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From the Grand Master

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

 uite a lot of mail is still being forwarded to me from the old San Bernardino P. O. Box address, which was closed about four months ago (unfortunately, the timing of the change resulted in that address being included as the U.S. Grand Lodge contact address in the latest *Oriflamme*). So before writing, please check the contact list included in the latest *Agape* or on the U.S. Grand Lodge web site for the current addresses of all the U.S. Grand Lodge executive officers and governing bodies. Changes of address within the U.S. should be sent to the U.S. Grand Treasurer General.

Soror Helena and I were recently invited to attend a Gnostic Mass workshop held at a beautiful wilderness facility north of Sydney, Australia. Many thanks to Soror Shalimar, Frater Numa, and our Sisters and Brothers from Oceania Lodge, Darkwood Oasis, Alpha and Omega Oasis and Serpente et Astrum Camp, who received us with splendid hospitality. Despite the Mother of all Jet Lags and occasional culture clash over such things as spaghetti on toast for breakfast, we found the workshop to be a wonderfully interesting and stimulating experience. Fresh perspectives seem never to fail to bring fresh revelations about Liber XV. I always try to take away something new when ever I see the Mass celebrated by new faces, and I did not leave empty-handed this time.

In structuralizing (internally processing, describing, interpreting, and evaluating) any event (such as attending a Gnostic Mass), we all abstract from the raw data presented to us; i.e, we *perceive* only a fraction of the data available, and of that, we *accept* only a fraction for each level of our internal data processing. This limited data set is, of course, subject to ordinary error, but it is also subject to coloration by our individual psychological reactions to sights, smells, sounds and language. Once we have accepted this “filtered” and “tinted” data set into our minds, we process it by filling in the data gaps with assumptions based on our past experiences and our beliefs, thus creating associations and inferences about the event. Since the observer is always a participant, at some level, in the event being observed, the observer’s inferences about the event can return to influence the event itself.

This is why the Gnostic Mass can seem so different when we participate in one at a new location, even when it is technically true to Liber XV. The performance of the Gnostic Mass will always be influenced by the inferences of the participants; and, since we are “time-binding” creatures, many of these inferences are passed down from one “generation” of participants to the next in a particular area.

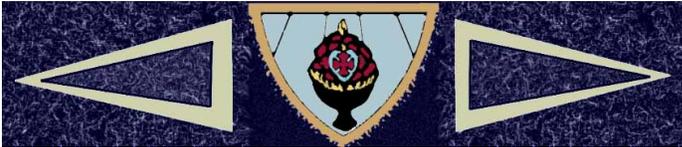
Many (probably most) of us, when we first experience a Gnostic Mass which is very different from the Gnostic Masses we are used to, will react rather negatively. Because it was influenced by a different set of inferences than ours, and these inferences were based on a different abstracted data set and different assumptions, it will not convey the same “meaning” we are accustomed to, and it will, thus, seem strange or even “wrong.” If we are accustomed to interpreting the Gnostic Mass as an allegory of the sexual process, we may be uneasy with its interpretation as an allegory of the individual’s path of initiation, or as an exposition of Qabalistic cosmology. If we are accustomed to experiencing the Gnostic Mass as a beautiful, solemn, and stately service, we may be uncomfortable with its presentation as a joyful, boisterous celebration. If we are accustomed to encountering the Priestess as a warm and accessible Venus, we may be troubled by her unveiling as a distant, icily alluring Artemis; or as a terrible, radiant Athena.

This difficulty can be largely overcome by simply being *aware* of the structuralization process described above. When we travel to new locations as individuals, we should keep our minds open, and use the opportunity to broaden our perspective and learn something new. And, as we stage our local Masses, we should continually question our own assumptions, inferences and “local traditions” pertaining to the Mass. We should try to supplement our abstracted data set, actually rereading Liber XV occasionally; by listening, with an open mind, to the ideas of others; and by trying to approach the Mass with the eyes of a child, with the *expectation* that we will be shown something new every time.

The Gnostic Mass is a Well which will never run dry, unless we stop it up with the debris of our own ideas and habits.

Love is the law, love under will.

Sabazius 



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From The Grand Treasurer General

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

“Establish at thy Kaaba a clerk-house: all must be done well and with business way.” (AL III:41)

You may have heard that O.T.O. is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation (actually there are now two corporations, one for O.T.O. International and one for U.S. Grand Lodge, but for the sake of clarity I will treat them as one entity called “O.T.O.”). This particular legal standing, recognized by the federal and state governments, imparts to us many benefits; but it also limits us in certain ways. If we want to continue to receive the benefits of our tax-exempt status, we need to abide by the legal requirements and conditions of that status. In this article, I will detail some of those benefits, as well as the rules by which we must abide in order to enjoy them. Since much of the O.T.O. operates and interacts with the rest of the world on a local basis, every member should be aware of these requirements. In particular, local body masters **must** abide by these rules in order to maintain their body in good standing.

First of all, O.T.O. is a non-profit corporation. We have designated it as such in our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. What this essentially means is that no individual shall personally profit from the activities of the corporation. All receipts in excess of expenses must be applied to the non-profit purposes of the corporation, namely, to support the fraternal and religious activities of the O.T.O. This important rule applies at the local level as well. It is important to keep funds collected for O.T.O. separate from your personal funds. Local bodies are strongly encouraged to establish a separate bank account in the name of the body. (Contact me for more information on how to do this.) Furthermore, do not borrow against O.T.O. funds or use them as collateral for a personal loan. When a local body closes for any reason, any money remaining must be sent to Grand Lodge.

In addition to our non-profit status, we have been recognized as tax-exempt by the IRS under tax code section 501(c)3. For this purpose, we are classified as a religious organization by the IRS, and we are not required to pay taxes on our income. We don't even have to file tax returns. This important benefit also comes with conditions. One of these is that we cannot engage in any political lobbying. Again, this applies at all levels of the Order. Local body newsletters must not include endorsements for any political party or candidate, nor encourage voting a particular way on a particular ballot measure. You may encourage people to vote, but not *how* to vote.

One of the greatest advantages of our classification as a religious organization by the IRS is that contributions to the O.T.O., whether made to Grand Lodge or to a local body, are tax-deductible. This applies to anyone who gives money to the Order, members and non-members alike. However, like everything else, there are specific conditions which govern this. The basic rule is that in order for a contribution to be tax-deductible, you must not have received any goods or services in exchange. Thus, money you pay for a feast is not deductible, since you received food in exchange. However, any additional contributions you make (either to the local body or to Grand Lodge directly) *are* generally deductible. These contributions do not have to be in the form of cash. For example, if you purchase a required piece of temple equipment and donate it to the Oasis, you may deduct the amount you paid for that equipment. In addition, your O.T.O. dues and fees may also be tax-deductible; consult a tax preparer to make sure.

As all local body masters know, much of the cost of running a body comes out of the pocket of the master. For example, as master of L.V.X. Oasis I paid the bill for the Oasis phone line every month. Luckily, such expenses are tax-deductible, but only if paid from your own money and not reimbursed from body funds. Also, the item purchased must be for the sole use and benefit of the body; for example, you cannot deduct the cost of remodeling your house just because it is used by the local body, since you would personally benefit. Also, you cannot usually deduct the value of your time spent doing things for the Order (I wish!).

In order to take advantage of the tax deduction, all contributions must be documented appropriately. In most cases this is as simple as obtaining a receipt from the local body for your contribution. However, if your contribution is \$250 or more, the body must write a letter to you acknowledging your contribution. This letter should be on O.T.O. letterhead, and must state the amount of the contribution, and that no goods or services were provided to the donor in exchange for the donation. A copy of the letter should be sent to the Grand Treasurer General. This letter does not have to be filed with your tax return, but you may need to produce it if requested to do so by the IRS.

Of course, all donations and expenses must be properly recorded in the financial records of the body as well, and reported to the G.T.G. on a regular basis. Please contact me to obtain forms that you can use for this purpose (or you may report in your own format as long as it conforms to standard accounting methods). If your body conducts a significant business enterprise on the side (e.g., sells goods such as T-shirts, incense, etc.) the income from this activity falls under these provisions as well. Please indicate the income and expenses associated with these activities separately and clearly in your financial reports; certain kinds of activities require additional reporting to the IRS.

If you are a member or body master and have any for-profit business enterprise that you run personally, make sure it is clearly separated from your O.T.O. activity. Do not associate your business with the name of O.T.O. or your local body, so that the separation between the non-profit and profit ventures is very clear. Likewise, do not use the same e-mail address or web pages to conduct activities for your personal business and for O.T.O. Finally, keep in mind that I am not a tax lawyer, so all of the foregoing information should be regarded only as a general guide and not as specific advice for your situation. I cannot determine whether a particular contribution is tax-deductible for you; this responsibility rests with the individual taxpayer. For more information, I strongly encourage everyone to refer to IRS publication No. 526 on Charitable Contributions, or consult a qualified tax professional. Nonetheless, I welcome your feedback on this article or any other questions you might have. Refer to the box on page 3 of this newsletter for information on how to contact me.

In other news, U.S. Grand Lodge recently sent out reminder statements to all members who owed Grand Lodge dues as of the end of April. If you think you might owe dues but did not get a statement, please let me know—we may not have your current address. For those of you who have already responded, on behalf of Grand Lodge I convey to you our sincere thanks. Also please note that all U.S. dues renewal payments should be sent to the U.S. Grand Treasurer General at P.O. Box 45139, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Love is the law, love under will.

Frater S.L.Q., United States Grand Treasurer General

Notice

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

Brother Gary Hudson went on to his Greater Feast Sunday, July 12, 1998 e.v. His death was due to an accidental overdose of prescribed medication. Gary had been suffering from a debilitating back injury and general bad health for the last three years. He is survived by three children ages 14, 11 and 9.

Gary Hudson was a devoted Thelemite for over twenty years and has done much to further the Law of Thelema here in Indianapolis and the Midwest region. He was a founding member of Porta Lucis Oasis and served as our ambassador for the group while it was open. He was a central figure in exposing the greater pagan community to the Gnostic Mass in Indianapolis. Being the Priest was one of the most satisfying experiences of his life. Gary always had time for anyone interested in Thelema and went out of his way on several occasions to be of service to other Thelemites and his community at large. He was the kind of brother who would give you the shirt off his back — no questions asked. In the spirit of service Gary founded a free medical clinic here in Indianapolis that is still thriving today. He received his medical background in Viet Nam as an EMT. Gary has traveled widely in Asia and both North and South America. Everything Gary did was approached with an intense enthusiasm and passion. He was a loving father, a devoted brother and a good friend. He will not be forgotten.

Unfortunately his children are now orphans as their mother passed away four years ago. These children are precocious and wise beyond their years. I have always looked upon them as children of the Order and have done whatever I could over the last few years to be of help and guidance to them and their father. Needless to say my concern for them is now greater than ever.

The last few years of Gary's life have been hard and painful. Gary had his problems and his children do not fully realize that his life was more fulfilling and active prior to his back injury. Therefore I would like to request from all of you to send cards and flowers to these children so that they will understand that their father's life had joy and beauty in it. Gary was a Star in the company of Stars. He strove for something greater and knew good people. Even if they are too young to realize and understand this now — I know when they are older this will mean a great deal to them.

We will celebrate his Greater Feast Saturday, July 18, 1998 e. v. at IAO-ABRASAX Oasis in Bloomington, IN.

The Hudson Family
c/o E. Goodman
2332 East 66th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46220

Love is the law, love under will.

In truth and tolerance,
Sr. Manibhadra



ΑΓΑΠΗ

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From The Grand Secretary General

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

Peace, Tolerance, Truth, Salutation on All Points of Triangle; Respect to the Order. To All Whom it may Concern, Greetings and Health.

“The OTO is dedicated to the high purpose of securing the Liberty of the Individual and his or her advancement in Light, Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, and Power. This is accomplished through Beauty, Courage, and Wit on the Foundation of Universal Brotherhood.”

I take these words to heart. In doing so I must share with you a current member strategy that dumbfounds me: soliciting involvement of the Grand Tribunal in adjudicating ill-tempered interactions between (and punishment of) fellow Initiates. In the last 4 months a local body's treasury was stolen, 3 charters to initiate have been taken back, there have been 2 suspensions, and 3 have been put on order-wide bad report suspending further advancement indefinitely. This saddens me deeply.

THE SOCIETY FOR CENTRES OF PESTILENCE *an epistle from IO Pan*

Too quickly Initiates are forgetting oaths sworn with each initiation as they regard to pledges of devotion toward fellow Initiates. Now I detest Holy Book thumpers of all religions, but consider these words of our Prophet, *inspirations for acting in accordance with True WILL*: I.v41, I.v57, II.v59, II.v24.

Now...I, too, might very well call the local police if a brother or sister jumped up and down on my automobile, brandished a sword at me, or made me fear for my life. At the same time other Initiates knowledgeable of the Constitution of the Order are proclaiming that those who seek justice through the profane courts forfeit “Duties of the Brethren” according Liber 101. Consider this excerpt from the Seventh House:

“25. Lawsuits between members of the Order are absolutely forbidden. . .
26. All disputes between Brethren should be referred firstly to the Master or Masters of their Lodge or Lodges . . . the dispute is to be referred (appealed) to the Grand Tribunal. . .
27. Refusal . . . to accept such decision shall entail expulsion from the Order. . .”

With Initiation we attempt to WILLfully control the chi - the life force. Losing control and assaulting another member is not acceptable. In proclaiming ourselves Magicians we must comprehend our own axis and invoke properly for results in accordance with our WILL. Most people run on auto-pilot. Initiators cannot afford the ill consequences of this when member's safety is involved. If you are an Initiator for the Order is it really an act of WILL to injure another member, resulting in losing your charters and privileges?

I think not. There is a cost for WILL and Liberty! We are in this Magical Order to learn to become strong enough to invoke, evoke, equilibrate, and wield the forces of our Selves.

In a relationship, are you fully conscious when you invoke a lover - of their lust, their anger, their charm, their inspiration, their ire, their humor? Do you take ownership of the fruit of your invocation - whether successful or unexpectedly devastating? Are you prepared for the “reward of Ra Hoor Khut” for the ramifications of your invocation?

The Order must have Initiators who can control their chi. We

hope they will be role models for the Order. Initiators with good track records advance in the Order and become chartered to take on further trust. It saddens me when we have to take back Charters. The Order shouldn't exist to intervene and take sides in the relationships of lovers. We seek and encourage local Body Masters and Initiators who can equilibrate their light and dark chi to instill and fulfill the principles of the Order. If necessary, Initiators and Body Masters must become peace-negotiators between brothers and sisters in and around their local Body area.

But why would anyone conjure the Grand Tribunal into your personal relationships or local Body business? The Grand Tribunal becomes involved to consider how the Principals of the Order are being represented. Obviously, when that isn't happening the Order has to become involved and take heed as to how it is being represented. In accordance with these great Principles, the Order may suspend or take back privileges previously chartered.

The Grand Tribunal is concerned with each Initiate's safety, and about misjudgment resulting in liability to the Order. Is it an act of Will to carelessly overlook safety resulting injury during Initiation? We look to our Initiators and local Bodies to show 'success as your Proof.' Do you really want a Sovereign Grand Inspector General sent by the Grand Tribunal investigating your local Body: talking with involved body officials and members, questioning the use of a perfect portion of proper precaution regarding safety regulations, asking about sobriety and use of any illegal substances during initiations, correct communication of our rituals, questions to determine whether or not the Order is liable financially for your error. An SGIG will ask frank questions in order to sort the covert trusts and local politics surrounding the situation. If the SGIG doesn't get the cooperation expected to sort out personality conflicts, or they feel that the principles of the Order are not being practiced, they are empowered to simply revoke charters, suspend initiators, or close local bodies. They can recommend expulsion of specific members from the Order to the Grand Tribunal. Be aware that an alert SGIG recognizes the fear in members' eyes which results from worrying about repercussions from their leaders after ill-chosen words and the departure of the SGIG having made their judgement.

It is the act of True WILL to control oneself no matter how close to the brink you get. Steady. Eye on the outcome. True Will is the presence of mind, in the face of disaster, to have the Zen-Thelemic wit to see your way safely through a nightmare, maintain balance, a smile, and sharp awareness of your adversaries. We give our power away when we buy into the other's anger, stress, insanity, and baited provocation. Like the Zen-Taoist, we can either move in harmony with the blow and redirect it or respond head on.

How can we ever experience Life, Light, Liberty, and Love without personal ownership for our behavior and actions, and resolution of our own life's issues by ourselves? To the extent that we live lives looking for the Order to put a roof over our heads, feed us, resolve our differences, punish our offenders, even render assistance to needy brothers and sisters, we give away our L, L, L, and L to others to provide for us as they will, when they will, and if they will.

Let us revisit our oaths and burn into our hearts their fidelity and fraternity.

Your comments and feedback are welcome at usgsg@primenet.com.

Love is the law, Love under will.

IO Pan, United States Grand Secretary General