

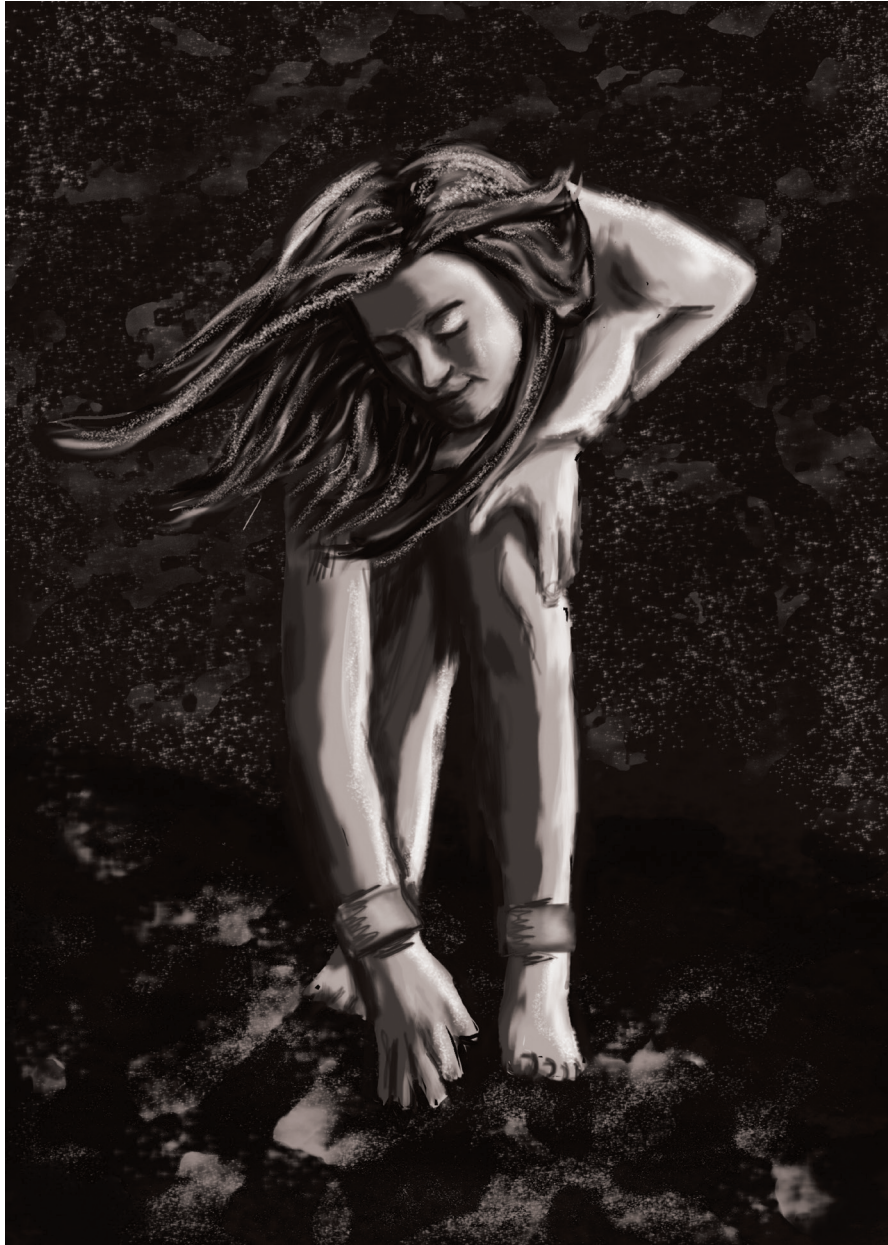
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The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.



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Anno Viii

Volume XVII, No. 1, 2017 EV



Mysteria Mystica Maxima

Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A.



E.G.C.

Agapé

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

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Agapé is published quarterly by Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A., a California not-for-profit religious corporation with business offices at P.O. Box 32, Riverside, CA 92502-0032. • O.T.O. U.S.A. is a duly recognized Grand Lodge of Ordo Templi Orientis, an international religious organization with business offices at JAF Box 7666, New York, NY 10116, and corporate headquarters at 24881 Alicia Parkway E-529, Laguna Hills, CA 92653. • Donations, legacies, and bequests made to Ordo Templi Orientis U.S.A. are tax-deductable to the extent permitted by law. • **Agapé** is distributed to all O.T.O. members in good standing in the U.S.A., and is available for download in PDF format at the U.S. Grand Lodge website: www.oto-usa.org/agape.html • Copyright © 2017 EV Ordo Templi Orientis U.S.A. All rights reserved and assigned to the respective authors. The viewpoints and opinions expressed herein are the responsibility of the contributing authors.

FROM THE EDITOR

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

Greetings, and Happy New Year to all our brothers and sisters from the editorial staff of *Agapé*!

As you will have no doubt noticed, this issue of *Agapé* brings you a new look. We hope you enjoy the change.

This issue brings us *nearly* up to date with news from the Electoral College. We anticipate that our next issue should bring us fully up to date and back on schedule. We appreciate your patience through what has been a protracted period of reorganizing and re-establishing a production process for *Agapé*.

As always, we welcome your content submissions at agape@oto-usa.org. Please share your articles, artwork, local body milestones, news, and rituals!

Love is the law, love under will.

Faternally,

Sr. Ron Labhart
Assistant Editor, *Agapé*

Regarding this quarter’s beautiful cover image, “Nuit,” the artist, Amber Mikelle of Crux Ansata Oasis, has requested that this quotation from *Liber AL* appear with the artwork:

“Then saith the prophet and slave of the beauteous one: Who am I, and what shall be the sign? So she answered him, bending down, a lambent flame of blue, all-touching, all penetrant, her lovely hands upon the black earth, & her lithe body arched for love, and her soft feet not hurting the little flowers: Thou knowest! And the sign shall be my ecstasy, the consciousness of the continuity of existence, the omnipresence of my body.” AL I:26

FROM THE GRAND MASTER

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

NOTOCON X and XI

U.S. Grand Lodge’s tenth national conference was held over the weekend of August 14-16, 2015 EV in Austin, Texas, with the theme of “Fire of Motion.” My keynote address is included herein. Many thanks to Sisters Melissa H., Vanessa C., Trisha M., and the members of Scarlet Woman Lodge, Bubastis Oasis, and 718 Camp, the speakers, the vendors, the Gnostic Mass crew, the musicians and chorus, and everyone else who put in so much excellent work to give us another great conference! I’d also like to thank Sister Melissa for her superb service as Chair of the Conference Committee, which ended at the conclusion of NOTOCON X, and offer our congratulations and best wishes to Sister Vanessa C., who has assumed those duties.

Since NOTOCON X, we have had the O.T.O. Women’s Symposium in Minneapolis (August 5-7 2016 EV) and the U.S.G.L. Lover Triad Convocation and Annual Joint Meetings of the Governing Bodies in Portland, Oregon (September 2-5, 2016 EV).

NOTOCON XI is scheduled for August 2017 EV in Orlando, Florida, with the theme of “For the Chance of Union.” Information about accommodations, speakers, schedule, and registration may be found here: xi.notocon.org/

Annual Report

U.S.G.L.’s Annual Report for FY2015 EV can be found here: oto-usa.org/2016/07/usgl-annual-report-for-2015

The Annual Report for 2016 EV is now being assembled and will be available shortly.

Man of Earth Delegate Program

The Man of Earth Delegate program is well underway at this point. To recap, we have created a system to implement Paragraph 5 of *Liber CXCIV*:

The Man of Earth takes no share in the Government of the Order; for he is not yet called upon to give his life to it in service; and with us Government is Service, and nothing else. The Man of Earth is therefore in much the position of the Plebian in Rome in the time of Menenius Agrippa. But there is this marked difference; that every Man of Earth is encouraged and expected to push on to the next stage. In order that the feelings of the general body may be represented, the Men of Earth choose four persons, two men and two women, from among themselves, to stand continually before the face of the Supreme and Holy King, serving him day and night. These persons must not be of higher rank than the Second Degree; they must volunteer for this service at the conclusion of that ceremony; and therefore they give up their own prospect of advancement in the Order for one year, that they may serve their fellows. This is then the first lesson in our great principle, the attainment of honour through renunciation.

We are referring to the four persons mentioned above as the *Man of Earth Delegates*. They are chosen by a *Man of Earth Delegate Nominating Panel* composed of *Man of Earth Representatives*, one representing each local body in U.S.G.L., in theory. The Representative for each local body is chosen by the Man of Earth members of that local body. In addition to participating in the Delegate nominating process, the Representatives are responsible for providing information about the Delegate program to the local Man of Earth membership. So far, in recognition of the fact that there are local bodies that would be unable to participate in the program, we have kept local body participation in the Nominating Panel voluntary. However, I’d like to request that all local bodies that have not already done so, and are capable of doing so, quickly provide a Representative to the Nominating Panel. For the details on how to do this, please contact the Chair of the Nominating Panel at dnp@oto-usa.org. For all other questions on the M.O.E. Delegate Program, please get in touch with the current delegates at delegates@gmail.com.

Birth, Death, and Jargon

Liber AL II:41 forms a part of what is known as the *Calendar* of our Church, a list of rituals and feasts recited by the Deacon in the Gnostic Mass. It reads as follows: “A feast for fire and a feast for water; a feast for life and a greater feast for death!”

As a sort of back-formed colloquialism, the term “greater feast” has come to be used, in some circles, as a synonym for the date of person’s death (or its anniversary), and some have taken this further and have begun using the term “lesser feast” to refer to a person’s birthday. I think this is usually done simply as an attempt to employ insider jargon, but it is possible that the use of the term “greater feast” is at least partially euphemistic--intended to avoid using the unlucky word “death,” after the old tradition of using such terms as “passing away,” etc.

In the *New Comment* on *AL* II:41, Crowley says, “The feast for life is at a birth; and the feast for death at a death. It is of the utmost importance to make funerals merry, so as to train people to take the proper view of death. The fear of death is one of the great weapons of tyrants, as well as their scourge; and it distorts our whole outlook upon the Universe.”

In the *D Comment* on *AL* II:34-44 (the entire *Calendar*), Crowley says,

“With abrupt vigour the subject swings over to the triumph of the Masters. Aiwass bids us rise up and awake. He prescribes ways of worship. We are to invoke with joy and beauty. He begins by making a list of rituals and feasts; and in the course of this he works himself up into a state of rapture so that these rites at first clearly defined in order, gather force, wave upon wave, quicker and quicker, until at last he proclaims all times and places as proper for feasts. At the end he exclaims once more that all such pleasures are free from any taint of hidden poison. We are to make the present perfect, without the least fear that we are making trouble for ourselves in the future. True, our bodies are dissolved; but this brings us into full timeless rapture. We enjoy all that may be, as we could not even at the best while forced to measure our

Magick in terms of the body and mind. It may be that events cease to occur, that they become one single event, a constant state of joy.”

So the term “greater feast” isn’t even correct insider jargon (Crowley didn’t even use the term in his commentaries), and the term “lesser feast” even less so (it doesn’t even occur in *Liber AL*). Even the phrase [greater] “feast for death,” which Crowley *did* use, does not refer to the *actual death* of a person, but rather what we living people do to honor a person upon their death--i.e., celebrate.

“Death” is a perfectly fine word. It is used abundantly in *Liber AL*, sometimes with very noble and favorable connotations. As the above commentaries clearly state, we have no cause to dread it for ourselves. I think, personally, that we Thelemites should refer to a person’s death, straightforwardly, as their **death**. To substitute euphemistic terms like “greater feast” for the plain term “death” is to subtly acknowledge our residual dread of it.

However, although we may indeed have no cause to dread our own deaths, grieving the death of a loved one is perfectly natural. Further, it is usually a necessary part of our human process of adaptation when a person’s life has been significantly changed by the loss of a partner, or a child, or a beloved mentor, or other person who has been a major part of their daily existence and may even have been a prominent factor in the shaping of their present character. Crowley’s advice that funerals should be made merry should not be taken to imply that any stigma should be attached to the natural grieving process.

So let us celebrate the life of the one who has died, and let us be kind, considerate, and, if possible, useful, to those who have lost a loved one.

Love is the law, love under will.

Faternally,

Sabazius



FROM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

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

Ninth Degree Revolutionary

Members in good standing of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the IX° in the United States (who are not serving as an officer or voting member of any Governing or Administrative Body under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Grand Lodge) wishing to volunteer to stand for election to the office of Revolutionary by the Electoral College are encouraged to write the President of the E.C.—see p. 18 for contact information.

Sanction for Appeal

Brothers or Sisters of our Order who wish to pursue appeal to a verdict of the Grand Tribunal may write to individual members of the Electoral College to request sanction be given to take their case to the Areopagus of the Eighth Degree (per *Liber CXCIV*, section 16) via e-mail links found at <http://ec.oto-usa.org/ESelectors.html>.

Hosting E.C. Meetings

Local bodies that are interested in hosting meetings of the Electoral College are encouraged to write the President of the E.C.—see p. 18 for contact information.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Electoral College, to thank the Master and members of Scarlet Woman Lodge (Austin, TX), Bubastis Oasis (Dallas, TX), and 718 Camp (San Antonio, TX) for their excellent hospitality in hosting our Summer NOTOCON 2015 EV meeting. I would also like to thank the Master and members of Horus Oasis (Salt Lake City, UT), the Master and members Knights Templar Oasis (Salem, MA), and the Master and members of Black Sun Lodge (Cleveland, OH) for their wonderful hospitality in hosting our Fall 2015 EV, Spring 2016 EV, and Fall 2016 EV meetings.

Upcoming E.C. Meetings

The Winter 2016 EV Electoral College meeting is to be held online Saturday, January 21, 2017 EV The Spring 2017 EV Electoral College meeting is to be held on Saturday, April 22, 2017 at Star of Babalon Camp (Raleigh, NC). The Summer 2017 EV Electoral College meeting is to be held in conjunction with NOTOCON on August 11, 2017, hosted by Hidden Spring Oasis (Orlando, FL).

Please mail submissions to the Secretary of the Electoral College—see p. 18 for contact information.

Attending E.C. Meetings

Dues current members in good standing of V° and above are welcome to attend and observe the in-person Electoral College Meetings. We request that those planning to attend contact the Master of the hosting body so that adequate arrangements can be made.

Website

The official E.C. website can be found at: <http://ec.oto-usa.org>

Forms

Masters seeking up-to-date forms for the Annual Report, Change of Mastership Application, Application for Oasis Status, Application for Lodge Status, or closure forms will find them by contacting the Document Control Officer at doc_control@oto-usa.org.

Communication with the E.C.

I would like to invite any initiates with specific concerns or questions regarding the operation of the Electoral College, to write to either the President or Secretary of the E.C. For contact information, please see p. 18.

Issue of Concern

It has come to the College’s attention that some

members who have been submitted to the College for consideration for succession as Master of a local body have been referring to themselves as “the next Master” of their body. As in, “I’m the next Master of XXX Lodge.” The College would like to state that this is inappropriate and would like to remind applicants that they have no change in status until the Electoral College has met and voted to confirm the application of change of mastership. Until the College has notified you that you have succeeded the currently seated Master, please do not change your form of address in any way.

The Electoral College, at its Summer 2015 EV meeting, held at NOTOCON on August 14, 2015 EV, took the following actions concerning duties in its charge:

Local Body Closures
None.

Change of Body Status
None.

Changes of Mastership
Mastership of Kephale Camp (Murfreesboro, TN) was passed from Richard Pence to Alice Scarlet Eidson effective August 14, 2015 EV.

Mastership of Scarlet Woman Lodge (Austin, TX) was passed from Adam D. Kessler to Grant Hugh Potts effective August 14, 2015 EV.

Mastership of Alombrados Oasis (New Orleans, LA) was passed from David Robert Braren to Sophia Vera Horodysky effective August 14, 2015 EV.

New Local Body Charters
Eleusis Camp was chartered in the Valley of Knoxville, TN, with Matthew Benson as Master effective August 14, 2015 EV.

The Electoral College, at its Fall 2015 EV meeting, held at Horus Oasis (Salt Lake City, UT) on October 24, 2015 EV, took the following actions concerning duties in its charge:

Local Body Closures
Astrum Inculta Camp (St. Louis, MO) was closed with cause effective October 24, 2015 EV.

Changes of Body Status
None.

Changes of Mastership
Kephale Camp (Murfreesboro, TN) has been rechartered as Obeah and Wanga Camp (Nashville, TN) and Mastership was passed from Alice Scarlet Eidson to Edward Elias effective October 24, 2015 EV.

Mastership of Thelesis Oasis (Philadelphia, PA) was passed from Ernest McCloskey to Frater Neo effective October 24, 2015 EV .

New Local Body Charters
None.

The College wishes to express its appreciation to the past and present Masters of each of these Bodies. We wish each of them the best in their new offices and endeavors.

The Electoral College, at its Winter 2015 EV meeting, held online on January 16, 2016 EV, took the following actions concerning duties in its charge:

Local Body Closures
None.

Change of Body Status
None.

Changes of Mastership
Black Sun Oasis (Cleveland, OH) has been chartered as Black Sun Lodge with Andrew Lent continuing as master effective January 16, 2016 EV.

Blazing Star Oasis was rechartered from Berkeley, CA to Oakland, CA, and mastership has passed from Frater Pralixus to IAO131 effective January 16, 2016 EV.

Mastership of Lapis Lazuli Oasis (Phoenix, AZ) has passed from Nathan Schick to Scott Plyler effective January 16, 2016 EV.

New Local Body Charters
Golden Thread Camp has been chartered in the valley of Pittsburgh, PA with Terry Murdock as Master effective January 16, 2016 EV.

Kephra Rising Camp has been chartered in the valley of Boise, ID with Frater Nicht as Master effective January 16, 2016 EV.

The College wishes to express its appreciation to the past and present Masters of each of these Bodies. We wish each of them the best in their new offices and endeavors.

The Electoral College, at its Spring 2016 EV meeting, held at Knights Templar Oasis (Salem, MA) on April 23rd, 2016 EV, took the following actions concerning duties in its charge:

Local Body Closures
Starry Bayou Camp (Houston, TX) was closed at the request of the Master effective April 23, 2016 EV.

Change of Body Status
Seven Gates Oasis (Louisville, KY) was rechartered to Seven Gates Camp and Mastership was passed from Frater Lugal to Gypsy Dawn Rose Antra effective April 23, 2016 EV.

Changes of Mastership
Mastership of Golden Lotus Lodge (Garden Grove,CA) has passed from Frater ALP LV to Frater PFDV effective April 23, 2016 EV.

Mastership of William Blake Lodge (Baltimore, MD) has passed from Christopher Kent Surprise to Stephanie Jeanne Olmstead-Dean effective April 23, 2016 EV.

New Local Body Charters
None.

The Electoral College’s Summer 2016 EV meeting was held online on July 16, 2016 EV. This was under dispensation from the Grand Master as the U.S.G.L. joint meeting will be held in September of this year at the Lover’s Convocation. The Summer meeting of the Electoral College is traditionally held in conjunction with the joint meeting. However, September would put us well behind our usual schedule in discharging our duties. The College was allowed to meet online this Summer so that we would be able to be prompt in our governance of the Man of Earth. At the Summer meeting, the Electoral College took the following actions concerning duties in its charge:

Local Body Closures
None.

Change of Body Status
None.

Changes of Mastership
None.

New Local Body Charters
Khonsu Camp (Las Vegas, NV) was chartered with Chad Martinez as Master effective July 16, 2016 EV.

The College wishes to express its appreciation to the past and present Masters of each of these Bodies. We wish each of them the best in their new offices and endeavors.

The Electoral College, at its Fall 2016 EV meeting, held on October 15, 2016 EV, took the following actions concerning duties in its charge:

Local Body Closures
None.

Change of Body Status
None.

Changes of Mastership
Mastership of Swirling Star Lodge (Miami, FL

was transferred from Frater ASiF to Shelley Marmor effective October 15, 2016 e.v.

Mastership of Heru Behutet Oasis (Kansas City, MO) was transferred from Mark Stahl to Isha Martin effective October 15, 2016 EV.

New Local Body Charters
None.

The College wishes to express its appreciation to the past and present Masters of each of these Bodies. We wish each of them the best in their new offices and endeavors.

Love is the law, love under will.

In the Bonds of the Order,

DVD HLL
President, Electoral College
OTO USA

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Dearest Brethren,

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

We would like to announce that Benjamin Shiva was born to Satyr and Hattie Quinn on February 22, 2016 EV, measuring 20.5” and weighing 7 lbs 10 oz.

Bubastis Oasis hosted a Feast for Life for “Babysatyr” on March 26, 2016 EV with a ritual written by Sister Hattie and Soror Magdalaina, who also presided. This was followed by an epic community potluck.

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally yours,

Hattie & Satyr



**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY NATIONAL GRAND MASTER GENERAL SABAZIUS Xº
TO THE TENTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE U.S. O.T.O. GRAND LODGE
FIRE OF MOTION
SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 15, 2015 EV
AUSTIN, TEXAS**

Brothers and Sisters,

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

Greeting, Acknowledgments, and Announcements

Here we are back in Austin, Texas, the Valley of our host, Scarlet Woman Lodge. Some of you may remember that this is the place where I received my Tenth Degree, nineteen and a half years ago. I think this is rather fitting for the Tenth Biennial National Conference of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

Let me start off by thanking Sisters Melissa H., Vanessa C., Trisha M., and the members of Scarlet Woman Lodge, Bubastis Oasis, and 718 Camp for their work putting this conference together for us.

I’d also like to thank Sister Melissa for her superb service as Chair of the Conference Committee, since she’ll be stepping down from that office at the conclusion of this event.

Sister Melissa will be transferring the Great Crystal Gavel to Sister Nessa Cohorn, to whom we offer our congratulations and best wishes. One of Sister Nessa’s main tasks over the next two years will be to oversee the organization of NOTOCON XI in the summer of 2017 EV. The theme of which will be “For the Chance of Union.” And the location of which will be Orlando, Florida.

New S.G.I.G.s/E.G.C. Bishops

The day before yesterday, the Supreme Grand Council convened here in Austin to initiate three new Sovereign Grand Inspectors General and Bishops of our Gnostic and Catholic Church. Brothers and Sisters, I present to you Brother Douglas B. (Tau Heru-Sutekh), Sister Kim K. (Tau Diotima), and Brother Chris F. (Tau Aryeh).

I’d also like to welcome one of our bishops back to active membership after a ten year vacation: Sister Content K.

National Guilds

I’d like to mention one thing that happened at the Areopagus meeting last May in Vancouver, which you may find interesting. As you know, *Book 194* describes a system of trade, craft, and professional guilds within the Order, to be organized internationally under the authority of the Areopagus.

As some of you may have noticed, the Grand Lodge of Australia has been experimenting with a national Australian art guild called “Collective 777.” The success of this experiment has led to International Headquarters deciding to permit the formation of national guilds within any Grand Lodge. This is significant because previously the guilds all had to be international in scope, which posed some serious difficulties in terms of communication within and administration of these guilds.

The plan now is that the national guilds can develop locally and ultimately enter into relationships with their counterparts in other Grand Lodges to form truly international guilds, as part of a more organic development process. A committee of Areopagus members was established to present a proposal for national guild formation, but the O.H.O. has informed me that U.S. Grand Lodge can begin the process of forming its own national guilds at any time.

My thought is that these proto-guilds would go under some alternative designation, “league,” perhaps, at least until the committee’s proposal has been presented and accepted by the Areopagus.

So be thinking about this, and if you and your associates come up with a workable proposal for such a national proto-guild, send it on to the G.S.G.

Theme and Variations

Our theme this year is “Fire of Motion,” taken from the Second Collect of the Gnostic Mass, “The Lord,” upon which Brother David H. expounded so well last night.

The context of this theme, as explained on the NOTOCON X website, involves manifesting the Law of Thelema in our daily lives, especially in the context of living in a part of the country where conservative Christianity still plays a dominant role in society. I’d like to expand on this a little by talking about manifesting the Law in the context of another pervasive aspect of our society: democracy.

The United States of America is a large, well-established democratic republic. Popular democracy is a core, foundational aspect of American culture. It is not, however, a core, fundamental value of Thelema.

Crowley’s opinion of popular democracy is summarized quite succinctly in *Book 194*:

“The principle of popular election is a fatal folly; its results are visible in every so-called democracy. The elected man is always the mediocrity; he is the safe man, the sound man, the man who displeases the majority less than any other; and therefore never the genius, the man of progress and illumination.”

At this point, I’m afraid I can’t resist also tossing in a couple of definitions from Ambrose Bierce’s *The Devil’s Dictionary*:

Rabble: “In a republic, those who exercise a supreme authority tempered by fraudulent elections. The rabble is like the sacred Simurgh, of Arabian fable -- omnipotent on condition that it do nothing. (The word is Aristocratese, and has no exact equivalent in our tongue, but means, as nearly as may be, ‘soaring swine.’)”

Referendum: “n. A law for submission of proposed legislation to a popular vote to learn the nonsensus of public opinion.”

Continuing along these cynical lines, democratic elections have always been basically contests of propaganda, and thus subject to gaming. For truly fabulous prizes! The ability to craft laws in your own favor promises great wealth to the most skillful and unscrupulous players, so it’s always the money people who have the most interest in playing the game. And the rules of the game are to get votes for your side and take them away from the other side. By all means available--including appeals to sentimentality and irrational fear, twisting the facts and outright lying, and even physical intimidation.

A system like this ultimately has to devolve, through a process of attrition and assimilation, into a binary system of one powerful coalition against another, locked in perpetual combat; each claiming to represent Truth and Justice but each, in fact, representing small groups of powerful individuals and corporations playing an endless game of chess, with us as the pieces on the game board. (An exception to this rule might come along occasionally.)

I’ve heard a lot of Thelemites arguing about which political party here in the U.S. is more “Thelemic” than the other. I think it’s a silly question. Political parties are artifacts of a system of popular democracy, which Crowley decried, and they’re both just huge propaganda engines designed to eternally bash away at each other - like giant gladiator battle-bots - because the People love conflict.

Now, I’m not saying that democratic politics is unimportant and should be ignored. It’s part of our world here in modern-day America, and so we need to make the best of it. I’m absolutely not one of those people who will tell you that voting is a waste of time. Elected officials constantly make decisions that affect you and your friends in significant ways. So as long as you have the ability to vote, I suggest that you need to use it; otherwise you’re ceding what little political power you have to others. You know how more and more

evangelical Christians are seeking elected offices, and winning. You know--especially here--the kind of effects these people can have on your daily lives.

But... don’t let yourself get shanghaied onto sleazy campaign steamers by scare tactics, superstition, sentimentality, or vague promises of economic advantage. Hold onto your own vision and principles, and vote them. If you can find candidates who actually advocate your principles, support them. Perhaps more importantly, actively oppose candidates who espouse views and policies that are inimical to your principles. If you have the energy and contacts, maybe you should consider being a candidate yourself for some local office.

And if you want to support Thelemic principles in a political way, I suggest you use *Liber Oz* as your guide; not the phony, intentionally divisive, celebrity culture, pseudo-issues cooked up by the political parties and their servants in the media.

Speaking of *Liber Oz*, I have heard some say that these are the rights we claim for ourselves as Thelemites. Yes and no. Sure, we claim them, but that’s because we assert these rights for all humanity. It isn’t enough to enjoy and guard these rights for members of our little in-group. If we remain silent while these rights are being denied to anyone, then we are not really being true to our principles.

Recall that we oppose tyranny, which is the use of political or economic power in a cruel, unjust, or oppressive way. We are against oppression, which is the deprivation of any minority group, or even an entire people, or sex, of their human rights. And we are against superstition--which people understand in different ways, but which I personally understand as the imposition of unscientific or pseudo-scientific beliefs to gain and hold on to political or economic power.

In Chapter 73 of *Magick Without Tears*, we find Crowley himself explaining how racism and classism are both rooted in fear, and how they bring out the worst in people. And he’s right--we need to be extremely wary of group-think,

mob rule, conventional morality, and all sorts of jingoistic band-wagon crusades. One of our most cherished principles as Thelemites is the sovereignty of the individual within society. In his essay “The Scientific Solution to the Problem of Government,” Crowley emphasizes that “[t]he absolute rule of the state shall be a function of the absolute liberty of each individual will.”

But, practically speaking, our nature as human animals is to cluster into groups and divide humanity into insiders and outsiders. And these groups do tend to act collectively in the interest of their members, especially when under threat. It would be foolish to be opposed to this natural tendency. It would be like being opposed to... thumbs. But it would be equally foolish to ignore it, or to pretend that it doesn’t happen, or try to wish it away. We see it everywhere, even among ourselves, within our own Order. Really, the problem comes when this tendency blinds us to the individuality of all the insiders and outsiders in our world--and to our own individuality apart from any group context.

Every individual human being needs Light, Life, Love, and Liberty, and has a right to the liberties described in *Liber Oz*. Furthermore, every human being has a right to be recognized as a human being--a Star--with a True Will, with all the attendant rights, and not dismissed as merely an outsider.

Those with initiative, dedication, resourcefulness, and genius certainly should be allowed to freely enjoy the fruits of their labors; and may also deserve a certain elevation of privilege if their labors also serve humanity. But these fundamental rights that underpin the ability to freely be oneself and do one’s will are for everyone--who does not reject them. They are not market commodities to be cornered through cleverness or family connections, either to keep to yourself or dole out selectively to your chosen and preferred. And if we stand idly by as other sovereign individuals have their basic rights eroded or torn away against their wills because of their group classification: their skin color, their gender, their ethnicity, their nationality, their preference in love, their economic status, their religion of their parents,

even their I.Q., then we are guilty of hypocrisy. Everyone has their Will to discover and do. The only ones who deserve abrogation of these basic rights are those who would deny them.

Thus, if we are to honorably claim these rights for ourselves, we must affirm their universality. Now, this puts us in a peculiar position that many of us will find uncomfortable. Because we live and participate in a culture that, through centuries of structuralization based on unscientific and pseudo-scientific notions, has internalized and institutionalized discriminatory biases based on race, gender, ethnicity, economic status, and a host of other arbitrary distinctions--and many, if not most, of us here, happen to be on the winning side of those biases. Whether we like it or not. You don't have to be a bigot to benefit from institutionalized prejudice. And when you do so benefit without protest, or even awareness of it, you are a tacit participant in an oppressive system. Opposing racial and sexual prejudice is a Thelemic value; even for white, heterosexual, middle-class men--like me. Even if we have to summon the courage confront our own fear of losing the automatic social privileges we have become accustomed to as societal insiders.

The Law is for all. Promulgation is not the same thing as recruitment or publicity. It is not enough to get new folks to Minerval, or to the Gnostic Mass. Promulgation is not just selling more copies of Crowley books, wearing Thelemic jewelry and clothing, and using our conventional greetings and daily rituals.

Promulgation--which is a magical act--must include the active advocacy of fundamental Thelemic values and principles. In the world: the Rights of Man. All men, all women. Within our Order: peace, tolerance, truth. Fraternity. Harmony. Rejoicing in each others' differences. Setting an example for newcomers. How can we act effectively to establish the Law of Thelema in the world if we do not have our own house in order? If we are tied up internally with our own factionalism, petty power struggles, and overblown controversies, how can we ever be a force for positive change in the world? Moreover, how can we even survive the massive waves of change that

are sweeping the world right now?

I'm not just talking about political change, here. We're experiencing fundamental changes in the ways that people communicate and interact with each other, changes in the ways individual and organizational privacy are viewed, changes in attitudes towards intellectual property, changes in the ways that people are able to go about simply making a living for themselves, changes in the ways people approach matters of spirituality and belief, and changes in our own physical environment whose extent we're only just starting to really grasp. Today, there's no point being concerned about fighting or preserving the status quo. The status quo is a paper butterfly.

We're all on board a tiny little fraternal boat here, bobbing around on very rough seas. We need to keep our eye on the stars and our instruments, and mind the pumps. It's time to put our Lilliputian quibbles aside.

With sweeping change comes danger, certainly, but also opportunity. Evolution is all about survival through adaptation to change. Of course it is important to our group identity to honor our traditions and landmarks, but our survival as an active and effective sodality will depend on our ability to adapt to change. And, if we are capable of pulling together and adapting creatively, coherently, and effectively, we may not only survive, but flourish.

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally,

Sabazius



ON CONTRIBUTING TO THE GREATER COMMUNITY IN THELEMA
BY IAO131



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

A maturing view of True Will

Prologue

Before even beginning to discuss the extent that contributing to the greater community is part of Thelema, it should be acknowledged that the "alpha and omega" of Thelema is "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." There is no law beyond doing your Will and you have no right but to do it. The answer to any question that takes the form "Is X or Y part of Thelema" is always "if it is your Will, then yes; if it is not your Will, then no." I am not saying anyone "should" or "should not" do anything, but I am presenting an argument why contributing to the greater community is justified within the philosophy of Thelema. With that in mind, we can take a look at what Thelema implies and Crowley said about contributing to the greater community.

I would argue that, at a less mature level, Thelema is understood to be an entirely selfish doctrine. (By "less mature," I simply mean "not fully developed," and no pejorative implication is meant by it.) When first learning about Thelema, individuals often understand "Do what thou wilt" to essentially mean "I have the right to find my Will and do it, so my personal needs trump everyone else's." From a certain standpoint, this is true. Your needs certainly deserve to be fulfilled. The problem is that many people simply do not know yet what their true "personal needs" and desires are in the first place--hence the necessity to engage in the process to know one's Will. Further, one in this mindset maintains a very dichotomous (i.e. dualistic, black-and-white) view of the "self" as distinct from "others."

Many people move to the next level of maturity when they join an organization or start applying Thelema at a broader scale. That is, one matures to realize that everyone else has the right to do their own Will just as much as oneself. It is the realization that, just as you are the center of your own universe, everyone around you is the center of their own universes. Not only this, but many come to realize that becoming aware of others’ needs and even helping to fulfill them actually makes one’s own Will much easier to accomplish. The dichotomous view of “my Will versus the world” begins to break down and we see that we are a Star in the company of Stars. We see that disagreement does not preclude a greater harmony or cooperation, and often we find that we can accomplish greater things if we work together with others. We may even begin see that the distinction between “self” and “other” is much more tenuous, fluid, and dynamic than previously supposed, perhaps gaining a glimmer of the meaning of “the union of opposites” being the Great Work.

This all may sound very obvious to some, but this is where things generally start to “break down.” Thelemites may see the rationale to serve their own needs and the needs of their Brothers and Sisters, but many do not see a rationale for contributing to the greater community. By “the greater community” I simply mean “people who are not part of O.T.O.” or even “people who are not self-identified Thelemites.” Why might this be?

Why should we contribute to the greater community?

I am defining contributing as “giving resources, including but not limited to time, energy, and money.” We should certainly make sure to dedicate our resources to ourselves, making sure that our needs are met so that we may accomplish our Wills. Many Thelemites naturally and intuitively understand that contributing to an organization like O.T.O.–i.e., by giving their time, energy, and money–is a great way to not only aid others in accomplishing their Wills but to learn more about one’s own Will in the process. The struggle for freedom–and the freedom that one has won for oneself–is naturally desired to be shared

with others, so we band together into communities in order to preserve and promulgate the Law of Life, Light, Love, and Liberty. Why should we stop at our local community of Thelemites? Is not the Law for all? Do we not acknowledge that every man and every woman is a star? Do we not want all individuals to have the freedom to do their Wills?

The image that precedes this essay is a well surrounded by four palm trees. This comes from Crowley’s essay *Liber CXXIV: Of Eden and the Sacred Oak* with the subtitle “And of the Greater and Lesser Hospitality of the O.T.O.” The subject of the essay is about “Profess Houses” in O.T.O., but I believe many of the principles apply on a greater, more general scale. As it is said in *Liber CXCIV*, “For, in True Things, all are but images one of another; man is but a map of the universe, and Society is but the same on a larger scale.” The import of the image is that the Thelemic community–represented by the Profess House, but it could be any group of Thelemites of any or no formal organization–is a source of nourishment and hospitality to everything around it. Crowley writes in *Liber CXXIV*:

“The symbol of the Profess-House is therefore a great Oak from which flow streams of water to every quarter fertilising indeed the ground about the hill and fortifying with moisture the roots of the oak itself, but not eddying about it and sapping its foundations. And in the spread of this Eden shall many men rejoice, taking shelter beneath overspreading branches, and refreshing their weary limbs in the fresh waters of the fount celestial pure. Alternatively, the symbol may be that of a well in the desert, sheltered by four great palms.”

Although the idea of the paradise of Eden with four rivers is a bit utopian and hyperbolic, it is nonetheless an important symbol. The idea is that the community (represented by the oak or the well) nourishes things around it (the four streams of water or the four palms); further, in the community’s nourishing of others, it also fortifies itself without losing its own foundations. I think this is a beautiful image: every Thelemic community is a beacon of Light to those who

stumble in darkness, a well of Life for those who struggle to subsist.

Crowley himself says clearly in *Liber Aleph*, “thou must by Law assure to every Man a Means of satisfying his bodily and his mental Needs, leaving him free to develop any Super-Structure in Accordance with his Will, and protecting him from any that may seek to deprive him of these vertebral Rights.” This is essentially the idea of Maslow’s “hierarchy of needs” about four decades before the idea was described by Maslow: every individual needs the foundation of their basic needs – their “bodily and mental needs” – before the capstone of any kind of “Super-Structure” can be developed. Crowley reinforces this idea when he wrote to Lady Frieda Harris, “The whole world as I see it is at present lost in constipations of this kind; the real needs of humanity are what they have always been: food, shelter, love and freedom. That, roughly speaking, is the general true will of the species, and all devices, which are not subservient to this will, are errors.” If we have the means to, for example, satisfy the bodily needs of those who spend most of their energy concerned about food and shelter, does it not make sense to contribute to them if we are capable? That is, if we have the resources – the time, money, and/or energy – to aid others in by helping to satisfy their basic needs, are we not simply – in some some small way – allowing more and more individuals to do their Wills more fully?

Crowley writes in *Duty*, “Pity, sympathy and like emotions are fundamentally insults to the Godhead of the person exciting them, and therefore also to your own. The distress of another may be relieved; but always with the positive and noble idea of making manifest the perfection of the Universe. Pity is the source of every mean, ignoble, cowardly vice; and the essential blasphemy against Truth.” Here we have a very good lesson from Crowley: if we are to help people, it is to manifest the perfection of every man and every woman being able to do their True Wills. It is to work towards the order and harmony of all the stars on Earth being as perfect as the order and harmony of all the stars in the Heavens. It is not done out of pity for distress or suffering, nor is it really done out of any emotion at all. This

relief – this service of others – is done out of the desire to fulfill the Law of Liberty, to bring about a world where everyone has the capability and freedom to accomplish their True Wills. Perhaps this is one way that we can fulfill what is hoped for in O.T.O. U.S. Grand Lodge’s Vision Statement, “We will foster harmonious and constructive relationships with the academic, business, civil, and greater social communities within which we operate.”

We therefore have a very powerful but very simple view of contribution to the greater community: Contributing is done to help satisfy basic needs such as food and shelter which are common across all humanity that they may be able to more fully accomplish their True Wills. We do not impose any “Super-Structure” upon others but allow them to develop as they Will and make their own choices, and we do not contribute aid out of pity. This is done to “make manifest the perfection of the Universe.”

So why aren’t we doing this already?

Contributing to others is too Christian! The most obvious answer to why many Thelemites do not see contributing to the greater community as justified is that helping other people sounds like “charity,” a word that is inevitably tied up in many people’s minds with Christianity. Aside from the various arguments around charity itself, I think we can acknowledge that rejecting an idea or behavior simply because it resembles some other belief system is not a good reason for rejecting it. Most Thelemites would think twice before rejecting *Liber Resh* as “too Muslim,” rejecting the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram as “too Jewish,” rejecting the Gnostic Mass as “too Christian,” or rejecting the use of a mantra as “too Hindu.” The reason to reject all these things should be determined by whether or not it is fulfilling or thwarting your individual Will, and that is always the only determining factor for everything. Perhaps some do not realize that “charity” comes from “caritas,” the Latin word used in the New Testament to translate the Greek word “agape” which some Thelemites may be familiar with. With this, I would also add things like the argument that contributing to others is too “liberal,” “socialist,” “communist,” or

whatever label associate with the general idea. Contributing to others is too Humanitarian! Yes, Crowley said "An end to the humanitarian mawkishness which is destroying the human race by the deliberate artificial protection of the unfit." He also lived off of a family inheritance and the generous donations of his friends and disciples. There is no need to even argue what "unfit" means in this context. I personally believe that we should concern ourselves with what is "fit" and "unfit" within ourselves to accomplish our own True Wills, and we acknowledge that every man and every woman is a star with an indefeasible right to accomplish their Wills as we do ours. Further, we have all benefited from others' resources, from amniotic fluids to stimulating conversations to job promotions. While it is obvious that our own choices determine our destiny to a large extent, it would be a vain and short-sighted thing to believe we are entirely "self-made" in any way. As *Liber Librae* says, "A man is what he maketh himself within the limits fixed by his inherited destiny; he is a part of mankind; his actions affect not only what he calleth himself, but also the whole universe." Aside from the fact that this means your acts (such as contributing to others) affect all of those around you, it also means every single other individual's actions affect your universe as well. A humble acknowledgment of this fact makes the idea of contributing to others seem quite natural.

We need to focus on our own! Yes, we do need to focus on “our own.” Our concern should begin with ourselves and emanate outward farther and farther. If, for example, an O.T.O. body is struggling to even pay the rent, it would not make sense to devote money toward contributing to the general community. As *Liber Librae* says, “If thou thyself hast not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?” Of course you need a sure foundation, both individually and organizationally. That still doesn’t preclude the possibility of extending influence and resources beyond oneself once that sure foundation is secured.

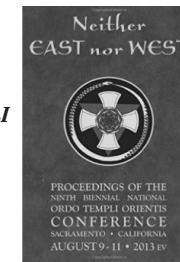
Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. If it is your Will to contribute to the greater community, then that is fine; if it is not your Will, then that is fine as well. Nonetheless, there is a good rationale for engaging in contributing to the greater community. If we appreciate the freedom to know and do our Wills, we will naturally appreciate aiding others to achieve this freedom, even if it is in a small way. Crowley insisted that we are to assure the satisfaction of basic needs such as food and shelter so that individuals may have the capacity and freedom to develop their own unique proclivities. He also reminded us that this should be done out of making manifest the perfection of the Universe on Earth, of wanting every man and every woman to be able to accomplish their Wills, not out of pity or distress. If we have the resources to help others satisfy their basic needs so they may more fully know and do their Wills, why wouldn't we contribute to the greater community?

Love is the law, love under will.

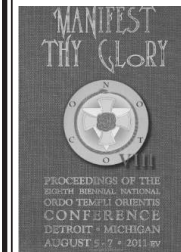
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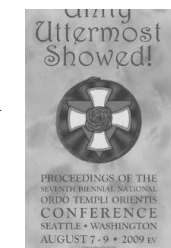
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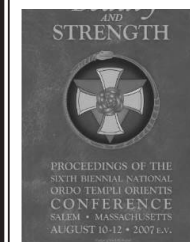
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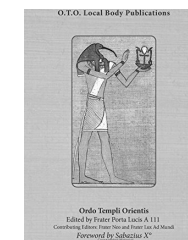
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