April, for instance, he mused: "How far are we right about things? We always want a little more than we get. I wonder if we are foolishly impatient." Unfortunately, Crowley's impatience for what he regarded as meaningful communications would frequently over-ride such insight.

The egg reappeared in a Working on 14th April, when an element of a vision was described by the Seer as "Nest with eggs." This is reminiscent of a phrase which Achad had used when informing Crowley of his assumption of the *Magister Templi* grade: "One made a beautiful nest." Later in this seance, Crowley asked: "Give me a single pure number to symbolise the whole vision" and received the answer: "83." Still later in the same session we get the number 74 occurring. The significance of these numbers was to emerge forcefully in subsequent seances, as we shall see later in this account.

On the 20th April: "Vision of beautiful bell - wedding-bell - changes to foetus. Crown. Head of foetus turns into an egg and rises upwards, and then rests on a lotus flower." This is of significance to the portrait of Lam, which can be seen as fusing the head of a foetus with the shape of an egg; the reference to a lotus flower brings to mind Harpocrates, the child, Dwarf-Self or Silent Self. To judge by what seems a surviving photograph from the 1919 'Dead Souls' exhibition, Crowley originally drew Lam with a crown, but subsequently lightened this to a faint shadow or umbra.

In the course of the Working of 27th April there was a vision which is particularly important, and which is worth quoting at length. In the following exchange, A is for Amalantrah as articulated by Roddie Minor; T is again for Crowley as Therion; *Arcteon* is C.S. Jones, Frater Achad.

Wizard very serious and looks at Achitha in a very contemplative mood.  
Seems to approve. Turtle is most prominent thing in Temple. Child is there,  
lion and Bazedon. Arcteon has a very prominent place, he is a tall man that  
always appeared in the Temple.

T: "What is the work of this week end?"

A: "Geburah."

T: "Geburah applied to what?"

A: "The egg. The egg is resting on the point of mountain tops, very sharp. Water around, lotus flowers on it."

T: "Egg is symbol of some new knowledge, isn't it?"

A: "Gimel. Lamed." (= spring, fountain.)

T: "What does that mean?"

A: "I don't know; followed symbol of mountain and lotus flower."

T: "How are we to break open the egg?"

A: "In plain language it means Thou art to go this Way."

T: "That isn't plain language. How are we to get this new knowledge?"

A: "Don't ask questions too fast. Sow the wild oats; go into the ... into the Mother ... to be born again."

T: "What about the Mass of the Holy Ghost?"

A: "That hasn't anything to do with it. You've shattered everything. I'll have to establish connection all over again. Going into the Mother to be born again, you get a New Life and then the Earth is covered with wonderful flowers, and bees come to the flowers to get honey to store, and the honey is stored elixir. I see a hill very steep ... Mother standing ... down washing child. I don't know if she's to save it or go after it or what. Lotus flower on water again."

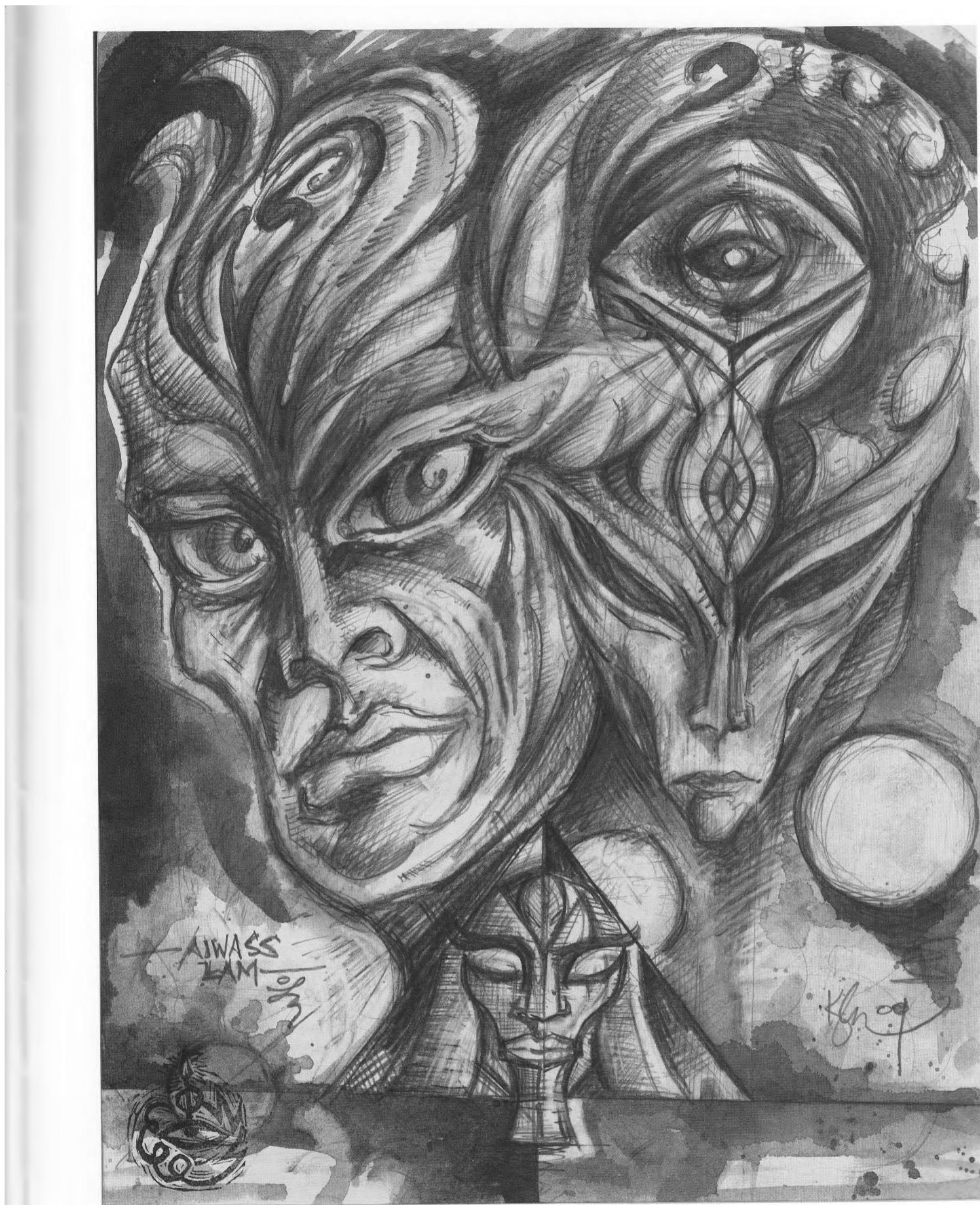
Arcteon: "How does this apply to breaking open the egg?"

A: "No ... the egg is in the lotus flower."

This last exchange is perhaps indicative of how Crowley and Jones were attempting to force the pace. After all, the egg does not need to be broken open, but is best left to hatch of its own accord.

From the surviving record of the Amalantrah Working, subsequent seances seem to have become more fragmentary and disconnected. Crowley's continuing frustration with the Workings is apparent from the seance of 7th May, when he remarked: "Has he [Amalantrah] got any advice? Is it worth bothering with?" Given some of the notable successes within the series of Workings — such as for instance the letter from Palak giving the Hebrew spelling for the Greek word *Therion* — his cynical and dismissive tone is surprising.

The link of the Amalantrah Working with the earlier Abuldez sessions was again referred to on 12th May: "We wish to consult you, Amalantrah, on the sudden return of Soror Virakam in the Temple." There are no further references to the nature and context of this return. However, we can probably assume that the "return" was that of an astral simulacra in



the woodland scene, rather than a physical participation by Mary D'Este in one or more sessions of the Amalantrah Working.

From the Working on 18th May: "I see an egg with one broken end and a hand inside." There was a Working on 16th June which had a very interesting exchange:

"Symbol for next week?"

"245"

"Explain, please"

"83 explains one side of it. 74 explains rest"

In his notes to this session, Crowley observed that 245 = ADM QDMVN, 'perfect man.' It also enumerates RVCh AL, 'Spirit of God.' We can take these ideas together as Perfection. This links up with the passage from the session of 27th April quoted above, which featured an egg; the question "Egg is a symbol of new knowledge, isn't it?" was answered by the Hebrew letters *Gimel* and *Lamed*, which enumerate as 83 and 74 respectively, now suggested as the two sides of Perfection. As if to underline this insight, Crowley subtitled his reworking of Legge's translation of the *Tao Teh Ching*, which he accomplished with the assistance of Amalantrah during his magical retirement at Aesopus Island, as *Liber 157* - the addition of 83 and 74.

This is the last session of the Amalantrah Working for which a record is known. In August, Crowley and Roddie Minor decided to part as lovers, and later that month Crowley sailed to Aesopus Island along the Hudson River for a retreat. The combination of drugs and intensive yoga triggered deep trances, in the course of which he remembered past lives. One of these was as Ko Hsuen, a disciple of Lao Tsu; the memories inspired him to rework Legge's translation of the *Tao Teh Ching*, helped by Amalantrah. Crowley gave an account of this in his Introduction:

During my Great Magical Retirement on Aesopus Island in the Hudson River during the summer of 1918, I set myself to this work, but I discovered immediately that I was totally incompetent. I therefore appealed to an Adept named Amalantrah, with whom I was at that time in almost daily communion. He came readily to my aid and exhibited to me a codex of the original, which conveyed to me with absolute certitude the exact significance of the text.

Crowley's intense work during his retreat at Aesopus Island triggered a deep and shattering insight into the nature of existence, an insight which Crowley described as the "supreme secret of a Magus".

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5.00 p.m. The meditation of this afternoon resulted in an initiation so stupendous that I dare not hint at its Word. It is the supreme secret of a Magus, and it is so awful that I tremble even now - two hours later and more - 2.20 p.m. was the time - as I write concerning it. In a single instant I had the Key to the whole of the Chinese wisdom. In the light - momentary glimpse though it was - of this truth, all systems of religion and philosophy became absolutely puerile. Even the Law appears no more than a curious incident. I remain absolutely bewildered, blinded, knowing what blasting image lies in this shrine. It baffles me to understand how my brother Magi, knowing this, ever went on.

I had only one foreshadowing of this Vision of Jupiter - for so I may call it! — and that was a Samadhi which momentarily interrupted my concentration of Sammasati. This can only be described vaguely by saying that I obtained a reconciliation of two contraries of which "There is a discrimination between good and evil" is one.

This experience has shaken me utterly: it has been a terrible struggle to force myself to this record. The secret comes along the Path of Aleph to Chokmah.

I could write it plainly in a few words of one syllable, and most people would not even notice it. But it has might to hurl every Master of the Temple into the Abyss, and to fling every adept of the Rose Cross down to the Qliphoth.

No wonder One said that the Book T was as ashes in the Urn of a Magus! I can't see at all how it will affect me at present. Even the Way of the Tao looks idiotic - but then of course that's what it is! So I suppose that's it, all right.

And its freedom, in an utterly fascinating and appalling sense, is beyond my fiercest conception.

Several days later, he returned to New York, his stupendous insight leaving him disconnected:

The next period is strangely confused. It is as if I were left in the Desert with no idea of direction and surrounded by a series of mirages. Innumerable people came into my life and passed out again, without leaving any trace.

The fact was that none of the people appointed by Amalantrah to various tasks were willing to undertake them. It may well be that this was due to a lack of real faith on my part. The communications from the Wizard had become confused and even contradictory. I had failed to understand his plan and to acquiesce unreservedly in it. This weakness of mine naturally reacted on the other people concerned.

The second paragraph of this passage suggests perhaps that although no records survive of further seances, Crowley continued with the Amalantrah Working after his return from Aesopus Island. It is striking that whilst during the reworking of Legge's translation of the *Tao Teh Ching* Crowley was by his own account in almost daily contact with Amalantrah, subsequent Workings were at best fitful, and Crowley regarded the failure as his.

'The Way' was the title under which the drawing was included in Crowley's 1919 'Dead Souls' exhibition. It was also published the

same year in *The Equinox* Vol III No 1, 'The Blue Equinox,' as a frontispiece to *Liber LXXI*, Crowley's commentary to Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*. Here the reproduction of the portrait is accompanied by a brief gloss:

LAM is the Tibetan word for Way or Path, and LAMA is He who Goeth, the specific title of the Gods of Egypt, the Treader of the Path, in Buddhistic phraseology. Its numerical value is 71, the number of this book.

Blavatsky's treatise is concerned with the need for the aspirant to become aware of the roots of the self in the deeper levels of consciousness which underlie the phenomenal world. Commenting on the term "Silent Speaker" in verse 11 of *The Voice of the Silence*, Crowley remarked that it

... may be considered as a hieroglyph of the same character as LOGOS, ADNI, or the Ineffable Name.

In the course of his Commentary on verse 70 of *The Voice of the Silence*, which speaks of the need for the aspirant to regain "the child-state he has lost," Crowley further remarked:

Here is written also the Mystery of Harpocrates. One must become the 'Unconscious' (of Jung), the Phallic or Divine Child or Dwarf-Self.

Subsequently, whilst commenting on verse 83:

The 'sixth sense' is the race-instinct, whose common manifestation is in sex; this sense is then the birth of the Individual or Conscious Self with the 'Dwarf-Self,' the Silent Babe, Harpocrates.

The portrait of Lam suggests both an egg and the head of a foetus. It is then an encapsulation of the Dwarf-Self, Silent Babe, or Harpocrates to which Crowley is referring, the quintessence of the Voice of the Silence.

The Silence is the noumenon which underlies and infuses phenomena, the continuum of which all things soever are simultaneously facets and the whole. The Silence is the quietness at the heart of noise, the stillness at the heart of activity, the being at the heart of going, and the emptiness at the heart of matter. These juxtapositions may seem merely revelling in paradox; the fact is, though, that reason is a tool of limited application, and paradox is a means of pointing beyond apparent contraries. The 'Way' or 'Path' is clearly a reference to the Tao. The "Treader of the Path" is the Initiate, treading the path of initiation. This brings to mind the concluding lines from 'Pilgrim-Talk,' section 13 in Crowley's *The Book of Lies*:

O thou that drawest toward the End of The Path, effort is no more. Faster and faster dost thou fall; thy weariness is changed into Ineffable Rest.

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For there is no Thou upon That Path: thou hast become The Way.

Interestingly, this echoes verse 49 of *The Voice of the Silence*, which says “Thou canst not travel on the path before thou hast become that Path itself.”

Crowley had a very high opinion of *The Voice of the Silence*, and considered that his Commentary shed light for the first time on the true, initiated value of the work. As he remarked to the publisher E.P. Dutton, who he was hoping would publish *Liber LXXI* in a cheaper, more readily available format:

*The Voice of the Silence* is the only Theosophical publication of the slightest literary distinction or even of occult merit. This new edition is far more valuable to students than any previously published because the meaning of the treatise is for the first time made plain by the commentary of Frater O.M. No Theosophist can afford to miss buying a copy.

Crowley considered his work to be a continuation of that of Blavatsky, and it was his expectation that publication of his Commentary would create a major upheaval within the Theosophical movement, the outcome being that he would finally be recognised as Blavatsky's successor. This can be seen from letters to his colleague Charles Stansfeld Jones. Writing to Jones on February 19, 1919, and referring to the imminent publication two days later of *The Equinox* Vol III No 1 and with it the Commentary, Crowley wrote:

I have entirely forgotten the horoscope for 11 A.M. March 21, and I do not know what the Word is. But speaking as a mere Exempt Adept, I will bet you a dollar that the publication of *The Voice of the Silence* will have the San Francisco earthquake looking like 30\$. I am just reading through the proofs, and it shocks even me. What will happen to the ordinary, gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild theosophist I cannot say, but I suggest your arranging with the United Undertakers Association for a fat commission.

And again, from a subsequent letter to Jones dated March 14, 1919:

If you should think it advisable for me to pass through Detroit, in a month or so, as suggested in my last, it must be carefully stage-managed. The Fourth Power of the Sphinx must be the great asset. It might be a good thing to have me address a selected group; if so, make them fight for invitations. It is just possible that I ought to make a public statement; this only in case of a really big row starting over LXXI, as I hope fondly. Remember that I, as E.L.Z., was H.P.B.'s Guru. Much more so than K.H., or even Morya.

It is clear then that for Crowley the publication of his Comment was a momentous affair, and it is equally clear that the frontispiece for a book

of such significance would be not only profound, but of direct relevance to the book.

There is a wider context within Crowley's work to the symbolism of the Egg. There is mention of "a babe in an egg" in verse 49, chapter II of *The Book of the Law*.

I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned & dead. Amen. (This is of the 4: there is a fifth who is invisible, & therein am I as a babe in an egg.)

Crowley's drawing appears to be a representation of "a babe in an egg". It is surely of interest that the letters at the bottom left of the portrait can also be seen as a stylized "49", thus linking it via the verse above to the Cairo Working of 1904. The egg also made an appearance in the Abuldis Working of seven years later, in 1911, since Crowley stated that the Working had terminated with an instruction for him to go to the desert (which he interpreted as meaning Egypt) and search for an egg under a palm tree. Roddie Minor's opening Vision of the Amalantrah Working thus drew a direct link with the Abuldis Working, and through that with the Cairo Working. Thus we have three Workings separated by intervals of approximately seven years, but linked by the intrusive archetype of the egg.

The link is surely to Aiwass. Kenneth Grant told me that when in 1945 he was browsing through Crowley's portfolio, and exposed to view the drawing of Lam, Crowley uttered the name *Aiwass* sibilantly. The suggestion here is that Crowley regarded Lam as a mask of Aiwass, described as the messenger of Hoor-paar-kraat. As Harpocrates, Hoor-paar-kraat is the dwarf god, the god of silence, commonly represented as the babe in the egg and surely referenced in the verse above quoted.

As we have seen earlier in this essay, the egg is clearly the dominant feature of the Amalantrah Working. The climax of this motif is the Working of 27th April, which is dominated by the egg but also has references to a child and to lotus flower — both references to Harpocrates which, as we have seen in our brief analysis of *The Voice of the Silence*, is synonymous with the Dwarf-Self.

Thus, Crowley's placement of the portrait of Lam as the frontispiece to his commentary on Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* underlines the connection between Lam and Aiwass, a connection which Grant sometimes refers to as Lam-Aiwass or Aiwass-Lam.

It is surely of great interest that another participant in the Amalantrah Working, Crowley's Magical Son, Frater Achad, went on to follow an

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increasingly divergent path after the Amalantrah Working. It may be that he took more from “The egg is a work that must be done” than did Crowley. In *Outside the Circles of Time*, Grant argues — very persuasively in my opinion — that what was contained in the egg was the state of awareness glyphed as the Aeon of Maat, which Achad foreshadowed in his subsequent writings. Subsequently, in April 1948, Achad detected the inception of the Ma-Ion, the initial incoming of the Aeon of Maat. This did not usurp the Aeon of Horus, but runs concurrently, just as for example Hoor-paar-kraat complements Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

We might wonder why Crowley does not appear to have taken the Amalantrah Working and the portrait of Lam further. The work of an adept is more often a collection of loose ends, not a finished body of work which follows a smooth line of development to a rounded conclusion. We have successive bursts of inspiration which are developed for a while, perhaps leading somewhere, perhaps not. On the other hand, perhaps the initiations and insights initiated by and developed within the Working were diffused throughout his subsequent work. There are several references to the Working and to the Wizard Amalantrah throughout *Magick without Tears*. I have the feeling, though, that Crowley did not understand the Amalantrah Working, or subsequently lost sight of the initiations which it sparked, and turned away from it. Clearly he retained a respect for it, shown perhaps by his initial reluctance to give the portrait of Lam to Kenneth Grant. Perhaps he felt he was passing on something of importance.

In 1945 Crowley remarked to Grant that the portrait was “drawn from life.” It was, he said, a drawing of an entity which several times intruded upon the Working, and which came close to wrecking it. It is likely that the initial occurrences of egg symbolism in the Workings were early manifestations of an informing intelligence. It gathered substance in the course of these Workings, until perhaps it was able to manifest in the form which Crowley drew.

The autobiography by the American journalist William Holt — *I Still Haven't Unpacked Yet*, published by Harrap, London, 1953 — includes an interesting account of a visit during the Second World War to Crowley’s flat in Jermyn Street. Holt mentions seeing a number of “hideous pictures”, continuing that a “particularly unpleasant one was of an oriental with a grotesquely misshapen head — a product of Crowley’s imagination, for Nature could not have produced such a freak to live”. “That?”, said Crowley, when he became aware of Holt’s uncomfortable curiosity, “He is my guru”.

Although this could have been the drawing of Lam, it might also have been the drawing of Kwaw which Symonds used on the dust-jacket of *The Great Beast*. What is interesting, of course, is comparing both Lam and Kwaw with Crowley's self-portrait which appeared on the front boards of the original publication of *The Confessions*; they have a great deal in common, to say the least, and are representations of a common source.

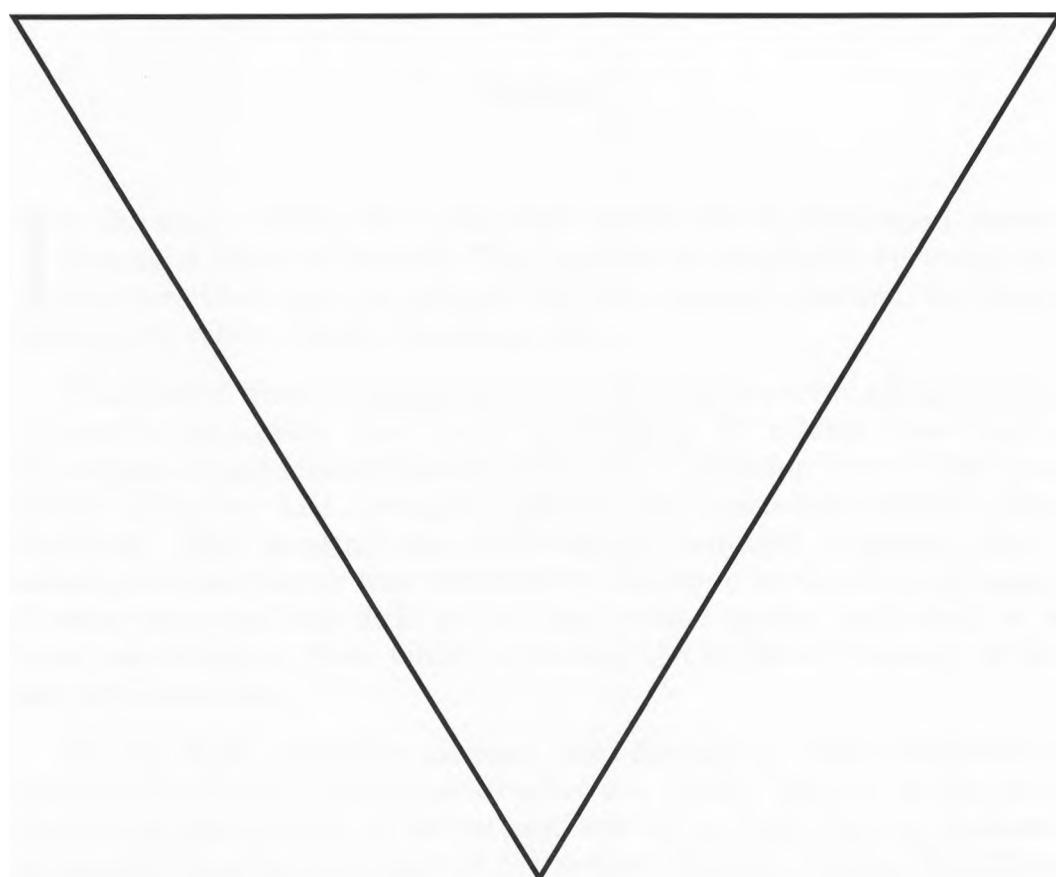
The inclusion of the portrait of Lam in *The Magical Revival*, and subsequently *Outside the Circles of Time*, has created an interest in Lam which has grown steadily over the years. Grant's understanding of what is comported by Lam has clearly deepened over the course of writing the Typhonian Trilogies, and he provides some very useful insights and opens up some interesting avenues of approach. The fact remains, however, that each initiate drawn to work with Lam must plumb these depths for himself or herself, to realise the Silent Self which is the key to initiation.

There is no specific meaning of or significance to Lam which can be communicated other than by direct experience. The title of the portrait — 'The Way' — is of great significance here. To quote once more from Crowley's 'Pilgrim Talk':

O thou that drawest toward the End of The Path, effort is no more. Faster and faster dost thou fall; thy weariness is changed into Ineffable Rest.

For there is no Thou upon That Path: thou hast become The Way.

# Two Fragments on Ataturk



Ithel Colquhoun

## Two Fragments on Ataturk

### Preface

**I**n the early 1970s, the artist and writer Ithell Colquhoun started writing a study of Crowley. This was never completed. However, two chapters that survive concern his son, Aleister Ataturk, by Deidre MacAlpine, whom Ithell Colquhoun knew.

The first of these is concerned with the events surrounding Aleister Ataturk's conception and early upbringing. It relates how Deidre MacAlpine approached Crowley after the 'Laughing Torso' libel case which Crowley had brought against his erstwhile friend, Nina Hamnett. This meeting was followed by conjugal relations, and a subsequent pregnancy was asserted by Deidre to be Crowley's progeny. Crowley accepted the child as his, and visited mother and child on at least one occasion, from which a photograph exists of Crowley by the sea with Ataturk.

In his Will, Crowley charged his Executors with contributing towards the child's maintenance after his death: "Assure, so far as in their lives, the welfare of the natural son of my body, Aleister Ataturk, at present residing in charge of his mother Patricia Deidre MacAlpine, at Wheal Betsy, Newlyn, Cornwall".

Although not an Executor, Gerald Yorke maintained occasional contact with Aleister Ataturk, and some of the letters between the two have survived which give rare glimpses of Ataturk's life.

From a letter to Yorke of August 1955, written from Wheal Betsy, we learn that Ataturk had just registered for National Service but had also applied for an American Visa. "I don't mind doing my National Service

at all but I am very anxious to get to America as soon as I can, so that I can start earning enough money to help my mother. Without me to look after she has only £16 a month on which to keep and feed 8 people. This comes from the family allowance and what my grandmother is able to give her from her own small income". In a subsequent letter of September 1955, Ataturk mentioned that he had not been passed for National Service due to mastoids, and whilst awaiting his American Visa he was looking for a temporary job.

By April 1962 Ataturk was back from America and living in Colchester, Essex. A letter from Ataturk to Yorke dated 2<sup>n<sup>o</sup></sup> April 1962 mentions a recent visit from Yorke. Shortly after, Yorke wrote a terse letter to Ataturk in April 1962, asking for a response to reports he had heard that Ataturk had been spreading "unsubstantiated gossip" about Kenneth Anger; Yorke had asked Anger to help Ataturk secure a job whilst in America. Ataturk replied admitting that he had done so, largely on the basis it seems of what he thought Karl Germer's attitude to be: "Karl is a wise man, and if he does not want to have anything to do with someone, he has a darned good reason". We also get a glimpse of Ataturk's ambivalence about his paternity:

It has taken me seven years to clean up this mess and since Kenneth Anger arrived in the U.S.A. I have had nothing but London Reporters from the People's News trying to get his story on the son of A.C. which I have had to deny.

With this letter he sent Yorke a copy of a prospectus he had drawn up for a project he called the "National Universal Center" to be located at Barstow, California. Loosely inserted is a clipping from the *Colchester Express* dated 19/4/62:

Bishop Backs Desert Peace Plan

The Bishop of Colchester, the Rt. Rev. F.D.V. Narborough, has given his blessing to the efforts of 24-year-old Aleister Ataturk to gain converts to help with the building of a hundred million dollar International Peace Centre in the Californian Desert.

When Mr Ataturk, who lives in Roman Road, Colchester, visited him on Tuesday, the Bishop told him that he was fully behind the concept of the centre presented to him. Like television, he thought it would help the people of the world to get to know one another but in a more concentrated manner.

The centre, which Mr Ataturk says is to be built on a 200-acre area of the desert — with an observatory, airport and university — would be open to scientists from all over the world. All this is described in the dozens of foolscap sheets he carries describing the project.

This "blueprint" also lays down certain cardinal principles for the running of the centre. For instance, people in need would have their circumstances

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recognised by others able to help them and receive assistance — they should never ask or need to ask for help.

In another press clipping, it was reported that Ataturk hoped to raise £40,000 in England by the end of the year. This might have seemed like a lot of money, but was a veritable drop in the ocean when compared to the estimated “hundred million dollar” cost.

Yorke’s view on the project is scribbled in biro on the back of the booklet: “The mad scheme of Aleister Ataturk, A.C.’s natural son. The property is the same as, or close to, that of which A.C. used to try to raise money and on which the Leffmgwells tried to raise turkeys to sell for A.C. They died”.

A letter survives from Ataturk to Yorke in February 1965, on notepaper headed “International Universal Center”. This was the first letter to Yorke for some time, and Ataturk mentions that he is now working as an engineering draughtsman. He also says that in the meantime he had been to Canada, “but the trip was unsuccessful”. He has, he continues, written a book which he would like to send to Yorke for his opinion on possible publication. By way of reply Yorke offered copious critical remarks on the novel, which he clearly considered a hopeless cause.

The second fragment by Ithell Colquhoun gives us a snapshot of Ataturk a few years later, in the mid 1970s. By this time, Ataturk had doubts that he was in fact the child of Crowley, and was attempting some sort of political career as a would-be representative of an ancient and dispossessed aristocracy of Britain. There is also the suggestion here that he was disadvantaged educationally, a suggestion borne out by the handwriting as well as the content of his letters to Yorke. Interestingly, we also learn that by this time he had a child — also named Aleister, and aged about nine — from a earlier marriage which, apparently, he had kept secret in the early years from his family.

By this time Ataturk was calling himself Charles Edward, Count dArquires, on the basis it seems of an assumed connection with Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Taken at face value, documents sent to Gerald Yorke allege that Ataturk died in 1978. Pasted into one of the scrapbooks of the Yorke Collection at the Warburg Institute is a telegram stamped 29/3/78. It is headed “Count Darquiers, 17 Adelaide Gardens, Llanfa[?]s, Brecon”. The message is handwritten, and states: “MESSAGE FROM LHASA [?] —ATATURK HAS MET WITH TRAGIC DEATH. KISSLA”. Someone has written across the telegram: “Ataturk died on the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1978”.

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A few weeks later, Yorke received a letter:

Count d'Arquires (Charles Edward)  
Ambassador House  
Trois Rue le Goldney  
London W9 2AP

Dear Sir,

I have been instructed to inform you that I am acting on behalf of the affairs of the late son of ALEISTER CROWLEY. I have submitted the only two letters ever written to ATATURK from his father for sale at CHRISTIE'S. The money will be put into trust. If you would be interested in these letters, please drop me a line or telephone 01 286-7526.

Although Yorke pasted the telegram and subsequent letter into one of his scrapbooks without comment, Richard Kaczynski reports in his biography of Crowley, *Perdurabo*, that Ataturk in fact died in 2002.

Little has been reported so far of Aleister Ataturk's history, and the two fragments here presented will hopefully go some way towards plugging this gap.

Michael Staley

## The Torso Laughs

**T**he Great Beast by John Symonds reports that a young girl waylaid Crowley as, defeated but not deflated, he left the Law Courts after the 'Laughing Torso' case. It was on a Friday the Thirteenth, a date which some professional diviners prefer as lucky. Was it lucky this time, and if so, for whom? And who was the girl? Who but Deirdre Patricia Maureen Doherty, grand-daughter of Thomas C. Gotch who was one of the founders of the Newlyn School of Painting in Cornwall.

He came first to Newlyn in 1879 while he was still a student, having begun his art-training only after four years of grind in an office. He then studied at various schools — Heatherley's, London; the Beaux Arts, Antwerp; the Slade; the Academie Jean-Paul Laurens, Paris — during a period of about nine years. The last three of these years were passed in Paris (for the winter) and Newlyn (for the summer). He married Caroline B. Yates who came from a prosperous family living in Cornwall and was to become a distinguished painter herself. In an interview with the magazine 'Black-and-White' (Sept. 21, 1895) Thomas Gotch is quoted as saying "—how fine a thing it is to have a critic — a friendly critic — on the hearth". Notice that her place is on the hearth, not in the studio, though her work was in some ways stronger than his own. Yet his granddaughter says that he idealised women and children almost as angels, being indifferent to men and male beauty

He and his wife lived first at La Houle, a studio overhanging Newlyn harbour opposite the Red Lion Inn; then at the Malt House (now divided into flats) half-way up Newlyn Hill. Despite the wholesome *plein-airisme* typical of the Newlyn School, there is an other-worldly

undertone in the work of some of its members. A long visit to Florence in 1891 gave Gotch's style a flavour of the original pre-Raphaelite painters of Italy. The interview quoted above is headed 'Realist as Mystic' and in his work the influence of an Isis-current, not less potent for being unconscious, can be detected. His 'Death the Bride' depicts a single figure, with floating poppy-crowned hair like Swinburne's Proserpine, who pushes her way through long grass and dusky vegetation. Another picture whose title I cannot yet discover shows what seems to be the hall of a North African *Medresah* or school of philosophy. A man resembling the artist himself, but clothed in eastern garb, stands highlighted in the centre of a polished floor; the other figures who sit enthroned on a dais round the walls are all women, thus belying Islamic tradition. The man looks towards three of them who have sceptres or wands of office beside their thrones: it might almost be a scene in a Golden Dawn temple.

His successful career as a painter enabled Gotch to build a house at the top of Newlyn Hill; he called it Wheal Betsy after a disused mine which once occupied the site. His only child, Phyllis, born about 1880, became a singer to be known as Phyllis April, the Cornish Nightingale. She married a man named Patrick Doherty who was invalided from the Army early in the 1914-18 war. He took a position with a mining enterprise in South Africa; Phyllis was on a professional tour in the same country when he died suddenly from the effects of war-wounds. She returned, pregnant, to her parents at Wheal Betsy where her daughter was born in March, 1915.

The little girl was soon known locally as Pat Gotch, following a Cornish custom still in course by which children are called by their mother's maiden name. (A stray survival of matriarchy?) Most of her childhood was spent with her grandparents, Phyllis being often away on concert engagements. There was, however, a period in the 1920s when Pat lived with her mother at the Court House, Bosigran (now the Cliff Climbers' Club House). She remembers the celebrated climber Mallory coming there; also D.H. Lawrence — returning briefly, I suppose, to the area where he had spent part of the late war. Phyllis had no taste for domesticity and found the care of a small child an embarrassment; she remarried, her second husband being the Belgian Marquis de Verdrieres whom she believed to be wealthy. She soon discovered her mistake and he soon departed in disillusionment. She was back again at Wheal Betsy when she heard the news of his death.

Meanwhile Pat was growing up; at the age of sixteen or seventeen she met a Major Robin Thynne who was connected in some way with the Marquess of Bath's family. At this time he was living modestly in a

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converted barn, consisting of a ground-floor and a room above reached by a ladder, in the hamlet of Trevithal not far from her home. Robin was a tall haggard man of middle age and indifferent health who seems to have been a genuine occult student. He was the centre of a small group who met in the barn to study the Qabalah with him. His esoteric background consisted in a link — how close, Pat was unsure — with a branch of the Golden Dawn; he had also been concerned with P.R. Stephensen and one or two others in establishing the Mandrake Press to publish Crowley's writings. Later he came to disapprove of The Beast's methods and to study those of Dr. Rudolph Steiner instead. (Strangely enough the barn is now occupied by a potter who is a student of Steiner's system.)

Pat claims that Robin taught her Hebrew for a period of about two years — the alphabet, probably, and such proper names and simple invocations as were learnt in the elementary grades of the Golden Dawn. I have no evidence that she knew more of the language than this. Her fellow-students were two sisters, Marcia and Sheila Hirst; a business-man called Jacob Weinberg; a painter, Ruth Adams, and a sculptor, Phyllis Yglesias, both from the neighbouring village of Mousehole; a Mr. and Mrs. R. Ling — she was a psychologist who later married Jacob, much to Sheila's chagrin — J. B. Jameson, and an American painter called Robert Anderson. I do not know how serious any of these were as students of the occult, but Pat was certainly enthusiastic.

She soon moved out of her comfortable home at Wheal Betsy and into the barn with Robin; her mother, 'the Marquise', and the neighbours were scandalised, though her grandmother, Caroline Gotch, was always understanding. (Her grandfather had died in 1931.) Robin's wife Dorothy — another psychologist — and their two daughters were not in evidence, though they must sometimes have visited him since Pat met them briefly. I do not have the impression that she was a 'home-wrecker'; the marriage was probably disintegrating before her arrival. It must have been through Robin that she first heard of Crowley, and thereupon determined to contact him.

The opportunity soon occurred: she had a cousin in the legal profession who used to tell her when an interesting case was due to come up for hearing, and it was on his suggestion that she managed to be in London during the course of the 'Laughing Torso' trial. Her sympathies were stirred by the isolation of the plaintiff: she felt that Mr. Justice Swift's summing-up was biased and the jury's verdict unjust. She was also, no doubt, intrigued by the revelations concerning the Abbey of Thelema and was curious to know more of the strange

rituals enacted there. She tried to express these emotions and aspirations as she ran up to Crowley on the broad pavement of the Strand as he left the Law Courts after the case.

According to Pat, Symonds's account of this meeting is inexact in some details; she did not fling herself at Crowley's head in the manner described. In response to her approach, Crowley at once suggested a date for her to have drinks at his flat. Flattered by a lively and attractive girl, he could scarcely do less! At the same time he made no secret of his association with Pearl Brooksmith, his current Scarlet Woman with whom (and probably on whom) he was then living.

It is interesting that Pat felt no physical attraction towards Crowley, who was then a man of almost sixty. Nor was he a romantic wooer: he made no protestations of love or pretensions to fidelity. When he intended to sleep with someone else he stated the fact openly. Though she admits to feeling a twinge of jealousy on these occasions, she preferred his attitude to one of sexual hypocrisy and deceit. She says he was the most honest-minded person she ever met and he encouraged intellectual honesty in others. His attraction for her was less physical than mental, and I surmise that this was usually the case with the women in his later life: it was his magickal talk that seduced them. Pat was longing, in the most starry-eyed fashion, to become the mother of a 'magickal child' and, convinced of Crowley's praeternal powers, she felt he was the man most likely to give her one.

Inevitably, some tension developed between Pat and the Scarlet Woman. To Mrs. Brooksmith, whose face had never launched a thousand ships, the presence of a recklessly-vital woman decades her junior must have been irksome. Pat's relationship with Crowley was intermittent, but she was with him whenever she could steal a few days or weeks in London. On one of these occasions the sign of Leo — the Mansion of the Sun, in zodiacal parlance — was in course and together they planned to produce a 'Sun Child'. Since Crowley at this epoch had no properly furnished *temenos* for the performance of his rites, he improvised with Pat's help a Sun-temple in his room, disposing round it the signs and other symbols likely to call into manifestation the influences of Sol and Leo. Their child was to be the result of a deliberate conception and Crowley worked out astrologically the most favourable moment. They planned to draw down a solar entity to ensoul the embryo, much as a 'Moonchild' was netted in Crowley's eponymous novel. (Madeline Montalban used to claim to have been, as a young girl, a Moonchild in a different sense in that, after many hours of ritual with herself entranced in the 'death-posture', she was resurrected as a new being by Crowley.)

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Back in Cornwall, Robin was much concerned at the realisation that Pat was directly under The Beast's influence, and it would be understandable if he were also jealous in a quite usual way. His other students took alarm at the mention of the ogre's name, and when it became obvious that the Sun-Child experiment had succeeded to the point of producing a pregnancy, there was general consternation. Pat named Robin as the father, thus giving less scandal in her home-environment than the truth would have done; for the 'Laughing Torso' case had re-awakened the sinister image of Crowley, which had slumbered uneasily in the public consciousness ever since the last major attack on him by the Press. This had happened some fourteen years previously when Betty May told all (or rather more than all) about her husband's death at the Abbey of Thelema, thus re-establishing Crowley in the popular mind as "the Wickedest Man in the World". Whether Robin knew the actual situation I cannot say; perhaps he accepted the fact that the child might (chronologically) have been his own. In any case he 'behaved like a gentleman' and said nothing which might further embarrass Pat. Her position was at that date much more awkward socially than it would be today.

Robin foresaw a great future for the world's women who, he believed, had never realised their full potential as human beings. Especially he cherished a devotion to Joan of Arc, whom he had depicted on his personal book-plate. Maybe he derived some of these ideas from Anna Kingsford, who was admired by many of Steiner's English adherents — either directly or through MacGregor Mathers, a co-worker with Anna in the Feminist cause. Even Crowley, who often made uncomplimentary remarks about women, prophesied that the Aeon of Ma or Thmaist (Themis, Maat), a feminine divinity, would succeed that of Horus, which the dictation of his *Liber AL vel Legis* had ushered in.

Pat and Robin sometimes took long trips about the countryside in his ramshackle car. On one of these he suffered a stroke; Pat drove him at once to the nearest big hospital which was at Exeter, but nothing could be done to save him. At the news of his death Jacob Weinberg panicked and, forcing an entry into the barn at Trevithal, made a holocaust of all Robin's papers. Questioned indignantly by Pat on her return, he maintained that Robin would have wished this to be done.

What was Jacob afraid of? Evidence concerning his own past? The result was that rumours proliferated even more wildly than before; locally it was said, among much else (and with what truth I do not know), that Jacob had been connected with the recent Stavisky scandals in Paris. Incredible as it may seem, I have read in diaries kept by the late Mrs. Thornley of Carbis Bay an account of Robin's group which is

blown up as a ghastly 'black magic' coven, with hints of human sacrifices: "the Penwith Horror" was her phrase. She might almost have been the Rev. Montagu Summers on the theme of the Vampire or the Were-wolf! In such descriptions there is more of gloating than of sincere distaste. Even years later there were flesh-creeping stories told, despite the fact that Robin's harmless little study-group did not survive its leader's death. It is possible, though, that he and his associates were indirectly responsible for rumours about Crowley performing 'black' rituals at various sites in Penwith.

If Crowley ever did this, it was not during his brief stay at Mousehole in 1938. As I established in my book on Cornwall, *The Living Stones*, he did not then have time to do so. I based my statements on an excerpt from a then-unpublished diary of Crowley's made available to me by Gerald Yorke. The main motive for this visit was to see Pat and the little boy, and Pat avers that it was his first and only visit to Cornwall. I suppose it is possible that he came here before she met him, sometime in the 1920s after the Cefalu episode. (Or alternatively, he might have come here after the outbreak of the 1939 war, when he fled the London blitz and stayed at various places in the country.) I would not bother to speculate about this were it not for the fact that the late Frederick A.R. Tonge, who for many years made the area around Gurnard's Head his second home, told me that Crowley sometimes stayed in the cottage at Zennor which was rented by D.H. Lawrence for a time during the 1914-18 war; that Crowley knew the Arnold Forsters who lived at Eagle's Nest, the house on the hill above; and that rituals, both indoor and outdoor, took place. It was on the strength of these reminiscences that I included the name of W. Arnold Forster in a list of Crowley's adherents which appeared in my book, *Sword of Wisdom*. If Mr. Tonge misinformed me I can only retract. Yet I do not feel that the matter is entirely clear: it is at least intriguing that the novelist Mary Butts, who stayed at Crowley's Abbey in Sicily, lived at near-by Sonnen until her death in the late 1930s. It would not have been impossible to rustle up from the Penwith environs a dozen or half a dozen people of similar calibre to hers, even if the Arnold Forsters were not involved.

In due course Pat produced a boy, born under the sign of Taurus. She gave him the name of Giair, but Crowley called him Aleister Ataturk, seeing a likeness between the child's natal map, which he cast at once, and that of the Turkish dictator Kemal. (I suppose that Kemal Ataturk was also a Taurean at least.) In Pat's copy of the deluxe edition of *Olla* (1946) presented to her by Crowley and inscribed with an affectionate heading "To You Two", he uses the name of Ataturk and makes it clear that he acknowledged the boy as his son.

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It seems that he is Crowley's only known son; the two small boys who formed part of the household at Cefalu, Hermes and Dionysus, were not his children. Though their mothers (Ninette Shumway and Leah Hirsig respectively) were his mistresses, their children were fathered by other men. Ninette was a widow with a young son when Crowley met her, and Leah had a son a year old when their affair began, which was before they went to Sicily. In Pat's view, today's claimant, 'Amado 777', is a pretender; I do not know him myself but I am told he appears too young to have been born in 1948, the very latest he could be, unless 'Old Crow' is capable of copulation even from the Beyond!

Pat finally broke with Crowley's *menage* because, as she puts it, "there was too much violence and vomiting among his disciples" — due, presumably, to his over-lavish advocacy of drink and drugs. But as long as he lived she kept in touch with him — in friendship after their sexual relationship was over. She claims to be the only woman with whom Crowley had such a relationship without quarrelling.

Her real 'magickal child', however, was born some years after Young Aleister. This was Michael, a remarkable boy whom Crowley identified as a reincarnation of Michel De Nostradamus. For some reason Pat dressed him as a girl and allowed his hair to grow long, which was not then the mode for boys. Besides a sweet nature and personal charm, he possessed a bright intelligence; his insight and perception were noticeable to all, and his death in an accident at the age of sixteen was a tragedy.

Pat says that Crowley was fond of children and animals — as, indeed, he says himself in *The Confessions*. He was on affectionate terms with Giair and Pat's two children by Jim MacAlpine, Michael and Caroline. She brought the three of them with her on one occasion when she visited Crowley after he was installed at his last abode, Netherwood, near Hastings. I have seen snapshots of him in his shirtsleeves lying on the lawn there at games with the toddlers. My guess is that like many male homosexuals he enjoyed *playing* with children, but when it came to working for them or otherwise taking responsibility he made himself scarce. He never supported Pat or Giair financially, nor even contributed to their support; Pat did not expect him to do so, even though her increasing family entailed the spinning-out of her resources dangerously thin. Jim had been reported missing while serving in Intelligence during the 1939 war and was never heard of again. Crowley developed, after his second marriage if not before, a sixth sense in picking women who would not make practical demands on him, however reasonable or necessary these might be. In this way he always showed a basic disregard for the well-being of his children,

deprived as they were not only of adequate means but also of a father's sustained help and interest.

Pat denies that Crowley was cruel to animals; she does not believe that he performed animal sacrifices, not even on the notorious occasion at Cefalu. By the exchanges on this subject during the Laughing Torso case, it became plain that either Crowley or Betty May was lying — he said he didn't sacrifice the cat, she said he did. Unfortunately for Pat and all tender-hearted people, the publication of Crowley's magical diaries in 1972 confirms that he did and, when challenged in court on the matter, perjured himself. Even without this evidence I would have guessed from the series of catastrophes which followed on the Cefalu phase that a Blood-Ritual had Gone Wrong, with consequent seeping-away of vitality.

Pat will have none of this. One day, as they were walking together along a London street, they came upon a kitten with a broken leg. They carried it to Crowley's lodgings and he set the fracture with the most delicate skill. He also tended, and cured, a puppy of hers that was sick. She says he was gentle by nature, with both animals and human beings.

He was also an incorrigible funster, as everyone knows; his pronouncements were by no means always to be taken at face value. You had to know him well before you could be sure when he was serious. He enjoyed puncturing the pompous and misleading the over-earnest. He could not resist letting any kind of pretension down with a bump, and had no scruples about doing so. Perhaps the title of Frieda Harris's memoirs, *Bump into Heaven*, is significant in this connection? Yet Pat's faith in his magickal powers never wavered. One day, when they were in a London bus, they found that neither had any money. "Don't worry", Crowley whispered to her, "The conductor won't see us." In fact the official did not demand their fare and Pat believed that Crowley had enveloped them in a cloak of invisibility, as he claimed to be able to do.

Taking one thing with another, the impression that emerges from his affair with Pat brings out a side of his character more agreeable than many of his critics would concede possible — a result, perhaps, of the mellowing process of age. He even offered to marry her when first told of the Sun-Child pregnancy, but was refused. It was a fairly safe proposal on his part as his second wife, Maria de Miramaro, was still living — in a mental hospital. A divorce from anyone so placed was then difficult to obtain; but even if money had been available for prolonged litigation, it is doubtful whether he would have gone to the trouble involved. Ever anxious to save humanity and reform the world, he seldom expressed practical concern for the welfare of an individual. Pat

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was probably right to decline: marriage to him would scarcely have improved her financial or social status.

On one of her visits to Netherwood she asked how and what she should study for self-development. His reply was, "Study nothing; learn from life. Live fully — and that will teach you more than all the books and the 'Masters'!" This was advice which she had been putting into practice ever since she met him, if not before, and now continued to do. Whether or not it was sound advice is debatable; what is certain is that it was not given to everyone who consulted him with a similar query. To some he prescribed an extended course of reading and esoteric praxis.

Pat claims it was she (with Giair) and not Lady Harris who stayed with Crowley to the end when he was dying. She telephoned to Frieda Harris telling her that he could not last long, but Frieda made the excuse that she and Gerald Yorke were too busy to come just then. In Pat's view, they felt nervous of being left with 'Old Crow' at the moment of death. She also says that Symonds's description of this event is inexact, her own account being that having sent Giair, then aged about ten, out of the room, she remained alone with the Master Therion for the final scene. He died with as much serenity as any saint; there were no tears and his last words were not "I am perplexed". As he slipped into a coma he looked up at her, saying, "So you're here — and not afraid ...", and as he drew his last breath there was a loud clap of thunder. This, she alleges, is always heard at the death of a great man; she heard it too when her first occult teacher, Robin Thynne, died.

When Crowley had gone, she telephoned to Frieda with the news and the latter re-appeared almost at once to sketch the Master on his death-bed.

His last words may not have been "I am totally bewildered" (as another version relates), but in his final photographs he certainly looks perplexed. He aged rapidly in the last few years of his life: from the snapshots of 1938, and even of 1941, the same 'Old Crow' looks out, but by 1946 he had become frail and shrunken, his *panache* all but evaporated, leaving the mere shell of his former self. His last likenesses show stains (of food, drink, medicine or tobacco-juice?) on the lapels of his tweed jacket — once a 'good' tweed, no doubt — and in the sleeve, what looks like a hole made by a cigarette-stub. On his face is an expression of questioning pathos.

## A Visit to Tally Ho!

**O**n the cusp of Aquarius, 1976 (Jan. 22), Peter Bishop called to take me to visit the Count's flat at Madron. Two of Pat's grandchildren were in the car with him: Caroline's daughter Helga Simpson, aged eleven; and Allie' — Young Aleister MacAlpine, the Count's son, aged about nine.

We drove first to Wheal Betsy where we found Pat drunk as a bee and disinclined to come with us to Tally Ho! There was some desultory conversation during which she claimed for her family a descent from Charlemagne. Peter suggested that she find the family tree which she said she possessed, but in the chaotic state of the household she could not lay hands on it at a moment's notice.

She stated quite openly that the Count was Crowley's son — as she had frequently done before to me. The Count himself denied this hotly; she persisted, and he fell back on the excuse that it could not be proved. (As I have pointed out already, it can be proved that Crowley believed him to be his son; Karl Germer and other followers of the Master Therion in America certainly accepted him as such. There is much internal corroboration besides.) The Count maintained that his grandmother — the Marquise de Verdrieres, afterwards wife of Jocelyn Bodilly — had told him that his father was Robin Thynne. (This was, of course, the story put about by Pat at the time of his birth to mitigate the scandal). Peter Bishop obviously felt that any connection with Crowley should be soft-pedalled as unhelpful to their present political enterprise.

The Count had changed Allie's name to "Charles Edward II"; I asked him why, and he replied that it was his own name. I inquired whether it

was connected with 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' and in answer he claimed the Prince as his ancestor.

Allie is an oval-faced child, quiet in manner and rather shy. His fresh complexion, hazel eyes and the reddish tinge in his hair come from his mother. He is not as nimble as a child of his age should be — he goes down steps crab-fashion and I suspect the same indefinable leg-weakness which can be noticed in the Count. 'Old Crow' remarked on this weakness in his son as early as 1938 when he came to Cornwall to see Pat and the little boy, then about eighteen months old — 'Aleister Ataturk', as he called him. Crowley's diary records some attempts to teach him rock-climbing which proved unsuccessful because of the child's maladroit movements.

Finally four of us set out for Madron; with the Count, Peter and myself was Rachel, Allie's half-sister, aged eleven, who refers to him as "the little 'un". Tally Ho! is situated in what was once the Isolation Hospital for the Penzance area, a granite building such as are now becoming scarce, which dates from 1836. A small chapel stands at the rear and the main structure is divided into four flats, the Count's being the only one now inhabited.

The apartment is furnished and decorated with a peculiar taste, the only colours being white, blue, gold and the near-black of antiques. This scheme is embodied in white walls and paintwork, deep-blue drapes, mirrors and gilt statuettes in the Mannerist style; there are also polished brass wall-ornaments and many silver- and gold-coloured cups and tankards ranged on shelves. Everything is clean and tidy but the atmosphere is rather that of a museum than a home. For the home of two children, it has a strangely un-lived-in air, containing as it does little that is not directly useful or — by the Count's notions — directly beautiful. There is an absence of books, papers, toys and all the miscellaneous impedimenta of ordinary living; and the only source of heat is a single electric fire which is moved from room to room.

A refectory-table occupies the centre of the 'Council Chamber' with a throne-like chair at the head of it. Near the blue-painted ceiling and above a huge mirror hangs a replica in relief of the grand seal of the 'Adjudicator' of the Council of Great Britain. This consists of an outsize fifty-pence coin, showing the figure of Britannia and flanked by gilded wing-like forms, recalling the ancient Egyptian solar disk with the wings of the vulture-goddess Nekhebet. The design is repeated on the Adjudicator's pennants, gold on blue satin with a gold edging. (I believe his patriotism to be perfectly sincere.) A drawn curtain hides a painting by the Count himself of the red-haired Barbara who left him two months ago.

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In the main bedroom a pedestal supports a charcoal-black bust of the Count, recent work of the Penzance sculptor Teresa Murley. At the head of the double divan, a wall-bracket supports a gilded St. George-like figure wielding a sword and standing on an eagle's back. The eagle-motif recurs several times in the general decor of the flat.

A gilt frame, elaborately carved with the figure of a man on the left and a woman on the right, encases a portrait in oils by a distant cousin of the Gotch family, Agnes Hepburn. Lettered on the frame above and below is the inscription "Charles Edward, Count D'Arquies". This painting, which hangs in another bedroom, dates from about 1966 but the frame may be later — I don't think the Adjudicator knew he was the Count before about 1974. On the landing is a picture, 'Conflict of Good and Evil', by Martin Rees, the man with whom Barbara is now living. I cannot help wondering how the Count can afford on his minuscule income to buy or commission such *objets d'art*. According to what Peter Bishop told me, he has nothing except a disability pension resulting from an accident while working in a factory. Presumably this happened during his years at Bristol before he returned to Cornwall about 1972. Peter also says that the Count cannot write, only print, and can only just sign his name. He can scarcely read: this is borne out by the absence of books or magazines in the flat. Altogether it looks as though he is a mental defective of some grade, high or low — I am not qualified even to guess which — and this in spite of his undoubted talent in certain directions.

A journalist named East arrived with his photographer to interview the Count for *The Sunday People*. He had discussed the eviction-order with the local authority, and when we were alone for a few minutes he told me that there was no hope of a reprieve for the Count's tenancy. When Peter reappeared he assured Mr. East that he would pay any arrears of rent or other debts, which I gathered might amount to some £300.

After the press-men had left I asked to see the decoration visible in the background of the photograph which *The Cornishman* had published with its first report. I had not been able to make out what it represented — a Byzantine-type mosaic, a carpet design, an architectural plan? (Pat had even told me she thought it was an ecclesiastical cope from some Eastern church!) It proved to be a large tinted plan of a proposed city; in fact the Count showed us a series of about thirty similar perspective drawings of aspects of this project. These showed evidence of some inventive sweep, and as far as I could judge their ideas were competently displayed; a booklet containing photographs of these drawings with explanatory captions was also well

presented. The basic idea as regards making the city or cities a practical proposition was the adequate harnessing of natural energies such as solar radiation and power from water and wind. It was my impression that the workable aspects of the project were mainly Peter's concern. The Count mentioned, in reply to a query of mine about his training in architecture, that he had studied at the architectural faculty of Los Angeles.

It is easy to trace the Crowley influence in all this, whether conveyed by genes or by exterior influence: the rickety *grandezza* of the life-style, with claims to noble descent and the assumption of exotic titles; the personal vanity and addiction to elaborate costume; the vast schemes for social reform, coupled with indifference to the wellbeing of individuals; indifference also to money, whether one's own or other people's (though not to what it can obtain). But there is also the artistic sense, the idealism and the capacity for hard work, given an aim that seems worth while. Pat has a theory that the Count resembles Crowley's father in character rather than Crowley himself; all three were imbued with a missionary spirit, even to fanaticism, and with progressively less adaption to accepted norms.

Rachel collected some clothes from her bedroom, as she was coming to stay at Wheal Betsy while the Adjudicator and his Acting Private Secretary made their first sally on London. It is difficult to assess the effect on the children of their disturbed background, but it cannot have been helpful. Rachel was in the middle of taking the Eleven-plus exam for entry to the Grammar School, and if she did not do herself justice in it this would hardly be surprising.

When we arrived back at Pat's we found that Miranda's two little daughters had been left there while their parents went away. Allie was there already as he had not come with us to Tally Ho! The complement of youngsters included Helga and her brother Bruce, as well as two Nigerian boys whom Pat was bringing up. The dogs, three Alsatians and a blind spaniel, added their quota to the general melee.

If this is the Wheal Betsy version of Thelema, it has positive side in that it encourages a sense of drama. Whenever I have visited there the youngsters improvised some sort of performance: this time they started 'dressing-up'. While Pat, who had grown sober while we were out, provided us with a picnic meal in the living-room — once the Gotch's drawing-room — the kids bounced in and out, trailing yards of lace and other rags, and saying they were kings and queens. And then apart from drama as embryonic art-form, there is always the unsought 'drama' of daily living in such a household.

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**Further Publicity**

Parallel with the local press-coverage, the other media, Radio and Television, also featured the saga of the Count.

In its review of the local weeklies on January 5, the BBC's *Morning Sou'west* programme from Plymouth referred to *The Cornishman's* interview of January 1.

Then the Count appeared on January 9 for about five minutes in the BBC TV 'bit' programme which then immediately preceded the 6 pm News. I did not see this myself but was told that he was by no means a 'natural', his delivery being slurred and hesitant.

On January 16 the local Radio News at 5.50pm carried an announcement that Harold Wilson, then Prime Minister, had declined an invitation to become a member of the Supreme Council of Great Britain. The Count required twelve members with himself as thirteenth — a perhaps significant arrangement. In a previous TV interview he had told the world that he would invite the leaders of all the political parties, including Mrs. Thatcher. If he did so, I suspect that their replies echoed Mr. Wilson's.

On January 23 BBC TV put on a brief item showing the Count arrayed in his full regalia with his Acting Private Secretary, both in a limousine which flew the Count's pennants. They seemed about to set off from Madron for Downing Street where they hoped to see the Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury. In fact, this was a rehearsal for the event planned to take place on January 26.

On the latter date *Morning Sou'west* reported their plan for this journey, referring to the Count as "the self-styled Adjudicator", and stating that the pair would present an address of loyalty to the Monarch and the Government. The same evening BBC Television covered similar ground.

During the next few weeks the Count occupied himself with attempts to stave off his eviction from Tally Ho! and canvassing for his twelve signatories. On Sunday, March 14, there was a knock at my door about 10pm and as I tumbled out of bed to answer it I called:

"Who is there?"

"Charles".

"Charles who?"

"Charles Edward".

The Bonnie Prince rides again, I thought. I did not let him in but arranged with him to call the following afternoon which he did. His purpose was to persuade me to "sign a document, as a member of the public", as he said.

In fact, I soon discovered that, by signing, I should have agreed to be named one of the required members of his Supreme Council. I explained that I could not take part in political activities and he at once denied that his activities were political. A glance at the document revealed that its diction was involved, so I asked for a copy in order to consider it. The Count replied that he had no copy; moreover, it must be posted (to the Queen? or the Prime Minister?) at once so as to arrive on March 17. This is, perhaps significantly, his mother's birthday; the document was dated March 16. I said I must have an opportunity to study the text before signing, but the Count grew impatient and required me to sign immediately. I declined, and he left in crossness, reviling his mother. I gathered she had discouraged his scheme to buy Wheal Betsy which he wanted to keep in the family. He objected to the policy she had pursued now since many years, of selling off the Gotch art and antique furniture until the place was almost bare. I could not help sympathising with his aim, though I felt sure his rescue-scheme was financially unsound.

I was able to see that the Count had obtained eight of the twelve signatures he required. Among them were those of Barbara and her new boy-friend, Martin Rees; S.L. Cooke, the maker of wooden toys; and Donelly, editor of the now-defunct *Penzance Advertiser*. There was also a "Jackson" but I did not gather exactly who this was.

On April 12 *Morning Sou'west* again carried an item about the Count who the day before had failed to get the nation-wide media-coverage he had expected for his latest "state-visit" to London on April 11. He had been accorded no more recognition for this than for the previous visit on January 26 for his Supreme Council, and the immediate result of his second *Hejira* was a quarrel with his Acting Secretary over a hotel bill.

On the strength of his title the Count had also applied to the French Embassy for assistance, but he fared no better in that quarter. This is scarcely surprising since his title must be Belgian, not French, derived as it is, though questionably, from the husband of his grandmother, the Marquise de Verdrieres. Pat had already told me that he was in London again, this time with the two children, planning to appeal to the French Premier, Valery Giscard d'Estaing: she spoke admiringly of "Aleister's guts". Pat is a 'big' person and whatever anxiety, even heartbreak, her children cause her, she always praises and defends them.

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On April 15 *Morning Sou'west* once more featured the Count, just before the National News Bulletin at 7am, and announced the end of the Supreme Council of Great Britain. It spoke of a family tragedy. Following their eviction from Tally Ho!, the Count's party had gone first to Marazion where the local parson tried to reason with them. Barbara was present at this interview but did not accompany them when they left later for Exeter. After spending the night there they departed for London in the limousines with pennants flying.

A few days later I heard in the 'Kings Arms', Paul, that the children were 'in care' with the Local Authority at Penzance and the Count in a mental hospital near Epsom. Later I was told that he had been transferred to St. Lawrence's, Bodmin; Pat's theory was that the Penzance Local Authority was responsible for this, resenting his protests about Tally Ho! and wanting him out of the way. The children went to foster-homes, first at Pendeen and later at Falmouth.

May 6 was Polling Day for the Local Government elections and the Count was standing for the Central Ward of Penzance. Next morning the news reported that he had come bottom of the poll with 65 votes.

Everything had come to an end, temporarily at least, for the Count: his home, his common-law marriage which had lasted some twelve years, his link with the children he had brought up, his schemes for public service — even, it seemed, his friendship with Peter Bishop. His plan to get possession of Wheal Betsy had also miscarried since Pat had agreed to sell it to Peter Hildreth, common-law husband of her daughter Miranda. A diver on oil-rigs in Scotland, he earns a good salary and the Count detests him: one more ingredient in the general frustration.

Any whirl of Thelemic enthusiasm may be offset by the thought that, had Pat been able to give her eldest son the special education which he no doubt needed, and the assured background which was equally necessary, he might have channelled his talents into some socially acceptable and even prosperous activity. As things were, his education had been brief and scrappy; by the age of sixteen, he was doing a labouring job on the roads of Invernesshire, as Karl Germer told me.

By the end of May 1976 Pat had concluded the sale of Wheal Betsy, which had become to her more a burden than a home, and arranged to give vacant possession early in July. The household seemed to continue much as before, though she made abortive attempts to find somewhere within her means to live in the neighbourhood. I took it that she would not move until she had done so. Angus, her younger son, who had decided not to return to Bangor University to finish his degree-course,

was living in a caravan at Newlyn and working at a manual job found for him by a boy-friend of his sister Caroline.

About the middle of June I heard a rumour that Peter Bishop had obtained the post of Conservative agent to a constituency in Surrey and his experiments in political 'Independence' seemed to be over. Not so, as the announcement of results in the Rotherham bye-election reported on *Morning Sou'west* (June 25) made clear. These were

- 1) Labour
- 2) Conservative
- 3) Liberal
- 4) National Front

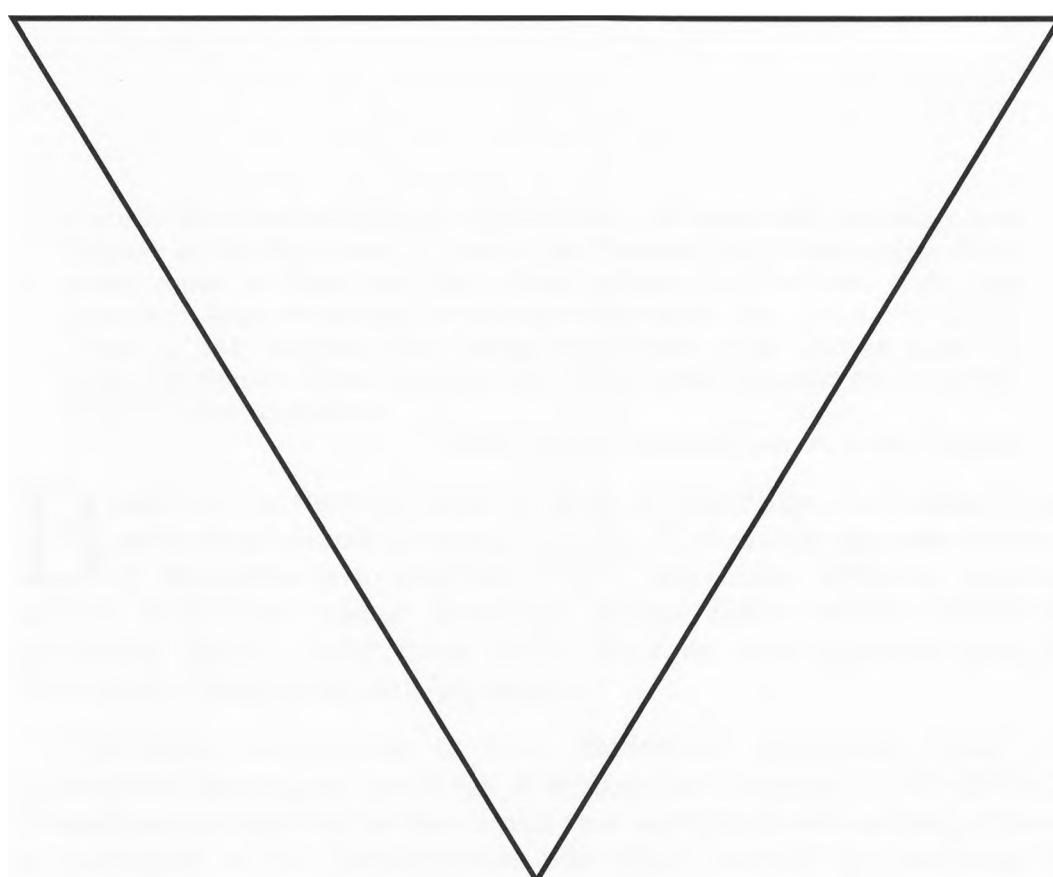
Among the one or two smaller contestants the Sunshine Room Party, in the person of Peter Bishop, polled 129 votes — his highest score so far? He lost his deposit, as did all candidates except the first two. The main plank of his programme was advocacy of the use of solar and other natural energies — a sound enough theory and a probable necessity of the future when its techniques have been perfected.

Pat, having packed off the Nigerian boys to their own country, left Wheal Betsy in the first week of July as she had promised. She did not say goodbye to her friends and I only heard the details some weeks later, from Angus. She departed in a hurry, piling herself and her baggage, with Bruce, Helga, two of the Alsatians and the two cats into her car. Angus drove them through the night, finally arriving at the cottage in Devonshire recently vacated by his sister Morag. A number of local creditors had been paid with cheques that bounced, but none took any legal action. For weeks there were rumours and counter-rumours about her whereabouts, the only solid news-item being provided by *The Cornishman* again. This reported that she had been fined for three motoring offences while still in Cornwall, but gave her new address in Devonshire.

When Morag returned for a few days to Wheal Betsy in order to retrieve some possessions left behind at her mother's first exit, she was astonished to encounter on the doorstep a woman asking for Aleister. This was none other than Jean, his legal wife, whom it appeared he had married some thirteen or fourteen years previously but kept secret from his relations. She now discovered his situation from Morag, scooped him up out of St. Lawrence's, and took him to live with her in London.

So the publicity the Count's exploits had attracted at least inspired Jean to claim him and thus served to provide him with hearth and home, if nothing more pretentious. But a base for future operations?

# Echoes of Silence



Alistair Coombs

## Echoes of Silence

*I praise the luxuriant Rapture of Innocence, the virile and pantomorphous Ecstasy of All-Fulfilment; I praise the Crowned and Conquering Child whose name is Force and Fire, whose subtlety and strength make sure serenity, whose energy and endurance accomplish the Attainment of the Virgin of the Absolute; who, being manifested, is the Player upon the sevenfold pipe, the Great God Pan, and, being withdrawn into the Perfection that he willed, is Silence.*

*Little Essays toward Truth, Aleister Crowley*

**B**uddhism is founded upon a body of teachings elaborated from psychological and spiritual insights. It is also a vigorous method of deconstructive analysis. There are many different schools within Buddhism whose doctrinal tenets differ widely although commonly placed under three main doctrinal and historical groups: Theravada; Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

Theravada corresponds to early Buddhism, comprising what are regarded as the original teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (c. 560-480 BC). There is scant historical evidence that this individual ever existed, at least as portrayed in his hagiographies. He didn't commit his teachings to writing, and there has been no royal lineage discovered to which he might have belonged. The works that purport to be his original teachings were compiled around a thousand years after his death. If there really was an historical Buddha then he would most likely have been the wandering son of a warring clan-leader from the foothills of the Himalayas, probably illiterate, and belonging to a slightly earlier period of history.

What we do find in the teachings attributed to Buddha are many references to those found in the *Upanisads*, themselves expansions upon

the teachings embodied in the much earlier Vedas. Buddha's central critique and reinterpretation of upanisadic lore was to do with the understanding of the self, which is now commonly known as the doctrine of *anatman* (no atman or 'soul'). The actual meaning behind *anatman* has been the subject of debate for a very long time, many of the original teachings having acquired layers of rigid accretion from scholastic communities since originally conceived.

Early Buddhism wasn't only concerned with the meaning of the self, but also appealed against animal sacrifice, and revised the understanding of karma. Previously applied as a (Vedic) ritual act, Karma now became psychologised into intention, volition or an act of will; all motivations needed to be understood as binding all activity to the cycle of samsara. One of the ways in which Buddha reworked these elements was by transforming the meaning of the ritual fire, undoubtedly the most sacred item at the heart of Brahmanism. He did this chiefly by considering the negative aspects of fire, such as hunger, insatiability and destructiveness, etc. How some of this was achieved may be gleaned from this brief but implicit example which illustrates fairly well the emergence of Buddhist philosophy from its Vedic background:

In Vedic cosmology, the cognitive process is undertaken by the self-cognizing Absolute. The reflexive character of this process is expressed by the word *atman*, which denotes both the Absolute itself, the conveyor of the cosmogonic process, and the forms assumed by the Absolute in the process: the world, the human being, the inner Self and finally the fire altar, which expresses those manifestations on the ritual level. The negation of the *atman*'s existence postulated in the Buddha's doctrine of *anatta* leads to the conclusion that the whole Vedic cosmogony is based on a false assumption and its acceptance inevitably leads only to suffering.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of Mahayana is no less misty than that of early Buddhism. The origin of it is popularly attributed to Nagarjuna (c.150-250AD), founder of the *Madhyamaka* or 'middle-way' school, and considered the second Buddha in Mahayana regions such as China, Tibet and Japan. He is supposed to have received the *Prajnaparamita* or 'perfection of wisdom' teachings - which are the hidden or esoteric doctrines of Buddha, said to have been unintelligible to his contemporaries - from supernatural cobras that inhabit a palace beneath a lake. In brief, the teachings of the Mahayana, revealed in order to sustain the Dharma throughout the period of the Dark Age, are intensifications of terms found in early Buddhism. Broadly speaking, Nagarjuna and the movement did to early Buddhism what Buddha had done to Brahmanism.

1. Joanna Jurewicz: 'Playing with Fire: The *pratityasamutpada* from the perspective of Vedic thought'. *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Vol. XXVI, 2000, p.96.

### *Echoes of Silence*

Nagarjuna questioned many of the excessive classifications of reality or abstracted elements delineated in the *Abhidharmakosa*, largely by extending the original understanding of *anatman* into the more primary implication of *siinyata* ('emptiness'), striking more of a cosmological statement. Here, all things are dependent upon cause and effect, for the very reason that they are empty of any enduring self-nature. In Mahayana, emptiness is heavily connected to the question of compassion, and is considered a dynamic signature of it. Ironically, a great deal has been written on the subject of emptiness, but here Chang explains the basic meaning of it adequately enough in a single paragraph:

If there is no T, no 'mine', and all dharmas are utterly empty, how can the law of karma prevail? The answer is: it is precisely because everything *is* empty and there is no self or 'I', that everything *can* exist and the principle of karma *can* prevail. If things were truly existent, i.e., with a definite, enduring substance or entity, then *no* change or flow would be possible. Because nothing has a self-nature (*svabhava*), everything is possible.<sup>2</sup>

In Mahayana the doctrine of the bodhisattva was also developed, with an emphasis upon assisting others to attain enlightenment through realising consciousness as being innately luminous. Over time, besides providing the foundations of subsequent Vajrayana philosophy and practice, these teachings also portrayed cosmic bodhisattvas and universe-emanating Buddhas, who unfold an infinite drama of world-systems subsisting within oceans of Dharma-charged sound, motion and light. However, being primarily concerned with the ultimate nature of reality, McGovern offers a possible reason for some of these aspects not being developed more systematically:

From the absolute standpoint the universe was completely non-existent - why, therefore, would one bother to classify the fictitious.<sup>3</sup>

Wherever Buddhism has taken root, it has assumed a very different hue, incorporating new practices and doctrinal elements seen to be harmonious. In the case of the importation of Buddhism to the west, Buddhism merged with science and this was an interaction engendered to some degree by the efforts of the early Theosophical Society. Shortly before embarking upon his pan-Asian Buddhist revival and attempt at unification, commencing in what was then Ceylon, Henry Steele Olcott authored his *Buddhist Catechism* (1881) which became part of the

2. C.C. Chang (ed): *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*. Pennsylvania State University, 1983, p.411, fn.

3. From *Buddhist Cosmology* by Randolph Kloetzli, Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1997, p.7.

curriculum in Buddhist schools in Ceylon. Chapter V of this work proposes a relationship between Buddhism and science, and is regarded as the earliest succinct expression of a dialogue. The former protege of the Theosophical Society, Anagarika Dharmapala, further popularised the compatibility of the two at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, which inspired the writer and publisher Paul Carus to do the same on a wide scale. The dialogue has increased in momentum considerably, and is now an area beyond many of the connotations formerly associated with it. A good representative example is *Buddhism & Science* (2003),<sup>4</sup> which draws together a collection of research papers by a number of Buddhologists and scientists from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds, whose research in identifying areas in common has proved very fruitful. A useful although highly critical historical review of the whole Buddhism-Science conjunction, on the other hand, would be Donald S. Lopez's *Buddhism & Science* (2004), where Lopez asserts that Mahayana isn't authentic Buddhism, and yet appears quite undaunted by the fact that the movement and its concepts has already been in existence for some two thousand years.

The convergence of science and religion was an area of great interest to Aleister Crowley. In 1906 he published an essay titled *Science and Buddhism* via his 'Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth' — a caption in harmony with the Theosophical Society's dictum 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth'. Thelema also declared itself to be 'the method of science, the aim of religion'. Despite this, the scientific bearings of Theosophy and Thelema are not very comparable; in fact, it is difficult to find any points of similarity between them at all. Theosophy has been concerned with the unfolding vision of science from many disciplines as a means of apprehending reality and achieving holism. Often dubbed 'the synthesis of science and religion', Theosophy originally proposed that science and religion share the same fundamental concerns. This differed from Crowley's assessment of how 'sane science' should have been united with occultism. However, belief in the paranormal development of mind and its extrasensory perception resulting from an examination of mental phenomena (i.e. the 'subjective'), has been a tradition for millennia.<sup>5</sup>

The possible reasons for Crowley adopting the type of scientific theories which he did, when others before had specifically rejected them, might be noticed in his matter-of-fact criticisms levelled at the

4. B. Alan Wallace (ed): *Buddhism & Science*, Columbia University Press, 2003.

5. B. Alan Wallace, *Hidden Dimensions*, Columbia University Press, p.66.

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prevailing occultism of the day, which he sometimes believed unnecessary for mystical attainment. He was often of the view that such attainment could be assisted, if not accomplished entirely, by an applied ethos of scientific materialism.<sup>6</sup> While his embrace of materialism may well have been for creative reasons of producing a synthesis with its opposite, it tends nevertheless to remain ascendant in a lot of his thinking. His earlier belief in the union of magic and materialism became subsequently reassessed; in *Magick Without Tears*, for instance, he happily salutes emissaries of Blavatsky for destroying Victorian materialism, and with it many of the scientific ideological commitments that were part of that particular age.

With its eye all-too-happily stuck to the wrong end of the telescope, as it were, science cannot really claim the non-existence of cosmic intelligence, spirits, reincarnation, matters surrounding causality, etc., when such areas clearly remain outside the concerns of the current scientific mainstream and consequently its programme of inquiry. Here in fact lies the main point of apparent psychological antagonism between orthodox science and some forms of esotericism. The former labels such items from a distance as unverifiable superstitions or untestable dogmas. The latter are faced with the difficulty of assimilating shifting conclusions which either quickly become obsolete, or go on to assume new dimensions of such proportion as to overturn the foundations supporting its prior and often much-vaunted model of reality.<sup>7</sup>

This is not to suggest that certain conceptions drawn from science have not found home and growth within esotericism; they clearly have. But for that matter, some of the major developments in science have their origin in the same areas of consciousness engaged with in occult and contemplative practice — experience, meditation, imagination, inference and critical analysis. We should consider Isaac Newton's oft-voiced (but just as often dismissed) preoccupation with alchemy, along with his *intelligent* belief in god, or a god principle. Pierre and Marie Curie are well known for their pioneering discoveries in the fields of magnetism and radioactivity; but what isn't mentioned so often is their regular participation in seances, in the belief that such activities would provide insights into the unanswered questions of physics. Although the work is not concerned with fortune-telling, *The Secret Doctrine*

6. This is not to suggest that Blavatsky was less *objective*. Like Crowley, she was of the opinion that one could access psycho-mystical states through 'scientific' means.
7. In 1893, for instance, the chairman of physics at Harvard was under the impression that there was nothing left to discover in physics.

made a noteworthy prediction that, nine years after its publication (1888-97), a large rent in the veil of nature would be made and materialistic science would receive a death-blow. This prophecy was fulfilled to a large extent, with x-rays, radioactivity and the discovery of the electron all being made in this nine-year period, findings that went on to revolutionise science from what it was. Similarly, the clairvoyant investigations made by Charles Leadbeater and Annie Besant into atoms and sub-atomic particles, as presented in their *Occult Chemistry* (1908), has found substantial corroboration in the findings of modern particle physics.<sup>8</sup> We should also consider Albert Einstein's frequent comments about the redundancy of logic in comparison to the faculty of imagination, and numerous allusions to other subjective outlooks that normally reside outside the ramparts of orthodox science. It is also alleged that Einstein was very fond of the *The Secret Doctrine* and kept a copy of it on his desk.

It is notable that one of Einstein's most remarkable contemporaries, David Bohm — the work of whom Einstein admired very much, even though they fell out in later years — held dialogues with Jiddu Krishnamurti and others. The current Dalai Lama termed Bohm as one of his 'scientific gurus'. Bohm's conception of time was also influenced by the work of one of Gurdjieff's disciples, J.G. Bennett. Bohm's super implicate order (based on a neo-Platonic concept) provides an excellent contemporary example of how the apparent antagonism between science and esoteric philosophy appears more to do with modern education than each originating from a different segment of an inherently divided brain. In any event, the whole matter is one beyond a question of 'pagan revolts against modernity', and similar banalities promoted by some areas of academia.

Now that science has declared consciousness as its new frontier — as it has been for a while — one particular area in development here concerns the interdependent relationship between mind and phenomena. An observer imparts upon any scientific experiment, or basic observation of any kind, the conditioning effect of their own mental attitude, observational awareness, and preconceptions of it. As leading Biologist Mae-Wan Hoe stated, sounding a growing majority: 'There can be no *a priori* dualism between consciousness and science. I see physics and chemistry evolving more and more under the guidance of an active

8. See Stephen Phillips' *Anima - Remote Viewing of Subatomic Particles* (1996), which carries a Foreword by Dr Srinivasan, Director of India's Bhabha Centre of Atomic Research.

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consciousness that *participates* in knowing.<sup>9</sup> If science were a process that worked independently of the mind, its faculties, and its perceptual flaws, then perhaps mainstream science by its own profile would not be the consistently inconsistent, self-correcting, and foundation-shifting entity which it so clearly is. Moreover, there is as much marketing involved in scientific theories as there is behind women's fashion; the support of new theories often similarly relies upon opinion simply rolling over and sleeping on its other side.

Crowley's interaction with Theosophy — or 'toshosophy' as he sometimes termed it — was too broad to fully explore here. However, he often believed himself to be the magical heir to the mission and work of Blavatsky, considering it portended in the year of his birth. He also at one point thought highly of Dr Anna Kingsford, as he expressed in his 'Preliminary Remarks' to the first volume of *Book Four*:

Now this woman, though handicapped by a brain that was a mass of putrid pulp, and a complete lack of social status, education, and moral character, did more in the religious world than any other person had done for generations. She, and she alone, made Theosophy possible, and without Theosophy the world-wide interest in similar matters would never have been aroused. This interest is to the Law of Thelema what the preaching of John the Baptist was to Christianity.

Kingsford was an early feminist, anti-vivisectionist, advocate of vegetarianism, one of the first women to have studied medicine, and the first to have obtained her degree without having experimented upon an animal. She apparently killed three prominent representatives of vivisection by sending them 'psychic thunderbolts', but caught a cold in the rain while waiting outside Louis Pasteur's laboratory to do so, contributing to her early death aged forty-one. While Crowley's opinion here is in a sense misleading, it would be more accurate were it referring to the Society of the Golden Dawn, for which Kingsford's sublime *The Perfect Way* (1882) was of considerable founding importance. In fact, it has even been suggested that Kingsford was the real character behind W. Westcott's adept from Nuremberg, Anna Sprengel.

Crowley was far less keen on Annie Besant. His dislike here is especially curious because Kingsford and Besant were virtually identical in what they stood for. His antipathy may have owed everything to Besant's position as Theosophical Society president; for during a later part of his career, as prophet of the New Aeon, he made attempts via a propaganda campaign to assume leadership of the Theosophical Society. However, Besant's distortion of the early teachings

9. From Mae-Wan Ho's *The Rainbow and The Worm*.

and the promulgation of pseudo-humanitarianism has been noted. Crowley also claimed to be the reincarnation of Eliphas Levi. There is, in all honesty, a megalith of disparity between the views of Levi and those of Crowley, so this identification may itself have had more to do with strengthening Crowley's talismanic Levi-Blavatsky-Therion lineage. Levi was indeed regarded highly by Blavatsky and sometimes crops up in *The Mahatma Letters*, although he was far from being the guru which Crowley appears to have thought he was.

There are numerous other interactions with Theosophical literature throughout Crowley's work. While there isn't much mention of *Isis Unveiled* or the *The Secret Doctrine*, his *Liber Trigrammaton* is described by him as "the stanzas of Dzyan in another system." Although ambiguous, Mabel Collins' *Light on the Path* is an interesting exposition of an esotericism remarkably in tune with the principles of Thelema. Despite being a Theosophical bestseller for over a hundred years, the book had originally been condemned by Blavatsky for containing elements of tantra. On the other hand, Collins' quaint but engaging occult drama, *Blossom & the Fruit: A True Story of a Black Magician* — the final six chapters of which were authored by Blavatsky during its serialisation for *Lucifer* — had been met by Crowley with some praise: "... [a] novel which has left so deep a mark upon my early ideas about Magick"<sup>10</sup> Related to the Collins affair is Crowley's bewildering opinion, noted in a diary entry,<sup>11</sup> that he thought Blavatsky was Jack the Ripper - an accusation that seems eccentric for his type of humour, although it was clearly intended as some sort of joke. Interestingly, however, a recent short story titled *The Black Mirror*<sup>12</sup> could shed light on this otherwise bizarre opinion. It is suggested that an explosive event, such as the first publication of *The Secret Doctrine* that occurred in London in 1888, would attract a very contrary movement from the inner planes — in this case, 'dugpa' or elemental activities overseeing a series of unusually horrendous murders, giving birth in turn to a new voyeuristic type of debased media and journalism. So, perhaps there was something behind Crowley's mysterious diary entry.

*The Secret Doctrine* also appears within the works of Crowley's magical successor, Kenneth Grant. The idea is conveyed through Grant's Typhonian Trilogies that the *The Secret Doctrine* forms part of an 'akashic grimoire', along with *Liber AL* and Lovecraft's

10. *Confessions*, p.690.

11. Kim Farnell: *Mystical Vampire: The Life and Works of Mabel Collins*, Mandrake, 2005, p.117.

12. By Robert Bruce MacDonald, *Fohat Journal* Volume XI, Number 2, 2007, pp.42-47.

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*Necronomicon*. Leadbeater had formerly suggested much the same about Collins' *Light on the Path* and Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* in his 1911 introduction to the former. Following John Symonds' study on Blavatsky, *The Lady with the Magic Eyes*, and shortly before Grant's *The Magical Revival* was set to appear, the two may have been planning a work on *The Secret Doctrine* in terms of present-day occultism which never came to light, as suggested in a letter from Grant to Symonds dated 28 March 1972:

I have been reading Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine. The matter is overwhelming and I have scrapped several attempts at making a synopsis. It is such a rich and finely meshed work, so astonishingly complex, that it is beyond me to do more than give the barest of bare outlines. Reading the book again after many years I now see it as a stupendous mine of occult lore; it would require, literally, years to attempt to assess it in terms of the present-day occult scene.

In an earlier communication from Grant to Symonds dated 19 December 1957, Grant also expresses some appreciation for Krishnamurti, whom he elsewhere described as the 'Moonchild' of Besant and Leadbeater. Despite Crowley's highly-vocal denunciation of Krishnamurti as a fraud, the acknowledgement by Grant isn't surprising given his early interest in various other contemporary eastern mystics and gurus:

One thing you should ponder deeply in connection with the T.S. and that is: for all its chicanery, charlatanism, false claims (K.H. and Morya etc), how account for Krisbnarmrti who, if he is not an avatar of God, is certainly one of the Great religious genii of today? This is a great puzzle and one that cannot easily be solved. After all, Krishnamurti himself on one occasion said that if it had not been for Leadbeater (who discovered him with Annie!) he would have been dead along with his other brother. I shall be interested to see how you treat this matter in your book for he is indubitably the flower of the T.S. and H.R.B.'s magical child — her greatest miracle, AND THAT WASN'T A FRAUD, because he is a genuine 'Master.'<sup>13</sup>

Of all Blavatsky's works, Crowley's favourite was the comparatively small and far less popular *The Voice of the Silence* (1889) a work 'dedicated to the few'. On the basis of Crowley's A.-A.-, classification of texts, the *Voice* fell outside the normal sphere of scholarship, and he saw it as Blavatsky's *Cloud upon the Sanctuary*. The *Voice*, albeit with Crowley's commentary, is one of the few texts within the canon of thelemic Holy Books not authored by Crowley. It appears from the following that the commentary was intended to gain support in his bid for presidency of the Theosophical Society:

I will bet you a dollar that the publication of *The Voice of the Silence* will have the San Francisco earthquake looking like 300. I am just reading through the

13. Both these letters from Grant to Symonds dated 1972 and 1957 respectively are from the private collection of Dr. Henrik Bogdan.

proofs, and it shocks even me. What will happen to the ordinary, gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild theosophist, I cannot say, but I suggest your arranging with the United Undertakers Association for a fat commission.<sup>14</sup>

There was no seismic activity following its publication; in fact, it didn't appear to raise an eyebrow anywhere at all.

In *The Equinox* of 1919 in which it was published, Crowley mentions that he had been studying the *Voice* for eighteen years; and in certain respects this is undoubtedly borne out in his level of analysis of the text; not to mention parts of the *Voice* being an inspiration behind his own A.-A.-, system of initiation, despite the latter's more immediate kabbalistic structure.

The *Voice* is said to derive from *The Book of Golden Precepts* and is Blavatsky's translation (from memory) of one of its ninety separate treatises. While the *Precepts* claim the same source as Nagarjuna's wisdom texts, they are also said to contain pre-Buddhistic treatises, in line with Blavatsky's claim that the source is concerned more with psychic and spiritual development than in upholding a particular tradition. One does, on that level, notice a fusion of different elements going on in the *Voice*, drawn from Brahmanism, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Yoga, and Theosophy. It is for this reason that some have considered the *Voice* as Blavatsky's own literary invention, and thus placed it in the same category as Sir Edwin Arnold's epic poem about the life of Buddha, *The Light of Asia*. While there certainly is a great deal of Blavatsky in its Victorian poetic style and ornamental inversions, and an appearance of theosophical schematas uncommon in Buddhism, the *Voice* still exhorts a central theme of Mahayana teaching and is the first English transmission of this school's doctrine to appear in the west. Reigle has noted some correspondences in the *Voice* with the central Mahayana bodhisattva text, the *Bodhicaryavatara*.<sup>15</sup> He also cites a work published in 1983 titled *Cosmic Ecumenism via Hindu-Buddhist Catholicism*, in which around 1950 a Tibetan Lama in Kalimpong allegedly compared the original (Tibetan) *Voice* to Blavatsky's English translation. Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup, the translator of the texts now subsumed within Evans-Wentz's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, remarked on Blavatsky's works:

... there is adequate internal evidence in them of their author's intimate acquaintance with the higher lamastic teachings, into which she claimed to have been initiated.<sup>16</sup>

14. Richard Kaczynski, Ph.D: *Panic in Detroit*, Blue Equinox Journal, 2006, p.32.

15. David Reigle: *Blavatsky's Secret Books*, Wizards Bookshelf, 1999, pp. 139-144.

16. Samdup had also assisted Arthur Avalon with the translation of his tantric corpus of texts.

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The former world authority on Mahayana Buddhism, D.T. Suzuki, had the following to say in relation to the *Voice*:

Undoubtedly Madame Blavatsky had in some way been initiated into the deeper side of Mahayana teaching ... There is no doubt whatever that the Theosophical Movement made known to the general world the main doctrines of Mahayana Buddhism, and the interest now being taken in Mahayana in the Western world has most certainly been helped forward by the knowledge of Theosophy.<sup>17</sup>

The ninth Panchen Lama of Tibet similarly considered the *Voice* authentic enough for him to write a foreword to the 1927 Peking Buddhist Society edition.

Crowley was no less enthusiastic than the above regarding the *Voice*'s mystical content, although he didn't hold the same view about it deriving from an authentic source:

Madame Blavatsky's method of exegesis, in the absence of original information, was to take existing commentators and disagree with them, her standard being what the unknown originals ought, in her opinion, to have said. This method saves much of the labour of research, and with a little luck it ought to be possible to discover subsequently much justification in the originals as they become known. Madame Blavatsky was justified in employing this method because she really did know the subject better than either commentator or original. She merely used Oriental lore as an Ostrich hunter uses the skin of a dead bird. She was Ulysses, and the East her Wooden Horse.<sup>18</sup>

While this isn't an unreasonable theory in itself, there is an assumption here over "unknown originals" becoming known and then justification somehow being traced in prior forgeries of them. It would be difficult to think of any other convincing instances of this. Crowley, who didn't himself know a word of any Asian language (besides Russian, Arabic and European languages, Blavatsky was proficient in Sanskrit), seems to be projecting his own method of appropriation with Legge's translation of the *Tao Te Ching*; not entirely incomparable to what others have seen in Arthur Waley in terms of Chinese literature, and Idries Shah in terms of Sufi teachings. The lack of original information here suggested by Crowley appears to be referring to Mahayana, and it becomes clear throughout his commentary on the *Voice* that he is unaware of the basic doctrinal tenets of this school, which he thought Blavatsky was inventing. His ignorance, however, could have been in part deliberate, so as to legitimise his commentary over the text by

17. From *Reincarnation* by Sylvia Cranston, TUP, 1998, p. 102.

18. *The Equinox*, Volume III, Number 1. Weiser, 1972, p.77.

adopting the doctrinal characteristics of early Buddhism as his standard of reference. Theravada, incidentally, was also much in line with his own scientific preferences. This was prior to the popular advent of quantum physics and the 'discovery' of Mahayana which, as mentioned before, are the two predominant representatives from each of these fields used in the Buddhism-science dialogue at present.

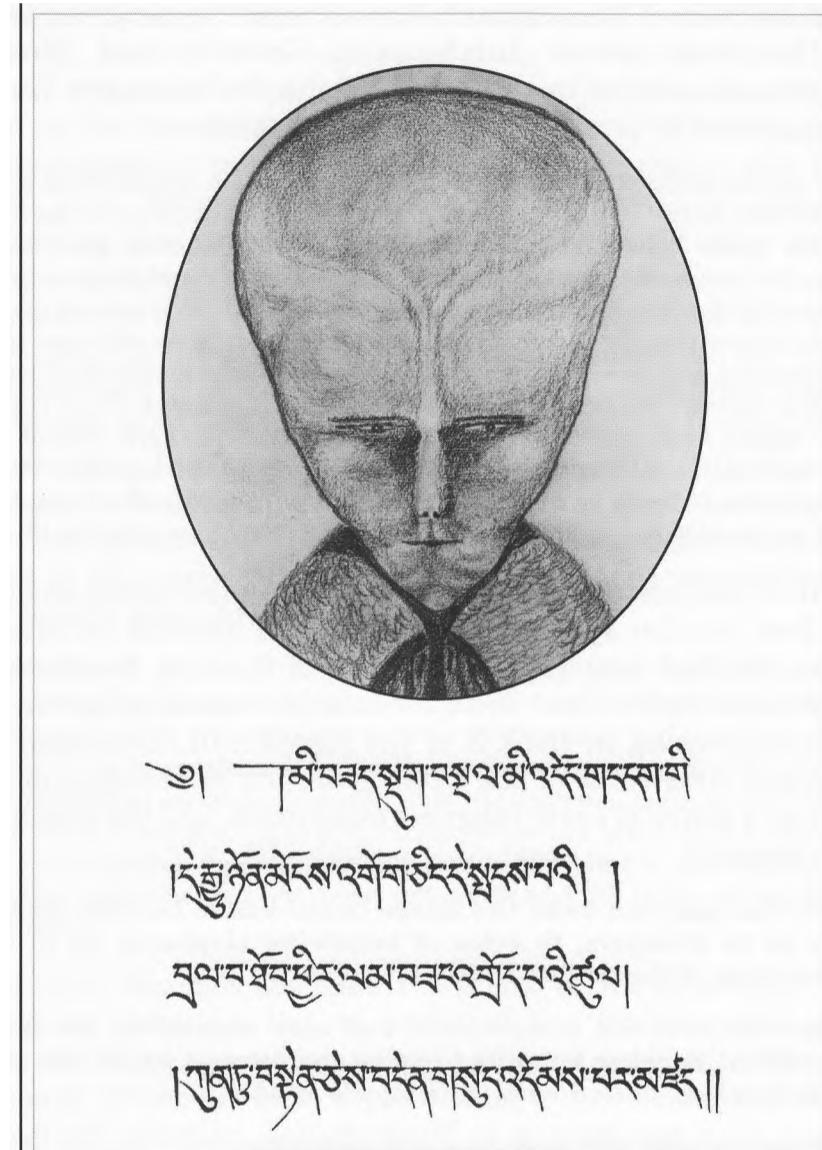
The *Voice* is a manual of initiation, or rather of awareness, and the stages of its actualisation. It is divided into three fragments; I *The Voice of the Silence*, II *The Two Paths*; and III *The Seven Portals*. What follows is neither a full assessment and summary of the *Voice*, nor of Crowley's percipient and often very jocular commentary on it; in view of the commentary we have selected passages which are of interest, while at times also comparing the views of Crowley and Blavatsky in the broader sense.

#### **The Voice of the Silence**

- 1. These Instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower *iddhi*.**
- 2. He who would hear the voice of *nada*, the 'soundless sound,' and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of *Dharana*.**
- 3. Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the *Raja* of the senses, the thought-producer, he who awakes illusion.**
- 4. The mind is the great slayer of the Real.**
- 5. Let the disciple slay the slayer.**

Crowley starts by drawing a parallel between the *Voice* and Robert Browning's poem of dream and brooding uncertainty, *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, suggesting that the disciple is lost in the dark due to a lack of an intelligible and coherent cosmology. While the *Voice* is indeed a mystical poem, not a logical tract on metaphysics, it is drawn from a consistent cosmology, one which Blavatsky was presupposing the reader to be familiar with. Despite this, and with the assistance of his commentary, Crowley reckons the *Voice* to be a serious initiatory guide to be studied by members of the A.·. A.·. and also practiced by them.

These opening verses deal with traditional techniques of meditation. *Iddhi* is the Pali form of the Sanskrit. The lower *iddhi* indicate psychic faculties which emerge through meditation; these can hamper progress at preliminary stages and thus need to be checked, although they yet remain present in various guises of subtlety as one advances. They are considered impediments chiefly because they create distracting



*The 1927 Peking edition of Blavatsky's The Voice of the Silence included the above four lines of Tibetan script written especially for the edition by the Panchen Lama. Glossed as The Path of Liberation, it was freely rendered in English as:*

*All beings desire liberation from misery.  
Seek, therefore, for the causes of misery and expunge them.  
By entering on the Path, liberation from misery is attained.  
Exhort, then, all beings to enter the Path.*

Crowley's drawing 'The Way' was not reproduced with the script, but is here included to highlight its close association with the essence of Blavatsky's book.

divisions in the will of the aspirant, thus hampering progress towards realising the true nature. Incidentally, Crowley and Blavatsky elsewhere shared a belief in the power of the Probationary Pledge to prepare the ground by troubling the timid or uncertain:

As soon as anyone pledges himself as a 'Probationer,' certain occult effects ensue. Of these the first is the *throwing outward* of everything latent in the nature of the man: his faults, habits, qualities or subdued desires, whether good, bad or indifferent. For instance, if a man is vain or a sensualist, or ambitious, whether by Atavism or by Karmic heirloom, all those vices are sure to break out, even if he has hitherto successfully concealed and repressed them. They will come to the front irrepressibly, and he will have to fight a hundred times harder than before, until he kills all such tendencies in himself. On the other hand, if one is good, generous, chaste, and abstemious, or has any virtue hitherto latent and concealed in him, it will work its way out as irrepressibly as the rest. Thus a civilised man who hates to be considered a Grandison, and therefore assumes a mask, will not be able to conceal his true nature, whether base or noble.<sup>19</sup>

It is difficult to estimate when and from where meditative techniques arose. The first popular systematisation of them appears in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. We find emerging indications of them in the *Katha* and *Svetasvatara Upanisads*, there is an even earlier instance, known as the Kesin hymn, appearing in Book X of the *Rgveda*. In distinction to the priestly esoteric constructs of the *Upanisads*, the near-shamanic Vedic hymns display a range of early religious experience, and the Kesin hymn is a unique example.

10. Before the soul can hear, the image (man) has to become deaf to roarings as to whispers, to cries of bellowing elephants as to the silvery buzzing of the golden firefly.
11. Before the soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is modelled is first united with the potter's mind.
12. For then the soul will hear, and will remember.
13. And then to the inner ear will speak - THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.

Silence in the Buddhist arena originally symbolised Buddha's calculated silence over certain questions which disciples would ask, chiefly concerning atman and other transcendental affairs. It represented his teaching that reality should not be confounded with empirical categorisations and theories, that it was impossible to conceive the transcendent in terms of the empirical, and that enlightenment cannot

19. Daniel Caldwell: *The Esoteric Papers of Madame Blavatsky*, Kessinger, 2004, p.83.

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be conveyed by any of these material and mental forms. Buddha not only applied this position to metaphysical theories, but also stood against the use of an autocratic empiricism, in terms of progression along the path and of achieving enlightenment. By means of his imposed silence, Buddha attempted to remove the centre of perception and knowing to another level entirely; although this is commonly referred to in Buddhism as the doctrine of the middle-way, it actually implies more than an awareness simply balancing mid-way between two extremes. It is important to note that, in relation to his mantle of silence, Buddha was not denying the existence of an atman or absolute. His position was that attempting to *conceive* of such with reality-obscuring language and concepts was deception, which could only culminate in static dogmatism and a resulting literalism — a criticism Mahayana subsequently made against early Buddhism, provoked by the way that the early teachings were being upheld. Buddha's silence over these areas was a significant impetus in the early formation of Mahayana, the orientation of which can be briefly summarised here:

Historically, it must be said that Buddha preached his phenomenological doctrines in an 'Exoteric form' to the people and his Ontological doctrine in the 'Esoteric form' was reserved only for advanced or brilliant men. Teachings on both these lines proceeded simultaneously without implying any periodical or chronological division. However, from the doctrinal point of view, the former is the more expedient (*upaya*) doctrine, while the latter is the real doctrine. This order equates well with the inherent natural law in the spiritual domain. Here the former or 'exoteric' must come first and the latter or 'esoteric' would come next.<sup>20</sup>

Silence, then, becomes the means to access occult knowledge. Not occult in terms of secretive, but in terms of the development of intuitive insight, and thus a process analogous to the retrieval of the 'lost word' in masonry. Silence is here representing a non-conceptual cognition at the level of intuition, which itself is a response to a sound of an otherwise indiscernible cosmic type — or, 'a voice of silence'. It is an activity which some would associate with a burgeoning spiritual instinct grappling upon a higher plane of awareness or memory. In terms of verse twelve, in ancient mystery tradition as put forth by Plato, there is no such thing as original thought or being able to think; all is rather a reorganisation or assimilation of recollection invoked from a submerged but ever-active state of memory. Similarly, Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and even Krishna as an embodiment of the supreme in the *Bhagavad Gita*, become revealers and upholders of the Dharma by having remembered

20. From *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System* by T.R.V. Murti, Munshiram Manoharlal, 2006, p.50.

the successive continuity of their former lives — a hallmark underlying their enlightenment.

Crowley similarly interprets ‘remember’ as ‘will to attain memory’, noting that as an ordinary man does this with his own experiences, an adept does so with *all* experiences. This provides a rationale for why — according to Crowley, Sri Krishna Prem, Nicholas Roerich, Lama Anagarika Govinda, and others — an artist can be considered an adept, in the sense that a great artist expresses what is felt and experienced by everybody. This he achieves by expressing his deepest nature, which naturally isn’t any part of ‘him’ at all. We can sometimes notice this occurring through many different channels, although it is a design worked towards specifically in Vajrayana Buddhist art.

Crowley’s ideas on reincarnation, in terms of his magical memory recalling previous incarnations, connect for the most part to literary identifications. However, there is an atypical theory of reincarnation of his mentioned in a magical diary of 1923, resonating loosely with the theosophical doctrine of globes which carry the human life-wave in its evolution across the planets of the solar-system:

With regard to Reincarnation, the heliocentric theory is right. As we conquer the conditions of a planet, we incarnate upon the next planet inwards, until we return to the Father of All (the Sun), when our experiences link together, become intelligible, and star speaks to star. Terra is the last planet where bodies are made of earth; in Venus they are fluid; on Mercury aerial; while in the Sun they are fashioned of pure Fire.<sup>21</sup>

While this does convey a basic sense of Levi’s remark ‘In the suns we remember; in the planets we forget’, it is a fragmentary glimpse in proportion to the more comprehensive scope of the globe doctrine, but an independent vision that harmonises with it all the same.

**19. Saith the Great Law: ‘In order to become the KNOWER of ALL-SELF thou hast first of Self to be the knower.’ To reach the knowledge of that Self, thou hast to give up self to non-self, being to non-being, and then thou canst repose between the wings of the Great Bird. Aye, sweet is rest between the wings of that which is not born, nor dies, but is the AUM throughout eternal ages.**

**20. Bestride the Bird of Life, if thou wouldest know.**

On account of the symbolism in this verse, Crowley includes in the commentary a similar passage from *Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente*, involving journey upon the royal swan in a region beyond space and time. The earlier version of these narratives appears in the *Nadabindu*

21. *The Book of Thoth*, Weiser, 1974, pp.129-130.

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*Upanisad*, where repose between the wings of the divine swan — a symbol of the sacred OM syllable with the right wing being A, the left U and the tail M — portrays a remove from all interplaying sets of opposites, via concentration upon the thought-eliminating sound which the airborne swan symbolises. Somewhat similarly, the Mahayana teachings, in distinction to those delivered at Varanasi by Buddha, were revealed to hearers from the altitudinous remove of a vulture's peak.

One will notice in this verse, and others, an enunciation of the term 'self' appearing in three different case variations. Crowley also mentions this in reference to the use of the term 'soul' in other instances. At first sight this may appear strange, given the Buddhist declaration of *anatman* — the refutation of a Bramanical self or soul infused with a personality enduring throughout eternity. However, as mentioned before, Buddha doesn't appear originally to have ever denied the existence of the atman; neither was *anatman* intended to be the word of an aeon or some universal mystic message. Rather, he rejected the *conception* — propounded by the Brahmin orthodoxy then predominant — of atman as a static entity, incapable of change. *Anatman* came out of a specific philosophical debate, and its original meaning would naturally have become lost on subsequent generations of followers. We can let Buddha make his point about the whole subject again here, noting that if he chose to answer in either the negative or the positive then there would be no such thing as Buddhism today:

... bear always in mind what it is I have not elucidated and what it is that I have elucidated ... I have not elucidated that the world is eternal, I have not elucidated that the world is not eternal ... I have not elucidated that the saint lives after death, I have not elucidated that the saint does not live after death. I have not elucidated that the saint both exists and does not exist after death ... what have I elucidated? Misery ... the origin of misery ... the cessation of misery ... the path leading to the cessation of misery.

- *Majjhima-Nikaya*

This is just one example out of many, and it is important to point out that the history of Buddhist doctrine of all schools has shown a skilful tendency to produce a surrogate of the atman, providing explanations for the continuity of incarnated existence that allow the conditions of karma and rebirth to function. This can be noticed in *bhavanga* (subliminal-consciousness), *bodhicitta* (wisdom-consciousness), *alayauijnana* (store-consciousness) *tathagatagarbha* (Buddha-matrix), and the *dharmakaya* and *sambhogakaya* subtle bodies. Blavatsky's use of the terms *self* and *soul* thus have their correspondences in the schools from which she is drawing. The term 'eternity', as it appears throughout the verses, could in some cases be seen in the same translational light; it would be

dissonant to replace it with ‘duration’ or ‘infinity’, perhaps a more accurate rendering of the Buddhist cosmogonical conception of ‘without beginning or end’. However, the term isn’t here indicating the anomalous Hebraic understanding of eternity as commencing immediately post-mortem. As long as the term isn’t being misunderstood as implying this sort of unconditional extreme, then one is beginning to understand Buddha’s position correctly.

Commenting on verse nineteen, Crowley suggests: “The words ‘give up’ may be explained as ‘yield’ in its subtler or quasi-masochistic erotic sense, but on a higher plane”. This is an interesting suggestion, although also likely designed to breed potentially *outré* complexes in the imagination of the all-too-acquiescent pilgrim.

**22. Three Halls, O weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils. Three Halls,  
O conqueror of Mara, will bring thee through three states into the  
fourth and thence into the seven worlds, the worlds of Rest Eternal.**

Crowley was reasonable in pointing out that the “seven worlds” mentioned is not a feature of Buddhism; but there do exist seven world ages in Buddhism, as well as seven ‘diamond’ mysteries. As it happens, he appears not to have noticed that in Fragment III there are seven paramitas listed instead of the traditional six.<sup>22</sup> Crowley suggests also that the four states could be referring to the four stages which it takes a *srotapatti* to become an *arhat*. This could well be the case, although what seems indicated are the comparable four stages which it takes to become a bodhisattva.

The appearance of the number seven is widespread throughout religion, folklore and mythology. It is not purely an iconographic number; it is rather representative of an active process of sequence in occult psychology, a numerical power providing a link between mind and cosmos. The number seven features in the *Hermetica*, which is often though erroneously considered the backbone of western esotericism. This itself is preceded by Plato’s *Myth of Er*, which mentions seven concentric cosmic ‘whorls’ or vortices. Far earlier, however, the number seven held a fundamental position not only in ancient Egyptian mysticism, but in the founding layout of its initiatory temples. One also notices it in the Assyrio-Phoenician and Chaldeo-Babylonian systems, and in Vedic and later Hindu cosmology. An early Vedic example of its use features in the *Nasadiya* hymn, which is composed of seven verses, each illustrating a phase of an unknowable cosmic creation. Like the

22. The paramitas do in fact range from six to ten in number, so it is by no means outrageous to notice Blavatsky’s text listing seven.

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majority of Vedic paradoxes or riddles, the clue containing the solution to all of the verses resides in the middle, the fourth verse, which is a transformative stage between two reflective triplicities.

The sacredness attached to this number is not a modern invention. As a mystical number *par excellence*, seven is central not only in Theosophy but is important in Gurdjieff's Fourth Way system also. The import of the number seven as it appears in these instances may possibly in part be derived from the heretical Isma'ili branch of Shia Islam, where the importance of seven is intrinsic in cosmology and initiation. The Druze communities of Lebanon are an offshoot of the Isma'ilis, and these sects could possibly have provided a connection between Blavatsky and Gurdjieff's secret brotherhood of adepts.

In relation to the Tibetan bardo tradition, Evans-Wentz has this to say of the significance of seven and its sevenfold multiplication;

... these Vowels were the mystery of the Seven Fires and their forty-nine subdivisinal fires or aspects. They are also represented by the swastika signs upon the crowns of the seven heads of the Serpent of Eternity of the Northern Buddhist Mysteries, originating in ancient India. In Hermetic writings they are the seven zones of after-death, or Bardo experiences, each symbolising the eruption in the intermediate state of a particular seven-fold element of the complex principle of consciousness, thus giving the consciousness principle forty-nine aspects, or fires, or fields of manifestation. ... In nature, the number seven governs the periodicity and phenomena of life, as, for example, in the series of chemical elements, in the physics of sound and colour, and it is upon the number forty-nine, or  $7 \times 7$ , that the [Tibetan Book of the Dead] is thus scientifically based.<sup>23</sup>

Evans-Wentz's "Tibetan Book of the Dead" was first published in 1927, so it is unlikely that Crowley was aware of this particular cultural meaning of the number forty-nine during the time of the Amalantrah working and the writing of his commentary to the *Voice*, unless he had read through *The Secret Doctrine* and found it there. It is therefore curious why the stylised numerals of the number forty-nine appear at the bottom left-hand corner of the portrait of Lam. Wentz's expositions on Tibetan wisdom have evoked more scorn from the academic community than Blavatsky. However, Bryan Cuevas in his *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead* reports "even academic specialists in Tibetan studies have found it difficult to escape the intoxicating power of Evans-Wentz's romance."

**32. This light shines from the jewel of the great ensnarer (Mara). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck.**

23. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Oxford 1989 Edition, p. 7.

33. The moth attracted to the dazzling flame of thy night-lamp is doomed to perish in the viscid oil. The unwary soul that fails to grapple with the mocking demon of illusion, will return to earth the slave of Mara.

The Bardo theme continues, and Crowley associates his understanding of Mara with Bulwer Lytton's term the 'Dweller on the Threshold,' and the light here mentioned as that which streams forth from the threshold of nirvana. While this could be supported in a sort of tantric sense — the 'dweller' being more inherent than just a projected thought-form — it would be more accurately considered a condition, although one with several eye-catching emissaries admittedly. Although several chapters of Lytton's work are extremely laborious reading today, the dweller entity evoked so vividly in *Zanoni* — by all accounts Blavatsky's favourite novel — naturally became strongly aspected in her works. Amongst other things, the dweller on the threshold provided a useful archetype with notable parallels in other traditions. The dweller also lurks within the channelled works of Alice Bailey; her Tibetan adept describes it thus:

There emerges from individual past lives and experience that which is the sumtotal of all instinctive tendencies, of all inherited glamours and of all phases of wrong mental attitudes. To these (as they constitute a blended whole) we give the name 'Dweller on the Threshold'. This Dweller is the sumtotal of all the personality characteristics which have remained unconquered and unsubdued and which must finally be overcome.<sup>24</sup>

Regarding this particular grade of glow to which Crowley makes reference, if it is one emerging normally and regularly in meditation, then we would have to suggest that it is a relatively evanescent affair rather than an indication of any ongoing neurological alteration.

36. Let not thy 'Heaven-born,' merged in the sea of Maya, break from the Universal Parent (Soul), but let the fiery power retire into the inmost chamber, the chamber of the Heart and the abode of the World's Mother.

37. Then from the heart that Power shall rise into the sixth, the middle region, the place between thine eyes, when it becomes the breath of the ONE-SOUL, the voice which filleth all, thy Master's voice.

38. 'Tis only then thou canst become a 'Walker of the Sky' who treads the winds above the waves, whose step touches not the waters.

The first two verses refer to the kundalini, or the coiled electro-spiritual energy at the base of the spine. Crowley accurately identifies the

24. Alice Bailey: *Esoteric Astrology*, Lucis Publishing Company, 1997, p.207.

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‘Heaven-born’ as the human consciousness, even though in its original solar nature it often remains in a state of inertia as pure potential. Kundalini and its symbolism, however, is a later sophistication of the earlier Vedic experience of psychic fire conferred by the most commonly invoked divinity in the *Rgveda* — Agni, the ancient fire god of the cremation grounds and a mediating divinity between different realms, who has sharp glistening jaws with jagged shiny teeth, is footless and headless, and has a thousand eyes and a thousand tongues. The “abode of the World’s Mother” might not necessarily be referring to the Muladhara lotus at the base of the spine, but rather to the centre of the body, or to the body as a whole. This emerges from a forerunner to yoga, the *Katha Upanisad*, the central narrative of which is woven from a dialogue between Naciketas and the Lord of Death concerning the nature of the atman after the death of the body. The traditional charnel-ground location of Agni (as the fire altar being a portal between worlds) becomes internalised and situated within the ‘inner cave’ of the heart. In Mahayana, the primary seat of consciousness similarly resides within the heart region, or centre of the body, from where in meditative practices one projects a psychic Buddha-body or lunar disk of consciousness.

Regarding the development of *iddhis*, Blavatsky’s notes to verse thirty-eight are:

*Khechara* or ‘sky-walker’ or ‘goer’. As explained in the 6th *adhyaya* of that king of mystic works the *Jnaneshvari* - the body of the yogi becomes as one *formed of the wind* as ‘a cloud from which limbs have sprouted out,’ after which - “he beholds the things beyond the seas and stars; he hears the language of the Devas and comprehends it, and perceives what is passing in the mind of the ant.”

Crowley’s remark that “The ‘walker of the sky’ is much superior to the mere reader of the minds of ants” seems immature and lacks any real justification.

**39. Before thou sett’st thy foot upon the ladder’s upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou has to hear the voice of thy inner God in seven manners.**

**40. The first is like the nightingale’s sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate.**

**The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyanis, awakening the twinkling stars.**

**The next is the plaint melodious of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell.**

**And this is followed by the chant of Vina.**

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**The fifth like sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear. It changes  
next into a trumpet-blast.**

**The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud.**

**The seventh swallows all the othersounds. They die, and then are  
heard no more.**

In view of the first verse stating that “thou has to hear” all seven sounds before progression can be made, Crowley responds to the challenge by suggesting that it wouldn’t be necessary for an advanced adept, who may already have fried the seeds of the sounds in a previous incarnation. Such advanced individuals could mean for Crowley those born with a natural gift for apprehending a higher reality, with the ability of expressing it artistically - or, individuals who were incapable of preliminary A.-A.-, magical exercises due to having already arrived at the level of contemplating formlessness. As Crowley points out in his *Eight Lectures on Yoga*,<sup>25</sup> Blavatsky held a similar opinion about apparently natural gifts being the aggregated results of merits from previous lives — although she wasn’t of the view that gifts (of any nature) were concomitant upon spiritual or visionary perceptions, as she further distinguished between gifts of a karmic nature and others of a mediumistic type.

Either way, the randomness and spontaneity of the gifted would indeed appear to be an occurrence in nature; such abilities are evidently not transmitted genetically, and neither are they the result of nurture. Both Crowley and Blavatsky regarded them as latent in most, with differing levels of activation. For Crowley, however, definite progress was being made if his disciples were able to churn out a few lines of readable poetry. His advice to certain of his acolytes upon artistic expression was to facilitate a deliberate encounter with what he identified as the deepest driving instincts, to then be able to incorporate these otherwise suppressed or ambling forces into the central motor of will, so as to possess full magical or artistic reign over them.<sup>26</sup> As regards Blavatsky, the emphasis is rather upon the age-old relationship between symbolic art, visualisation, and inner transformation generally. There are techniques, suggested in the *The Secret Doctrine*, that were clearly drawn from authentic tantric Buddhist tradition, involving what is known very generally as deity-yoga — the visualisation of subtle energies in the form of shape, sound and colour to influence any number of things at the gross level, as mentioned in this example:

25. *The Equinox*, Volume III, Number 3. Sangreal Foundation Inc., 1969, p.77.

26. A slightly different example of this would be Jung’s recently exhumed *Liber Novus*.

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This line, though you may call it ‘imaginary,’ is, once you succeed in seeing it with your mental eye and give it a shape and colour, in truth as good as real. Moreover, according to the prismatic colour with which you endow your line, so will the influence act.<sup>27</sup>

What constitutes a work of art in these areas is the degree to which the artist has coordinated his or her subjective nature to the extent that they reveal the same in the field of reference of others. This is what Arthur Machen identified in a short story as ‘processes’, meaning an awareness of a convergence and interpenetration of different apparitions of reality.

There is a possible connection proposed by K. Paul Johnson between these sounds and those found in *Radhasoami* meditation, along with other techniques found in the *Voice*, although they can be found in other traditions too.<sup>28</sup> In any event, whatever their origin and however advanced we all are, they are delightful sounds to reproduce in meditation, stirring-up a range of associated colour and otherworldly image.

**44. Heaven's dew-drop glittering in the morn's first sunbeam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck of mire.**

The analysis of this verse identifies the lotus with the sacred lotus in Buddhism and thus with the mantra *Om Mane Padme Hum*. On the face of it, the interpretation of what this refers to would suggest an area in which Crowley and Blavatsky were diametrically opposed beyond any reconciliation. However, in her less-known analysis of the lotus in her grade papers for the Esoteric Section, Blavatsky does discuss the sexual dimension of its symbolism in terms of the “creative organs corresponding to the Creative Forces of the Kosmos”, advising her students that they had better abandon any “false propriety bred by hypocrisy and the shameful misuse of primeval functions once considered divine” before they take up the pursuit of esotericism. Before its publication in English, Blavatsky may also have been acquainted with the ‘L’Amoureux’ chapter of Levi’s *The Magical Ritual*, about the “brilliant phantom of a vision” achieved at orgasm. Because of this, however, we are obviously *not* suggesting that Blavatsky and Crowley were in any way alike in their views on the use of sex as a means to awaken spirituality; although, going by his own recorded experiences

27. From *The Books of Kiu-Te or The Tibetan Buddhist Tantras* by David Reigle, Wizards Bookshelf, 1983, p.9.

28. K. Paul Johnson: *Initiates of Theosophical Masters*, SUNY, 1995, p.63. In his *Yoga*, J.F.C. Fuller compares the sounds to similar ones found in the *Hatha Yoga Pradapika*.

and success rates with sexual practices, it would be difficult to see Crowley truly believing it to be the ultimate jewel which he portrayed it as, at least as he applied it.

Blavatsky's criticisms of the works of R. Payne Knight, Allen Campbell and Hargrave Jennings on the subjects of sex and phallic worship really had nothing to do with phobia, but concerned entirely her exposition on cosmic evolution and the genesis of humanity along with it. In short, as can similarly be seen in the views of Gerald Massey, it concerns a fundamental divergence in the understanding of derivation (ultimately of consciousness) from the physical/physiological vs. cosmic/metaphysical. Regarding her own sexual proclivities, the basis is unclear for Crowley's claim that she "loved like a Cleopatra", while being quite correct about the drinking, smoking and swearing. For besides her first marriage, a more than likely encounter with Richard F. Burton in Egypt in 1853 (who incidentally did much to popularise sex and spirituality in the west with his 1883 translation of the *Kama Sutra*), some probable extra-friendly relations with Olcott, a brief second marriage to a young Armenian man in New York in 1875, and some unlikely (although possible) lesbian encounters with Annie Besant and Mabel Collins, the evidence for a voluptuous sexual history is fairly scant.

**46. Before the mystic power can make of thee a god, Lanoo, thou must have gained the faculty to slay thy lunar form at will.**

**63. Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest.**

**64. Merge into one sense thy senses, if thou wouldest be secure against the foe. 'Tis by that sense alone which lies concealed within the hollow of thy brain, that the steep path which leadeth to thy Master may be disclosed before thy soul's dim eyes.**

This slaying of the lunar form is similar to Crowley's A. A. task for a Neophyte to acquire perfect control of the astral plane. Briefly, this lunar body is understood as the *chhaya* or shade (in a sense the astral body) of the physical: the ethereal gel out of which it evolved, as certain life-forms still do from the egg. An early example of the lunar association with this shade comes from a portion of the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* known as the 'five fire wisdom' which relates to an early doctrine of reincarnation. Here the atman rises upon the smoke of the funeral pyre and becomes absorbed into the waxing moon, to eventually return to earth via rain during the moon's waning. The rain then fecundates harvests, which are in turn ingested by men, who then transfer it via their semen to women, recommencing the cycle. For those who are illuminated, however, and who are thus able to liberate themselves from the lunar cycle, the

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atman makes an alternative route into the centre of the sun at the commencement of a year when the sun moves north, marking the period of amassing light and energy that occurs after the winter solstice. Following this, the atman then enters the world of the gods and from there into a region of lightning. Thus, some of this detail may well be behind Gurdjieff's saying about automaton humanity being "food for the moon".

Crowley interprets the preceding verse, and the two verses following, as not allowing any emotions or moral impressions to invade the mental plane that would be likely to cause agitation and hence division of will. While this is fair enough, it would seem in view of verse sixty-four that the overall aim is to render ourselves passive to the spirit behind the senses, utilising quite normal preparatory affects of meditation. The plasmic cavities of the brain are where images of the hidden god reside. "The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me".

68. The rose must re-become the bud born of its parent stem, before the parasite has eaten through its heart and drunk its life-sap.
69. The golden tree puts forth its jewel-buds before its trunk is withered by the storm.
70. The pupil must regain the *child-state he has lost*, ere the first sound can fall upon his ear.

Crowley comments upon the need to purify and consecrate the Temple of the Holy Ghost before the miracle of the One Substance can occur. Associating the 'child-state' with the mystery of Harpocrates and with the unconsciousness of Jung, Crowley provides an idea as to how culturally diffuse traditions show marked similarities whilst lacking any apparent means of communication. The way that these patterns of behaviour remain present in the ether, to be transferred to isolated animal and human groups, is a key element within Rupert Sheldrake's recent formulation of morphogenesis. Whilst referring chiefly to adaptive changes in the form of the body, it implies telepathic transmissions through fields of consciousness (morphic resonance), explaining how 'new' behaviours and ideas spread. Of course, to mainstream science, the idea is probably just as outrageous today as was the *The Secret Doctrine*'s 1888 claim about the atom being divisible.

### **The Two Paths**

9. Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the Soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster, mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies.

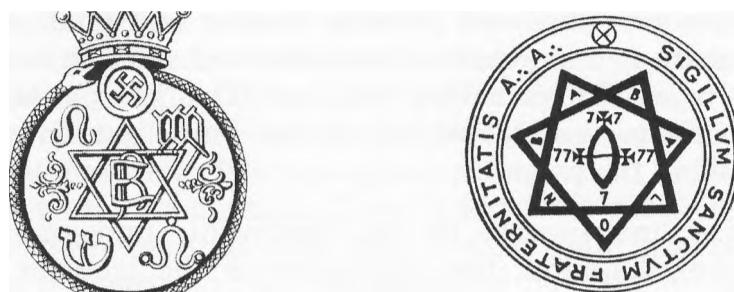
It remains a problem to many, how the atman — or its luminiferous Mahayanic equivalents — can mingle in the springs of defilement which water the sea of ignorance. It is similar to the mystery of how reality is able to produce illusion. Like much else here, it is a question insoluble by reason, as Crowley points out. However, it can begin to provide a purely philosophical explanation as to how a whole with all of its faculties can be contained in many parts, yet remain unaware of its greater potentials. A far simpler analogy would be the case of a young child who, while containing potentialities within his or her own nature, has yet to have the experience and application to bring them out.

**12. For mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek O beginner, to blend thy mind and Soul.**

The likening of the mind to a mirror, which when dusty is incapable of reflecting the Dharma realm, derives originally from Shen-hsiu's Northern China school of Ch'an. Shen-hsiu, following a fabled debate, was succeeded by Hui-neng who became the sixth Patriarch of Chinese Zen (though in her notes Blavatsky mistakenly states Shen-hsiu as being such). Shen-hsiu's school emphasised gradual enlightenment, while that of Hui-neng emphasised sudden enlightenment. In any event, texts containing these teachings were not widely available during Blavatsky's day and certainly not available in any European translation.

‘Soul-Wisdom’ is here interpreted by Crowley as the will, obscured by illusions of various kinds. There has been endless debate over what the True Will actually means: as much useless debate as there has been over what analogues mean in many other systems. The problems arise here largely due to there being a search for correct definitions which don't provide a solution to anything, because they address pseudo-problems to which there is no end. Here in fact lies the common ground between Buddhism and academia: in both cases one is often getting to know more and more about less and less. However, the terms *will*, *volition*, and *intention*, on their own plane, correspond to the same thing. Despite their interrelationship they are different from, for example, motivation and action, since they are the propelling agents and causes of these behavioural cycles. Will, volition and intention interlink profoundly with non-action, which is different from asceticism, quietism, not acting, and general immobility. This sort of ‘non-action’ correlates behaviour with cosmic will, volition and intention; and while these are responses to greater causes — much as a star or galaxy is a reacting to something else — they are given emphasis as the tools behind release from the planetary thralldom of samsara, or nature *in abscondito*.

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Seals used by Blavatsky (left) and by Crowley (right)

Will, volition, intention — and we could say ‘imagination’ also — are gaining recognition as formative powers that do influence phenomena, however subtly:

A phenomenon is not yet a phenomenon until it has been brought to a close by an irreversible act of amplification, such as the blackening of a grain of silver bromide emulsion or the triggering of a photodetector. In broader terms, we find that the nature at the quantum level is not a machine gun that goes its inexorable way. Instead, what answer we get depends on the question we put, the experiment we arrange, the registering device we choose. We are inescapably involved in bringing about that which appears to be happening.<sup>29</sup>

This understanding, earlier espoused by Paracelsus, could without too much difficulty be easily compared to, amongst other things, earlier beliefs and practices related to the projection into, and post-mortem experience of, the (self-created) bardo realms of which our own world forms but one interdependent and complementary division.

**13. Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But within thy body - the shrine of thy sensation - seek in the impersonal for the Eternal Man; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.**

The very fabric of the universe is generated and held in thrall by ignorance, augmented on our own level by attachment to illusory identifications — whether individual, group, national, etc. It is due to being enmeshed in these identities, which perpetuate the illusion of

29. Vic Mansfield: *Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Physics*, Templeton Foundation Press, 2008, p.158.

duality, that keeps the samsaric wheel of suffering, catastrophe, and rebirth in place. This perpetuation occurs — so we are told — because these identities are ephemeral patterns lacking any innate reality. The Buddhist mission is to understand them in their relative and transient sense, hence to see things as they truly are. The “Eternal Man” or soul here mentioned is really nothing of the kind, but an impersonal aggregation of all the patterns.

It remains unanswered, in the Theravadic understanding of a perishable skandha-mind, how liberation or the transfer of karmic impediment or merit can occur at all. In Mahayana, this is all accounted for via the agency of a luminous mind — something which, unlike the skandha-mind, is capable of achieving transformation and realising multi-dimensional perspectives, making enlightenment possible. Coming from his perspective, one can understand Crowley questioning the statement that “thou art Buddha”; but as mentioned before, this is just an expression (in English) of what is termed variously as *bodhicitta* or *tathagatagarbha*, implying that progress towards enlightenment does not happen from entering an external state, but from a Buddha-germ of luminosity within. However, Crowley’s comparison of this particular inner ‘Buddha’ to the Augoeides is a good cross-cultural parallel.

**28. Wouldst thou become a Yogi of Time’s Circle? Then, O Lanoo:**

**29. Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range - believe thou not, O devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.**

The circle of time mentioned here refers to the *Kalacakratantra* or ‘wheel of time’ teachings with which some of Blavatsky’s works have a connection. In aim the Kalacakra tradition was similar to Crowley’s A.- A.\ exercises, in the sense of aiming to achieve illumination within a number of years, rather than lifetimes ranging across aeons.

The understanding of time in Buddhism is a fickle mistress, and from the early schools there exist some strange conceptions of it indeed. The general explanation in Mahayana is that time is entirely relative and not a sovereign absolute, an entity constructed on the basis of an observed continuum of momentary and ultimately delusional phenomena. It is limited to this continuum; past, present and future are merely relations developed by the mind. It is for this reason that some have found this Mahayana understanding to conform tidily to modern scientific space-time paradigms, where Einstein’s remark that “time and space are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live” would apply. What we also have from ancient eastern

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traditions is the idea of time operating in cycles rather than in a linear sequence, whether in application to the life of a man, culture, civilisation, or entire cosmic system. The linear conception of time seems to derive from Aristotle's imagination, and was helped along the way by Hebraic religion and colonial calendars. However, it is a pattern of thinking that colours even modern scientific theories regarding the origin of the universe. The metaphorical 'big bang', out of which time suddenly began, is an example. There is fortunately a growing scientific reservation with this splintered (and actually quite bizarre) conception, supporting the view that the universe had no ultimate beginning but rather operates in infinite cycles, which agrees entirely with earlier doctrines.<sup>30</sup> As regards the evolution of consciousness, Buddhism doesn't make a great deal of use of Brahmanical time-cycles but does possess its own derivative versions. In Mahayana, consciousness is already illuminated but has been conditioned by external defilements. The consciousness may or may not become liberated during a certain point in a time-cycle, but its release wouldn't have been dependent upon that point. However, there are Maitreya cults which would say that specific periods of astrological alignment would be more favourable points to some.

Despite having affinities with ancient Egypt, and declaring the work of Thelema to be the rediscovery of the Sumerian tradition, Crowley wasn't fond of what was revived in Theosophy as the cyclic succession of ancient lost continents and civilisations, their residual cultural consciousness providing the foundational link between each. However, Michail Bakhtin presents three far more simplified layers of temporal identity as drawn up in his work *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981).<sup>31</sup> Bakhtin's three stages commence with what he terms the folkloric chronotope, characterised by the ancient experience of time working in cycles; personal identity is relational and connecting with symbolic landmarks, all being features of the shamanic worldview. The second identity portrays much of our own modern culture, being a fragmentation between cosmic and personal time and an isolated sense of individual becoming, cut off from others and the world matrix and often in vigorous competition with them. The Hebraic religions typify this sense of individual destiny partitioned in the religious sphere, not to mention socio-economic schemes. Using *Gargantua & Pantagreul* as

30. There are several research papers on this topic but, for a recent example, see 'Why the universe had no beginning' by Paul J. Steinhardt, *Astronomy*, April 2009, pp.28-33.

31. A lot of Bakhtin's works were originally published in Russia during the 1920s.

an example, the third identity is termed by Bakhtin a 'Rabelaisian unmasking', marked by a resurgence of personal time re-linking with historical and future consciousness. Mythological accuracy resumes precedence over mundane correctness which is characterised in part through a revival of images from the ancient matrix, this time in the form of a 'heteroglossia' that interpenetrates different cultures on a global scale. Theosophy, Thelema, the collective unconscious, emerging emphasis upon ecology, and the globalisation of esotericism generally, express well the Rabelaisian process of unmasking, many themes of which can also be seen, as Bakhtin suggests, in the modern mystery-horror novel.

Left to itself, this model would, like many others, be subject to the usual revisions and comparisons. However, modern astronomical and astrophysical data suggests that our solar-system forms part of a relationship with other systems; during which, at different points of orbit and alignments with the galactic-centre, our earth periodically absorbs sudden influxes of ions and other electromagnetic particles. These influence consciousness and behaviour, providing us with an idea as to what might be the cause behind these larger patterns of anthropological tendencies.

Regarding verse twenty-nine of this fragment, Crowley and Blavatsky were in near agreement over the redundancy of imposed seclusion and strict asceticism in the development of occult abilities. It has been said that cerebral abnegation alone is far more powerful in the production of effects on the higher planes than a physical separation from the world; that the importance lies in mental isolation rather than physical. However, both Crowley and Blavatsky recognised utility in occasional retreats of abstention for occult training.

**38. These vestures are: Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya, robe sublime.**

Blavatsky's account of the robes or bodies, and the states associated with them in Mahayana, is not as misleading or as arrogated as Crowley appears to think. Crowley's aversion to anything even vaguely hinting at compassion — which gets banished outright as "mawkish sentimentality" or "toshi slop treacle-goo", possibly because it is seen by him as some sort of infiltration from Christianity — has practically nothing to do with virtues and the like in the puritanical sense. It is rather a disciplinary means of inculcating new patterns of mental actions and reactions. There is also an important cosmological dimension to the understanding of compassion in Buddhism, the idea of which Crowley appears unintentionally to express elsewhere. Without

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this type of cosmogonic-love ‘compassion’ there would be galaxies and universes quite out of control, and not a world-system stable enough anywhere to support a pursuit of occult interests.

Further in his commentary to this verse, Crowley also criticises the frequent use of the ‘ten thousand worlds’ and incalculably large time-cycles which are common features in oriental arcana. However, these schemes are more practical than just a naive attempt to impress others with an exaggerated knowledge. It is actually irrelevant to their purpose whether or not one chooses to accept them as realities. If we used elements from the *Vajracchedika* or ‘diamond-cutter sutra’ as examples here, we could say that these features are designed to impress in the awareness a sense of relativity between two extremes; obviously what William Blake attempts to portray in the commencing verse of *Auguries of Innocence*, and what ziggurats, pyramids and European cathedrals attempt to communicate through their proportion to the individual. They are reminders that we move and have our being within a larger environment.

### **The Seven Portals**

1. ‘Upadhyaya, the choice is made, I thirst for Wisdom. Now hast thou rent the veil before the Secret Path and taught the greater Yana. Thy servant here is ready for thy guidance.’
2. ‘Tis well, Shravaka. Prepare thyself, for thou wilt have to travel on alone. The Teacher can but point the way. The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the pilgrims.
3. Which wilt thou choose, O thou of dauntless heart? The Samtan of Eye Doctrine, fourfold Dhyana, or thread thy way through Paramitas, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading to Bodhi and to Prajna, seventh step of Wisdom?

Commenting on the first verse, Crowley dismisses the idea that the two paths referred to are Theravada and Mahayana. But when considering the reasons behind the latter school’s critique of the former, and how the doctrine of the succeeding school has been characterised fairly accurately thus far, there seems little justification for this. Though he doesn’t pick up on it, the term *shravaka* (hearer) doesn’t stand well in the literature of this school, since this was a monastic designation which had apparently become ossified through dogmatism and which the early Mahayana cults chose to denigrate. However, anyone who has engaged with any of the source material of this movement will notice that there are frequent scribal errors, sometimes of the most elementary nature. They are light years away

from the polished textbook translations that most are familiar with from recent years. It is, moreover, incredible how certain terms have become defined as they appear in their consensual use today, which are so often quoted by some as infallible standards of comparison.

There are too many individuals to mention who get chided in Crowley's commentary to these verses, one being T.W. Rhys Davids, who appears to be Crowley's textual support in areas of Buddhist doctrine throughout his commentary. In regards to a perceived lack of Buddhist mystical experience on the part of Rhys Davids, Crowley writes:

What was wanted was a Master of some Occidental language to obtain the experiences of the East by undertaking the practices of the East. His own experience put into words would then form a far better translation of Oriental works on the same subject, than any translation which a scholar might furnish. I am inclined to think that this was Blavatsky's method. So obvious a forgery as this volume only contains so much truth and wisdom because this is the case.<sup>32</sup>

Some of this statement naturally makes one wonder what Crowley really saw in Buddhism at all. Elsewhere, Crowley suggests that the *Voice* is the forgery of a great adept — comparable to *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosencroutz* — and therefore superior to anything 'genuine'. This is a good appraisal of a factor behind the development of religious ideas and shows how new texts can become incorporated into the canon of what is accepted as genuine scripture.

Crowley's most significant connection to Buddhism appears to have been Allan Bennett (Ananda Metteyya), founder of the International Buddhist Society and leader of the first Buddhist mission to England in 1908. Bennett, a former member of the Theosophical Society and The Golden Dawn, is an interesting and rather atypical case. Having a background in science, Bennett was dissatisfied with the theosophical influence already present in Buddhism in Ceylon, and went to the trouble of relocating to Burma in order to receive his ordination there. Despite his apparent thirst for a 'pure' Buddhism, unmingled with the 'esoteric Buddhism' of Theosophy, Bennett yet seemed as eager as had Olcott and Dharmapala to present the west with a Buddhism consonant with the investigative principles of western science. Whatever his success in this particular endeavour may have been, the popularity of Theravada has certainly been outstripped by the subsequent arrival of Mahayana, in terms not only of its popularity in the west as a more enriching form of Buddhism, but also intrinsically within the framework of the Buddhism-science dialogue.

32. *The Equinox* Volume III, Number 1, Weiser, 1972; supplement, p.80.

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**15. Before thou canst approach the foremost gate thou hast to learn to part the body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow, and to live in the eternal. For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF.**

Taken as an instruction which Crowley feels should have been mastered before the first gate, he concludes that it is probably indicative of a joke on the part of the guru. Intentionally placing disciples in amusing, awkward or even life-threatening situations in order to tease out a faculty (or just wake them up), is a technique in several Buddhist traditions and elsewhere. Human relations on this planet are generally highly antagonistic affairs, and humanity seems more than capable of producing enough trauma to deal with, without need for 'gurus' to throw in an extra strain, requisite for some though this may seem. All genuine traditions assert after all that real progress is often furnished from the doldrums of bitterest experience, or through shock — although it is necessary for it to become assimilated — and this is a learning opportunity independent of any formal institution or ritualism. It is part of the crisis of sensitivity that Buddha identified as suffering.

Considering this verse again, it would follow naturally that a mind possessing an awareness of itself would turn its attention, by way of natural course, to residing in all its diverse locations. Crowley expresses this elsewhere:

... each one of us has thus an universe of his own, but it is the same universe for each one as soon as it includes all possible experience. This implies the extension of consciousness to include all other consciousness.<sup>33</sup>

The engine of this process of the transference of consciousness is known in Tibetan as *phowa*. Preliminary practices can involve dispersing the consciousness into either a visualised form or the body of others. Other than practising this in meditation or at dinner parties, surviving the initial onslaught of a particularly powerful steam bath without walking outside can indeed induce a sense of dispersion that can be localised in a specific location or area with practice.

**24. Thus do the 'Brothers of the Shadow' - the murderers of their Souls, the dread Dad-Dugpa clan.**

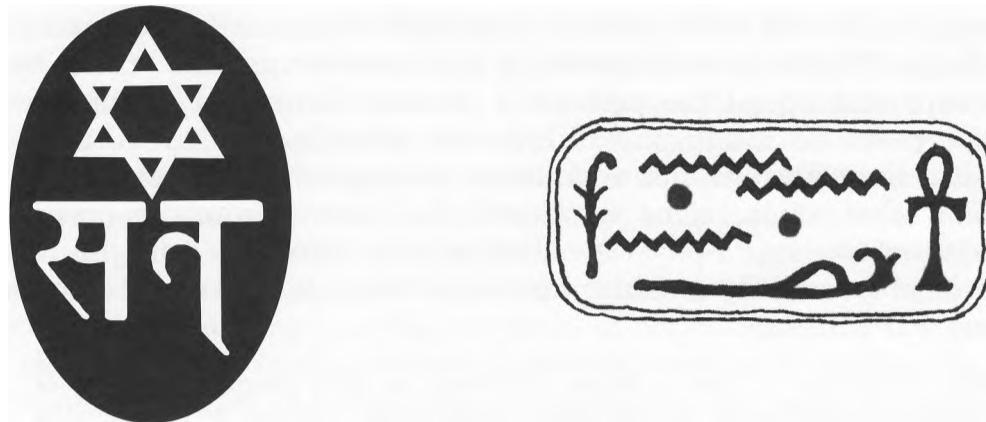
Crowley compares these 'Brothers of the Shadow' with his version of Black Magicians, the Black Brotherhood. Despite the appellation *Dugpa*, this class of entity as it is understood in Theosophical literature is not confined to this particular sect of Bhutanese Buddhism. While on

33. From the Introduction to the 1938 edition of *The Book of the Law*.

one level it is an exotic term for a necromancer or black magician, a Dugpa is rather a principle that occurs throughout nature. There are animal dugpas, and one should also consider the invisible ‘death rays’ that occur in certain species of the plant kingdom that have been known to vampirise other individual plant cultures. Crowley’s Black Brother, on the other hand, seems more related to kabbalistic Tree of Life pathworking, whereby an initiate becomes stuck in Daath due to his or her aspirations being of a purely personal and selfish nature, a type of self-awareness that cannot encounter the experience of the abyss and thus pass beyond it. Madness results for the obvious reasons. In sight, however, of the universal initiatory path from which both Blavatsky and Crowley were drawing, there are connections between dugpas and Black Brothers at least in terms of stages, even though ninety-five percent of black magicians of the dugpa variety are entirely unconscious of what they actually are and do. The term appears to derive from the noun *brug*, meaning ‘thunder’ or ‘dragon’.

**43. Stern and exacting is the virtue of Viraga. If thou its path wouldest master, thou must keep thy mind and thy perceptions far freer than before from killing action.**

The reference to “killing action” relates possibly to the *Bhagavad Gita* and the meaning behind the advice given by Arjuna to Krsna about performing any number of acts without forming attachment to them, which similarly features in Confucianism by letting thoughts ponder the whole memory of experience without reacting to any of its content. This is known in the *Gita* as *appadharma*, and holds a clear correlation with the Buddhist ‘skill in means’; implying that when one is so far advanced on the path, and virtually incapable of not being an expression of the true will, one can use all manner of methods to illumine others. Such behaviour on the part of bodhisattvas may often be misunderstood by those who don’t possess the same level of realisation, generally because these actions are context-specific in the sense of addressing individual recipients and situations. There is an echo of this *modus operandi* in Greek tradition by way of the early Greek goddess of wisdom and profound contemplation, Metis, who formerly represented creative ingenuity in the sense of crafty inventiveness and cunning magic. This was a power embodied by even the highest of the Greek pantheon, Zeus, in his methods of shape-shifting with the aim of whisking away, and achieving congress with, human women. Naturally, the only method to estimate the success of such means would be to gauge the extent to which anything of benefit resulted from it. Blavatsky was perhaps as conversant with this darker goddess as much as she was with Sophia, for in worldly circumstances the two are often irresolvably loving sisters. Certain of her colourful



*The personal seals of Blavatsky (left) and Crowley (right).*

parlour tricks, however, remain beyond any reasonable doubt outside the circle of normal manufacture.

**44. Thou hast to saturate thyself with pure Alaya, become as one with Nature's Soul-Thought. At one with it thou art invincible: in separation, thou becomest the playground of *Samvritti*; origin of all the world's delusions.**

Blavatsky's notes on samvriti give the general idea of it quite accurately. It was a pity therefore that Crowley rejected it, even though it doesn't itself present an important part in the distinction of mind and consciousness in Yogacara insight, a school which Blavatsky mentions in the notes. However, he certainly picks up on the verse's entreaty to acquire *paramartha* (the opposite of samvriti), which is the meaning here of saturating oneself with alaya. This implies cosmic consciousness in the sense of containing all present, past and future psychic energy of the planet which alternately appears either calm or violent, beautiful or grotesque only at the level of samvriti. A Dhyani-Buddha contains this within their own nature, as an adept does with human experience on their own level. It would thus not be so diagrammatically misleading in preliminary meditation to visualise alaya as if centered within a sphere surrounded by the reflected light from the stars — this encircling inverted ethereal counterpart being the astral serpent of Levi, or the gaseous and highly-electrified 'sidereal light' of Paracelsus.

**46. Be of good cheer, O daring pilgrim 'to the other shore.' Heed not the whisperings of Mara's hosts: wave off the tempters, those ill-natured sprites, the jealous *Lhamayin* in endless space.**

The *Lhamayin* are influences that wander footloose through space from decaying stars and solar-systems; they fulfil the cosmological aspect of the dugpa. Mathematically speaking they are the numerical ratios that interrupt and upend the process of element formation, disruptive to those grades of intelligence which are directly dependent upon a physical base. Despite his work being permeated with the amount of realism that it is, some of Crowley's later opinions concerning incorporeal or supra-physical intelligences, deriving from his own experiences, certainly measure up to and reiterate Blavatsky's to some extent. For instance:

My observation of the universe convinces me that there are beings of intelligence and power of a far higher quality than anything we can conceive of as human; that they are not necessarily based on the cerebral and nervous structures that we know, and that the one and only chance for mankind to advance as a whole is for individuals to make contact with such beings.<sup>34</sup>

This is a truly remarkable statement for somebody so plagued with the conceptions of an unsighted inanimate science and at times over-possessed by a corroding intellect inspired from the same, happy to criticise scholasticism but replicating its more suffocating attributes whenever possible.

**49. Have mastery o'er thy Soul, O seeker after truths undying, if thou wouldst reach the goal.**

Crowley again raises the issue of the soul in relation to Buddhism and Theosophy, which is understandable as the term is liable to so much misunderstanding. However, the principle of the septenary organisation of the soul is comparable to the bundle of skandha continua, though it is more intricate, interdynamic and conveys a more complete picture. Souls, atoms, cells or stars are temporary fields of activity, being the emanation of a greater quality of containing intelligence; the organism is thus a projected expression of a greater soul's consciousness. *Soul* here means an organisation of lesser constituent parts. Thus, in the Buddhist analysis of sentient life there is no atman *identity*, yet there is *that* which experiences. The qualitative substance of the souls, which are really aggregations of cosmic memory, contain the potentialities — in terms of being extensions of sentience — that enable expansion and manipulation of consciousness and eventual progression towards illumination over multiple lives. Each soul or subtle body division is by no means emblazoned with an everlasting personality idealised from the human — for which there are many terms in different traditions — although the substances of the soul natures are

34. Crowley, *Magick Without Tears*, Llewellyn Publications, 1973, p.217.

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malleable and reactive to the type of activities impressed upon them by sustained intensities of thinking or behaviour. This all may all appear somewhat confusing, although it will be helpful to think of the whole of space as one vast continuum of infinitely varying potential, due to aggregations of energy being in very different states of activity, whose processes of change through development, mutability and transition are a product of consciousness itself. There is no such thing as dead matter. Regarding the durability of the soul over other aggregates with an apparent lesser life-span — the question which seems to create most of the misunderstanding over the existence or non-existence of this entity — then one could easily compare a passing emotion in relation to the personality, the life of a fingernail in relation to the hand, a cell in the optic nerve in relation to the eye, or a life of a star in relation to its mother galaxy. The longer durability doesn't mean that something isn't dependent on its own cycle of emergence and dissolution, that it isn't subject to change.

**51. The dreary task is done, thy labour well-nigh o'er. The wide abyss that gaped to swallow thee is almost spanned ...**

In view of Crowley elsewhere not seeming to understand why the term *Myalba* ('hell') is referring to (our) man-bearing planet as a whole, we could say that this is, by and large, the same meaning which Blavatsky gives to the Abyss. This sense is one which arguably upholds the ancient view of the underworld as similarly corresponding to this planet during its cyclic progressions through obscuring cosmic influences of various kinds. In more practical terms — for instance, as regards Ordeals of the Abyss, etc. — we would have to emphasise the categorical difference between ceremonial ritual and initiation.

**57. Ere thou canst settle in *Jnana Marga* and call it thine, thy Soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine own throes and sorrows, O Conqueror of Weal and Woe.**

**58. Make hard thy Soul against the snares of self; deserve for it the name of 'Diamond-Soul'.**

**59. For, as the diamond buried deep within the throbbing heart of earth can never mirror back the earthly lights, so are thy mind and Soul; plunged in *Jnana Marga*, these must mirror nought of Maya's realm illusive.**

The 'Diamond-Soul' refers to what in tantric Buddhism is termed as *Vajrasattva* ('diamond-being' or 'diamond-essence'), something of a hybrid between the earlier bodhisattva and Tathagatagarbha doctrines. The diamond (or crystallised light) symbolism illustrates the clear, transparent, yet indestructible character of its nature. Since *Vajrasattva*

sometimes presides over the five Dhyani-Buddhas, this implies the connection of the undivided awareness of soul-consciousness with the universe. It also carries a meaning in bardo terms as the matrix of primordial deity from where post-mortem manifestations of consciousness (as figurations of light) are pre-programmed to appear as tantric deities or Buddhas, according to the agitation of karmic seeds incurred by the disembodied mind. With all this luminosity in view we should consider the same in regards to consciousness through an interpretation of modern physics by Dr Edi Bilimoria:

... the very word 'consider', is derived from the Latin *con sideris*, 'with starlight'. It is a graphical illustration of how the intimate relation between light and mind is deeply embedded in our everyday use of language. Slightly more technically, we all know that  $E = mc^2$ , which invokes light as a factor in the interconversion of radiant energy (light) and matter. However, Einstein's famous equation can as well be rewritten as  $c = \sqrt{E/m}$ . Now the dynamic, Shakti-derived function predominates in  $m$ . So an intuitive reading of the rewritten equation can be stated in words as: light is the dynamic function of Shakti *underpinned* (as the denominator of the equation) by the consciousness quality of Shiva. Therefore light is *propelled consciousness*.<sup>35</sup>

**71. Henceforth thy way is clear right through the Virya gate, the fifth one of the Seven Portals. Thou art now on the way that leadeth to the Dhyana haven, the sixth, the Bodhi Portal.**

**72. The Dhyana gate is like an alabaster vase, white and transparent; within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of *prajna* that radiates from Atman.**

**Thou art that vase.**

The vase is an important symbol in Tibetan Buddhism, for it contains the water of immortality, as well as the heavenly dwelling place within its calm deeps. Alabaster as a translucent building material was considered a magical substance in ancient Egypt, representing the milk of life. This seems to have had something to do with the process of the rock's geological formation taking place in the bowels of the earth, as well as its milky colour. Also termed *Ankh*, alabaster was used to line the walls of the sarcophagus chamber in tombs, due to it being a material representing an alchemical transformation from a gross or terrestrial state to a more subtle one. The vase is also symbolic of the sixth theosophical 'soul principle' known as *buddhi*.

**74. Know, conqueror of sins, once that a Sowanee hath crossed the Seventh Path, all nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued.  
The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night-blossoms, the**

35. Dr Edi Bilimoria: *The Snake and The Rope*, TPH, 2006, pp.237-238.

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streamlet to the pebbles ripples out the tale; dark ocean-waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound, scent laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately pines mysteriously whisper: 'A Master has arisen, a Master of the Day.'

75. He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.

76. Yea, He is mighty. The living power made free in him, that power which is HIMSELF, can raise the tabernacle of illusion high above the gods, above great Brahm and Indra. Now he shall surely reach his great reward!

Crowley appears to accept Blavatsky's note that a Master of the Day is referring to a *manvantara*. He thus suggests that there is confusion over the personal initiatory progress of the man and his cumulative progress in relation to his incarnations, although no confusion is apparent. Neither is there any dubious mix-up of Buddhism and Hinduism taking place, as Indra is indeed happily ensconced within the Buddhist heaven world. Now able to raise the tabernacle of illusion above the abode of Indra, this aspirant is at least able to quell future incarnations, or has autonomy to take them or not. While it might be far-fetched for Blavatsky to suggest that 'Master of the Day' is referring to a whole *manvantara*, it could also read as Master of the Aeon - the incarnation of (a) god in flesh — although not as these successive ages were somewhat linearly adumbrated by Crowley, but rather on a cyclic and thus concurrent basis.

78. Nay, O thou candidate for Nature's hidden lore! If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathagata, those gifts and powers are not for Self.

79. Wouldst thou thus dam the waters born on Sumeru? Shalt thou divert the stream for thine own sake, or send it back to its prime source along the crests of cycles?

From his own understanding, and attentiveness to what is happening in the text, Crowley would be on good tracks in his oblique reference to the first verse, where he compares a Magus to a bodhisattva, he who:

... detaches the being that was once called 'Self' to fling it down from the Abyss that it may 'appear in the Heaven of Jupiter as a morning star or as an evening star, to give light to them that dwell upon the earth'.

The 'Order of the Silver Star' seems to fulfil a similar function, at least in terms of its description. It appears to be on account of the different meaning of the bodhisattva in Mahayana, and the fact that Mahayana is less deterministically arranged than Theravada, which is behind

Crowley's reason for designating Blavatsky an A.-A.: Magister Templi rather than, for instance, a Magus. By his own authority on this, the conferral of any one of these three supernal grades alone would appear fairly arbitrary as "... these Grades are not necessarily attained fully, and in strict consecution, or manifested wholly on all planes".<sup>36</sup> Their interchangeability seems supported further by the fact that Crowley correlates the qualities of an *Ipsissimus*, Magus and Magister Templi with the three *laksanas* (marks) of Buddha's insight into the conditioned world — *anitya* (impermanence), *duhkha* (suffering, although more appropriately, imperfection), and *anatman*. These three insights, despite Crowley's hierarchical arrangement of them commencing with *anatman*, were not originally consecutive realisations but were developed from each other by fairly logical consequence. They may at one point even have had a connection with the higher threefold-knowledge in earlier Vedism.<sup>37</sup> Keeping with the role of a bodhisattva here, however, Crowley's description of an *Ipsissimus* having no relation as such with any Being: He has no will in any direction, and no consciousness of any kind involving duality, for in Him all is accomplished ..." compares moderately well with the trans-personal attainment of sunyata and what this means for a bodhisattva, as Sangharakshita intimates:

If *Sunyata* is described as the absolute cessation of even the faintest vestige of self-consciousness or ego-sense, however, and if from the cessation of self-consciousness the cessation of self-will necessarily follows, then obviously it should be possible to regard the complete cessation of self-will as equivalent to the realisation of *sunyata*. Silence in its profoundest sense is thus *Sunyata* and *Sunyata* is the Absolute Silence.<sup>38</sup>

Having realised that there is no enduring self-identity — and thus no personal motivations manifesting as 'I will attain', or 'I will endure' — compassion reveals itself as a 'law without attribute', a dynamic expression resulting from this insight into what is described as a luminous emptiness, where there is no sense of self. This is somewhat towards the understanding of compassion in Mahayana as it goes hand-in-hand with emptiness; it is not really seen as a normal human attribute — in the sense of a superficial narcissistic kindness, or an emotion directed towards others — but rather the manifestation of a

36. *Magick*, 1973, p.329.

37. Elsewhere in the commentary the marks are identified as the laws of illusion and banished for being the emblems of Klingsor's castle! However, this does find home in Madhyamika.

38. *Magick*, 1973, p.330.

39. From *Paradox and Poetry in 'The Voice of the Silence'* by Bhikshu Sangharakshita. Indian Institute of World Culture, 1958.

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trans-personal or Buddha-like quality. It would naturally follow at this level that a rejection of the bodhisattva path would result in an attempted avoidance of suffering rather than an overcoming of it, so any ultimate liberation from the cycle would not be possible. Does Crowley infer any of this despite being unaware of the terms? Not particularly, although in a routinely bumptious remark to a verse in this commentary:

It is with no hope of personal advancement that the Masters teach. Personal advancement has ceased to have any meaning long before one becomes a Master. Nor do they teach because they are such Nice Kind People. Masters are like Dogs, which 'bark and bite, for 'tis their nature to.' We want no credit, no thanks; we are sick of you; only, we have to go on.<sup>40</sup>

This suggests that the principle of this type of compassion is really the underlying ground of advancement of all kinds, even if not immediately of any discernable self-aggrandising benefit to the agent.

**97. 'Yea; on the Arya Path thou art no more Srotapatti, thou art a Bodhisattva. The stream is cross'd. 'Tis true thou hast a right to Dharmakaya vesture; but Sambhogakaya is greater than a Nirvanee, and greater still is a Nirmanakaya - the Buddha of Compassion.'**

Crowley seems dissatisfied towards the end of his commentary, as if he had been expecting a shotgun to the brain. There is clearly a lack of pharmacological effect going on for him; his commentary degenerates under a host of discursive quibbling and, when it suits, an omnipotent literalism. However, the real crux of the problem — something we see presented in the verse above — is due to Crowley not being aware that, despite possessing the highest attainments, a bodhisattva does not become by his A.:A.- classification of mystical experiences a liberated god; he 'remains' as a "Buddha of Compassion". We could therefore more productively conceive of Crowley's opinions over this as an attitude towards this aspect of Mahayana as a whole, as it is no mere 'salvation army' whimsy injected by Blavatsky or, even worse, something smacking of a Black Brother. This being said, one naturally imagines that had he ever known about Nagarjuna's development of the middle-way doctrine, he would probably have assimilated its proposition assiduously above all else.

Further on in his commentary he seems to repeat what he believes is being attempted in the text, by including material describing the nature of liberated consciousness, a transcendent realm of reality with which he liked to declare intimate familiarity, often via the categories of his supernal grading system. Leaving aside the obvious reasons for him

40. *The Equinox*, Volume III, Number 3, Weiser, 1972; supplement, p.74.

including it in the commentary here, however, it is quite systemic of his view that these conditions could be communicated in language, that they were somehow even ingrained in written language; never pausing to consider that language itself originates from and elucidates only a specific spectrum of experience - our modern trade and commerce languages especially. The only real animation we find in written language is in the invisible glue that binds correspondence to word; there is nothing inherently substantial in language itself, any more than there is in the imprints of mathematical equations. The summoning magnetism — that which binds object to shadow from a two-dimensional representation — occurs by association from memory.

Concerning the geography of progression, Crowley points out as a criticism in the commentary that the pilgrim moves along the path but not in point of view. This seems to restate only that the transcendent realities being indicated are, by their very nature, not subject to logical analysis because unable to be experienced referentially through the pattern and frame of word. His related view which he often projects as confirmatory of his attainments — that truths contradict themselves and become their opposite through the abyss happily ever after — is again a drama subsisting upon the apparatus of reason, however deeply submerged or richly mediated. There is no movement beyond this endlessly pole-shifting category of meaning; for as intellectual approximations at best of what they are attempting to describe, they remain figures at play in the reactive stop-gap sensorium of reason, thus remaining dialectically subversive only. Experience of the other natures — suggested only through paradox in a 'language of silence', and sensed only by the nature of the Wandering Fool — is never present to participate fully in the rattle of dialectical sensation, for the very simple reason that it is not susceptible to a cage of words as it involves a trans-conceptual knowledge, one that doesn't have to declare or prove itself. In the ancient world, silence was likened to the piping of a *syrinx*, which was known for making the sound of a serpent hissing.

Crowley's commentary to the *Voice*, despite some interpretational flaws, occasionally shows some brilliant insights. It is also an interesting document in terms of presenting a working vision towards the practical stages of his A•A', system of magical training, which like Blavatsky's work in some respects presents a fusion and synthesis of eastern and western esoteric tradition. Both Blavatsky and Crowley had also provided a methodology for the assimilation of aspects of eastern spiritual thinking, which was neither so well developed by, nor as readily available from, the scholarly commentators of their times. Regarding another theme here — that of the development of Buddhism — it will be noticed that even in its origins it is in reality far from

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something that manifested independently, and that over its existence it has remained anything but a homogenous and unchanging train of events. If humanity is still around for the next thousand years, then the forms of Buddhism recognised today will not be the only ones practised and discussed. Lama Anagarika Govinda had something to say about this which incorporates an observation that could just as easily apply to many other things as well:

In our work in the West, we have the great opportunity today presented by a new beginning. We are not bound to any one national tradition of Buddhism, and we do not need to carry around with us the burden of an outmoded inheritance. We can approach Buddhism in the spirit of beginners, and ... we have the chance to observe without prejudice the living dynamism of the development of Buddhism through the thousands of years of its existence. In this way we can gain an overall picture of the variety of forms that developed at an early date in India before spreading to South, Central, and East Asia and unfolding there. Every one of these forms is a grandiose and unique creation that accentuates and displays the different aspects of the Buddha Dharma, so that it is of importance not only for its own time and culture, but also for the further development of the Dharma as a whole. We respect the different traditions as they are, without trying merely to imitate them. For if we were to imitate any one particular tradition, we would be binding ourselves to something that belonged to a different time and a different culture. We would merely be exchanging our tradition for another - which in the long run would be senseless.<sup>41</sup>

41. From *A Living Buddhism for the West*, Shambhala, 1989, p. 10.