

AGAPÉ

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February 1, 2006 EV



From the Grand Master

In Memoriam: Brother Christopher J. Parker

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

On November 29, 2005 EV, my friend and Brother Christopher J. Parker died in Glendale, California of lung cancer, at the age of 40. Chris was hospitalized for severe pain in early September, and was subsequently diagnosed with cancer and began treatment. In late October, Chris decided to forego further treatment, and, at his request, Soror Helena performed his Last Rites per *Liber 106*.

In accordance with his wishes, Chris's remains were cremated, and the urn bearing his ashes was placed upon the altar at the Requiem Mass celebrated in his honor on December 10th at Blue Horizon Oasis. Other memorial services were held at various locations around the country.

Chris took his Minerval in 1983 EV at "OX Chapter," which would later become Baphomet Lodge (Oases were termed "Chapters" back then). He was an officer at my Minerval and First Degree initiations at Baphomet Lodge in Los Angeles in 1986 EV, and his personal enthusiasm, energy, kindness, and humor were significant contributing factors to my decision and Soror Helena's to pursue active involvement in the Order.

He took his V° at Babalon Chapter in Los Angeles in 1990 EV, but in the early '90s, he withdrew from active participation in the Order as he wrestled with some difficult personal issues involving addiction and family-related matters. He emerged from this dark period around 1997 EV, and resumed active Order involvement—with a vengeance. Chris quickly became one of the pillars of the Southern California O.T.O. community. He was involved in most of the major Order-related activities at the various Southern California O.T.O. bodies, particularly at Blue Horizon and LVX Oases; and he frequently used his own experiences to help his Brothers and Sisters. I appointed him to the Electoral College in the Spring of 1999 EV, where he served with distinction. He had preferred the role of Deacon in the Gnostic Mass for most of his early O.T.O. career, but he was

ordained an E.G.C. Priest on December 4, 2001 EV, and masterfully celebrated that role many times thereafter.

Chris's energy, enthusiasm, helpfulness, straightforward honesty, and devotion to the Law of Thelema were truly exemplary; and his gregarious personality, sincere spirituality, and quick wit endeared him to nearly everyone he met. By the time he died, he had forged many, many friendships. His family and the hospital staff were amazed by the number of people who came to visit him in the hospital during his final days.

I, and many others, celebrate his life; and we will miss him. May there be granted the accomplishment of his Will.

Love is the law, love under will.

Sabazius

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From the U.S.G.L. Education Committee

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

The first deliverables from the Education Committee are under review and include the following material: History of Pan; Introduction to Qabalistic Psychology; Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram; Systems of K.&C. of the H.G.A.; and some modules of a larger Astrology course. The release process has not yet been defined but further updates will be announced within the next quarter.

Your help is still needed. Course material, outlines, and annotated bibliographies are welcome. Interested initiates of at least the K.E.W. degree may still apply to join the committee. Contact education@oto-usa.org for more information or to submit material.

Love is the law, love under will.

In the Bonds of the Order,
Kayla Block, Committee Secretary



Mysteria Mystica Maxima ✠ *Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica*

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Executive Editor: Sabazius X°
Editor & Layout: Br. Joseph Thiebes
Assistant Editor: Sr. Dawn C. Davis
Proofreading: Fr. Zir
Production Assistant: Sr. Star Fredericks
Editorial Address: P.O. Box 15037
Portland, OR 97293-5037

U.S. GRAND LODGE OFFICERS

U.S. NATIONAL GRAND MASTER GENERAL: SABAZIUS X°
P.O. Box 32, Riverside, CA 92502-0032 • ngmg@oto-usa.org

U.S. DEPUTY NATIONAL GRAND MASTER GENERAL: LON MILO DUQUETTE
P.O. Box 3111, Newport Beach, CA 92659-0705
dngmg@oto-usa.org

U.S. GRAND SECRETARY GENERAL: FR. HUNAHPU
PO Box 47988, Minneapolis, MN 55447 • gsg@oto-usa.org

U.S. GRAND TREASURER GENERAL: HANK HADEED
4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd. #444, Portland, OR 97214-5246
gtg@oto-usa.org • www.oto-usa.org/treasury

U.S. GRAND TRIBUNAL
DATHAN BIBERSTEIN, *SECRETARY* • grand_tribunal@oto-usa.org
P.O. Box 17462, Minneapolis, MN 55417

U.S. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, U.S. SUPREME GRAND COUNCIL,
U.S. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
P.O. Box 32, Riverside, CA 92502-0032

U.S. ELECTORAL COLLEGE
DOUGLAS JAMES BLAKE, *PRESIDENT* • ec_president@oto-usa.org
P.O. Box 47056, Seattle, WA 98146

DANN BUCHANAN, *SECRETARY* • electoral_college@oto-usa.org
5030 N. May Ave., #252, Oklahoma City, OK 73112-6010

U.S.G.L. INITIATION SECRETARY: SR. IXL BALAMKE
PO Box 47988, Minneapolis, MN 55447 • initiation@oto-usa.org

U.S. E.G.C. SECRETARY: TAU MARIE
P.O. Box 201750, Austin, TX 78720-1750 • egc@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. PARLIAMENTARIAN: SR. HELENA
P.O. Box 32, Riverside, CA 92502 • parliamentarian@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. OMBUDSMAN: FR. HRUMACHIS
P.O. Box 3008, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-1257 • ombudsman@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. QUARTERMASTER: FR. V.V.N.
quartermaster@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. WEBMASTER: CRAIG BERRY
webmaster@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. LIBRARIAN: FR. K.Z.
P.O. Box 32, Riverside, CA 92502-0032 • librarian@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. ARCHIVIST: FR. P.
P.O. Box 6635, Jersey City, NJ 07306

U.S.G.L. VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: JAMES McLAUGHLIN
volunteers@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY: ARIANA WHITE
PO Box 3993, Eugene, OR 97403 • publications@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. SECRETARY FOR CORRESPONDENCE: T ALLEN GREENFIELD
3267 Buford Hwy., Ste. 720-109, Atlanta, GA 30329-1707
correspondence@oto-usa.org

COORDINATOR, O.T.O. PRISON MINISTRY: DANIEL L. AKZINOR
P.O. Box 66319, Portland, OR 97290-6319
prison_ministry@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER: FR. HRUMACHIS
P.O. Box 3008, Ashland, OR 97520 • pio@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION: JOSEPH THIEBES
P.O. Box 15037, Portland, OR 97293-5037 • agape@oto-usa.org

U.S.G.L. EDUCATION COMMITTEE SECRETARY: KAYLA BLOCK
education@oto-usa.org

WWW.OTO-USA.ORG

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Attention: Every O.T.O. member within U.S. Grand Lodge should have received a copy of the *Minerval Guide*, a pamphlet explaining a number of basic issues of O.T.O. membership. If you have not received one, please request one from your local body master, or from the U.S. Grand Secretary General.

From the Grand Tribunal Secretary

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

Within the Grand Tribunal, remedies are applied with suspension, expulsion, etc. However, while the remedial processes of suspension, expulsion, bad report and curtailment of privileges are clearly spelled out, these are not the only options available to the G.T. With this in mind, a committee has been formed to develop consistent guidelines for the use of additional alternatives—particularly, the utilization of letters of reprimand (admonition), counseling (instruction), etc.

For example, if the G.T. receives a complaint of slander (employing the G.T. Complaint Tracking form), instead of moving immediately towards a remedy of expulsion, we may instead decide to send a letter of caution to the member, addressing the offense and recommending that certain specific steps be taken to ameliorate it. Additionally, a letter of counseling may be utilized to both inform and warn a member regarding poor sponsorship decisions. Tangentially, similar remedies may possibly prove useful for Masters of local bodies.

Lastly, this documentation may further assist in providing a measurement of a member's willingness to resolve a complaint. For example, letters that are received via certified mail by a member and are left unanswered may serve as a marker when applying another remedy.

Love is the law, love under will.

In the Bonds of the Order,
Dathan Biberstein, Secretary

O.T.O. Women's Symposium

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

I am pleased to announce the first O.T.O. Women's Symposium (O.T.O.W.S.) which will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada on July 29-30, 2006 EV at the Gold Coast Casino. Please note this is a date change from a prior announcement.

O.T.O.W.S. attendance is open to all initiate members (women and men) in good standing of O.T.O. Speakers may, however, limit attendance of their presentation by gender. All attendees must pre-register. Registration will open in January 2006 EV. The registration URL will be announced at:

oto-usa.org

For more information, e-mail:

otows@notocon.org

Love is the law, love under will.

In the Bonds of the Order,
Kayla Block, On-Site Coordinator
O.T.O. Women's Symposium, 2006 EV

From the Electoral College

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

The College wishes to express its deep and profound loss at the celebration of the greater feast of Brother Chris Parker. The College would like to recognize his steadfast dedication and tireless service to ourselves, our Work, the Order, and to the Law that we serve. He is a brother, a compatriot, and a friend. We wish him well.

The following actions concerning local Bodies were taken by the Electoral College at its Summer meeting, October 22, 2005 EV:

Closure

None.

Change of Master

Mastership of RPSTOVAL Camp (Ashland, OR) has passed from Frater Ox to Soror Ashera.

Mastership of Thelema Lodge (Oakland, CA) has passed from Brother S. John Banner to Frater Luciftias Peripsol.

Mastership of Hoor-Paar-Kraat Oasis (Ogden, UT) has passed from Frater Peredur to Sister Danielle George.

Mastership of Horus Oasis (Salt Lake City, UT) has passed from Sister Pamela Offret to Frater LEGIO.

Change of Body Status

Thelesis Camp (Philadelphia, PA) has made Thelesis Oasis with Brother [name redacted for internet distribution] as Master.

New Charters

Frater Indigo has been granted charter as Master of Starry Bayou Camp (Houston, TX).

Frater Eparisteros has been granted charter as Master of Abrahamadabra Camp (Portland, ME).

Hosting E.C. Meetings

Local bodies that are interested in hosting the Spring and Autumn meetings of the Electoral College (as well as Summer meetings in even numbered years) are encouraged to write the President of the E.C. — see p. 2 for contact information.

Upcoming E.C. Meetings

The Spring 2006 EV meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 15th, 2006 EV at Hoor-Paar-Kraat Oasis (Ogden, UT).

The Summer 2006 EV meeting is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, July 22nd 2006 EV at Blue Horizon Oasis (Glendale, CA).

The Fall 2006 EV meeting is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 14th 2006 EV at Serpentine Splendour Lodge (Las Vegas, NV).

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.

Communication with the E.C.

I would like to invite any initiates with suggestions about how we can do our job better, or who have 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. 2.

It is my goal as President of the Electoral College to take effective measures bringing about better communication between the E.C. and the membership of all local bodies. Any input provided to this end is warmly welcomed. I believe that communication is of benefit to the entire Order in our mutual goals and aspiration toward enlightenment in all forms.

All postal mail correspondence with the Electoral College Secretary should be sent to the address listed on p. 2.

Website

The official E.C. website can be found at:

ec.oto-usa.org

Forms

Bodymasters 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 (exclusively) at:

ec.oto-usa.org/ecservices.htm

Bodymasters not already in possession of the username and password (distributed on August 18, 2004 EV) will be granted them upon request (see E.C. contact information on p. 2).

Local Body Reports

418 Lodge ☩ Sacramento, California

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

We are pleased to announce that the premiere volume of *CHETH*, the annual journal of 418 Lodge, O.T.O., is now available. This volume includes essays on Tetragrammaton as a formula of Initiation, the Gnostic Mass, and much more. Featured contributors include Dr. Richard Kaczynski, Dr. David Shoemaker, and Frater Hrumachis. In addition, we have included poetry and art by Soror Meral (to whom the volume is dedicated) and a few of our Lodge members.

The cover price is \$10, plus \$2.00 shipping for each copy ordered. Dues-current members of 418 Lodge, as well as representatives of O.T.O. local bodies wishing to add a copy of *CHETH* to their local libraries, qualify for a discounted rate of \$8.00 per copy. Please specify your purchasing status in the comments field of your PayPal payment.

Immediate PayPal ordering is coming soon on the 418 Lodge website (www.418oto.org). Meanwhile, you may send your PayPal payments to:

info@418oto.org

Alternately, you may send a check or money order, payable to:

418 Lodge, O.T.O.
PO Box 661536
Sacramento, CA 95866-1536

Be sure to give us your full shipping address.

We think you will be very pleased with this beautifully-produced, limited edition journal. (Perfect-bound, 70 pages, color cover with b/w art inside.) We are accepting submissions for future volumes. Submission guidelines follow.

Love is the law, love under will.

In the Bonds of the Order,
David Shoemaker
Master, 418 Lodge
CHETH Editor-in-Chief

Sekhet-Bast-Ra Oasis ☩ Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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

Greetings from the Heartland of America. Sekhet Bast Ra Oasis, in the valley of Oklahoma City, is pleased to announce the opening of our new separate Temple space. It is a very beautiful place, put together by the generous donations of time, money, sweat, blood, tears, equipment, books and lots of love from all of our local body members and many that are not so local. We now have open public hours which include a day for the celebration of a public Gnostic Mass. We host various classes for members and the public on topics including Tarot, the Gnostic Mass, the *Rites of Eleusis*, magick, and others as they are instituted. This will be a wonderful place to hold initiations, knowledge lectures and conferences.

Our website is constantly updated with the latest improvements that include links for merchandise, donations and dues, and the coolest virtual tour of our new space that you can see without actually visiting us. (Please let us know when we can expect to see you in person!) Special thanks go to our late Brother David Knouse and his sister, Julia V., for donating some of his extensive library to our Temple. We also wish to thank Brother Lon Milo DuQuette for attending our public grand opening at the beginning of November, 2005 ev with a book signing event. We wish to invite all O.T.O. members to stop by and visit us whenever you are able.

You can find us at the following address:

Sekhet Bast Ra Oasis
2714 N. Penn
Oklahoma City, OK 73107

To contact us via phone or e-mail:

405-816-5175
info@sekhetbastra.org

Visit our website at:

www.sekhetbastra.org

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally,
Dr. Ben Sanders
Frater Azoth
Secretary, Sekhet Bast Ra Oasis

CHETH Submission Guidelines

CHETH is an Annual Journal of Contemporary Thelemic Thought. It is the aim of the journal to publish original content on the cutting edge of the Thelemic community. *CHETH* is published by 418 Lodge of the Ordo Templi Orientis. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome, and there is an open submissions schedule. The publication goes into production in the late spring; thus, to be published in a given year, articles should be submitted by the end of March. Submissions and questions may be sent to our postal address (see above) or via e-mail to:

master@418oto.org

webmaster@418oto.org

Articles should be approximately 2,500 words, though shorter articles will be accepted. We will publish 8-10 articles per issue. Articles should show excellence in either research or theory, and must be original pieces, unless submitting a historical manuscript with permissions. In addition, short fiction, poetry, and illustrative graphic shorts are encouraged. Do not be afraid to submit your writing. "All words are Sacred." Also we are looking for black & white illustrations (raster images, minimum 300dpi), and other printable images relevant to the general content and community. The page dimension is 6x9", so try to submit your art to perspective (horizontal pieces are acceptable). Again these must be original pieces, or historical pieces with permissions.

Step Six: the responsibility of the Rose Croix Chapter—the “Regional” Level

If a local body is fortunate enough to have a regional Chapter of the Rose Croix in their vicinity, the local body master may, if they have been unable to assist in effectively resolving the matter at hand, choose to refer the matter to the Most Wise Sovereign and/or High Priestess of the Chapter. The members of the Chapters of Rose Croix are mandated to promote beauty and harmony within the ranks of our Order, which can be an invaluable resource to body masters and individual members in this process. The members of the V° therefore have a greater obligation to the general membership, and the Order as a whole, in fostering harmony through their actions. Body masters, if they are not members of a Chapter themselves, would do well to familiarize themselves with local members of the Rose Croix in their area, including the officers and the Chapter’s Committee of Four.

Step Seven: the Committee of Four

Liber 194, paragraph 8 states:

In this degree the Most Wise Sovereign of each Chapter will appoint a committee of four persons, two men and two women, to arrange for all social gatherings, banquets, dances, the performance of plays, and similar pleasures. They will also endeavour to promote harmony among the Brethren in all possible ways, and to compose any disputes by tact and friendliness without formal appeal being made to any more authoritative tribunal.

The above excerpt clearly shows that we have yet another resource available to us upon the *Path of Mediation* in the Committee of Four, which represents the Seventh Step in the *Path*. The Committee of Four, though explicitly referred to in *Liber 194*, is a resource that is just beginning to develop in our Order. Psyche-Eros Chapter, based in Portland, Oregon, has a standing Committee of Four which is charged with informal dispute resolution.

Essentially, the four members, two men and two women, are known to the general membership; if a brother or sister is having a problem, the local body master can refer them on request. The local body master can also informally approach a member of the committee as a neutral party, in confidence for advice and counsel without escalating the matter any further. From my experience on this committee, this has proved immensely useful in clarifying questions for the general membership as well as resolving disputes in their earliest stages of development. The reason this has been successful is primarily that members know that the committee is available to them as a resource. The committee is specifically charged with “promoting harmony” and composing disputes by “tact and friendliness.” There are Committees of Four being established within various Chapters around the country. This resource will become more widely available to the membership nationwide, as Chapters begin to mature and develop.

Level Four: the “National” Level

If a dispute or conflict cannot be mediated or resolved at the regional level through the Rose Croix Chapter or its Committee of Four, the matter should be referred back to the local body master, as stated previously in *Liber 101* [see *The Path of Mediation, Part 3* in *Agapé* VII:3]. The local body master should then instruct and possibly assist the member(s) to formulate and file a letter of grievance, outlining the matter of the dispute and completing the *Complaint Tracking Form* for submission to the Grand Tribunal *via* the G.T. Secretary. A copy of the letter should also be sent to the other member in question (as well as their sponsors) so that they may formulate and submit responses to any accusations, or file a statement of grievance themselves, as necessary. This action brings the matter to the fourth level, which is the “national” level.

In a case where the complaint specifically involves a local body master or local body officer, the individual member should file a signed and dated complaint in writing to the Secretary of the Electoral College and the Executive and/or a responsible Sovereign Grand Inspector General in the region for review and consideration.

Step Eight: the role of the Electoral College

The E.C. generally deals with issues concerning local bodies and the actions of body masters or officers specifically, as these matters fall directly under their purview. The Grand Tribunal, on the other hand, generally deals with disputes or conflicts between individual members of the Order. So it is very important, at this stage of the process, to get really clear on how these governing bodies function and where to address problems or grievances. Again, we can refer directly to the *Minerval Guide* or the *Camp, Oasis, Lodge Master’s Handbook* for clarification. Recognize that the E.C. would only become involved in a matter that concerned problems with a local body master or possibly another local body officer, not in disputes between individual members. For convenience, we will refer to the E.C. as the Eighth Step, though this would only apply in the specific instances mentioned.

The Role of the Sovereign Grand Inspectors General

The Sovereign Grand Inspectors General also play an interesting, important and vital role in this entire process. *Liber 194*, paragraph 19 states:

All members of the Seventh Degree travel as Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the Order, and report, on their own initiative, to the Supreme and Most Holy King, as to the condition of all Lodges, and Chapters; to the Supreme Council, on all affairs of the Second Triad; and to the Electoral College, on those of the Third.

Essentially, they serve as the eyes and ears of the Supreme and Holy King and are his direct representatives. They therefore do not represent a specific step on the *Path of Mediation*, but in a very real sense can serve as an effective guide upon it, by taking action on their own initiative, or by referring members to the appropriate officer or governing body that can assist them. The

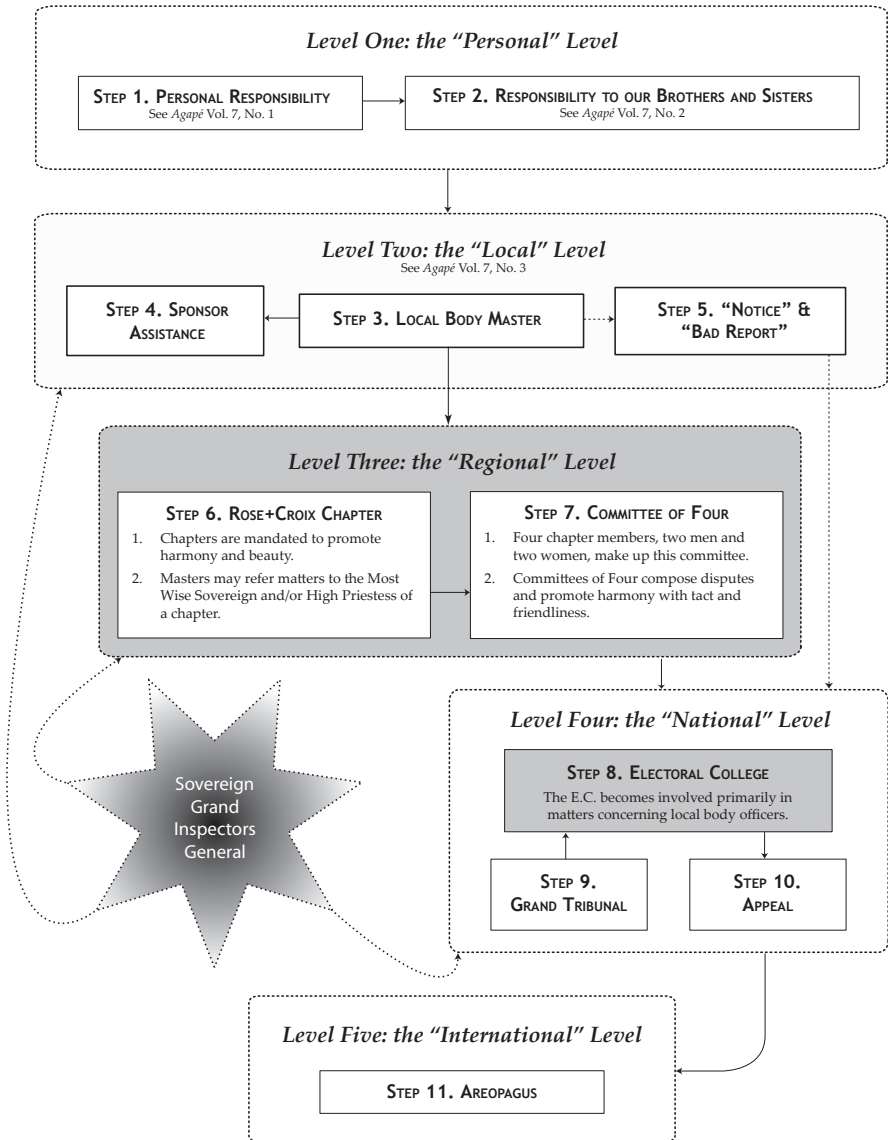
Establishing and modeling a critical path toward efficient mediation and dispute resolution in our Holy Order

role of the S.G.I.G. may therefore vary at each level and at each step upon the *Path*. So it is important that we recognize the important role of the S.G.I.G., and that it is incumbent upon us not to abuse their office in the process by trying to use them to skip a step in the *Path* by appealing to their authority. Just so, it is important for the Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, when approached by individual members with a particular problem, to check in with that member to see where they are upon the *Path of Meditation*, and if they see a member inadvertently or intentionally skipping a step, to refer that member back to the appropriate officer or governing body who can best handle the matter at the appropriate level.

In terms of dealing with specific matters concerning the Man of Earth triad, an S.G.I.G. would be an appropriate governing officer to approach if there is a specific grievance or problem with a local body master, in which case the S.G.I.G. would report the matter to the S.H.K. as well as the E.C. for review. In the case of issues within the Lover triad, they would refer the matter to the Supreme Grand Council.

Soverign Grand Inspectors General are also charged with the duty to report on the condition of all Lodges and Chapters to the S.H.K. If there is a matter that is potentially adversely affecting a local body, the S.G.I.G. may, at the request of the S.H.K., intervene and mediate; or may attempt to resolve the matter at any particular level. Consider this, and remember that this is the prerogative of the S.H.K. to authorize an S.G.I.G. to take action.

Next issue: the Ninth Step: formal appeal to the Grand Tribunal, dispute resolution and binding arbitration; the Tenth Step: the appeals process; and the Eleventh Step: the Areopagus



Agapé Volume 8, Number 1 submission deadline:
 ☉ in ♀ • ☽ in ♃ • *Dies Saturnii* • Anno IV:xiii
 Saturday, April 1, 2006 EV

Please send your local body reports and governing body reports to:

agape@oto-usa.org

We will also accept other kinds of work, including essays, art and photography.

Submission guidelines are available at www.oto-usa.org/agape.html. For more information contact agape@oto-usa.org.

On Compassion: a Reexamination

by Frater Ash

A compelling essay about compassion and its importance within both Thelema and Buddhism appeared in a recent issue of *Agapé* [*The Vice of Kings* by John Crow, Vol. 7, No. 1]. In this writer's opinion, he did a good job of briefly explaining how compassion fits within Buddhism, and how this is so relevant to Thelema since Aleister Crowley was a practitioner of that spiritual path at the time of the reception of *Liber AL*. Crowley's understanding of Buddhist compassion is evident in his numerous references to (and admonitions against) the concept of losing one's self in the course of becoming a compassionate *Bodhisattva*.

Brother Crow's well-written essay, however, did not tell the whole story. Buddhism certainly colored Crowley's ideas regarding compassion, but that was not the only filter he used to interpret *The Book of the Law*. Crowley was not immune to outside influences, and there were two other frames that made compassion such poison for him: Christianity and Social Darwinism.

Crowley was raised in a strict Christian home, and his parents were devout members of a fundamentalist sect called the Plymouth Brethren. Because the Bible was young Crowley's only reading material, he knew it well and would certainly have understood the way it presented compassion. In the Old Testament, compassion is often equated with the divine

In the New Testament, compassion is presented in a different manner—as an act of self-sacrifice, symbolized by the crucifixion of Jesus on the Cross. The apostle John said it best when he wrote, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:16-17). Crowley had great disdain for this particular notion of compassion. He writes, "We have a sentimental idea of self-sacrifice, the kind which is most esteemed by the vulgar and is the essence of popular Christianity. It is the sacrifice of the strong to the weak," (*The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, Ch. 49—more on this quote later) and "Now in practice, in everyday life, this unselfishness is always cropping up. Not only do you insult your brother King by your 'noble self-sacrifice,' but you are almost bound to interfere with his True Will. 'Charity' always means that the lofty soul who bestows it is really, deep down, trying to enslave the recipient of his beastly bounty!" (*MWT*, Ch. 46). Here he is defining compassion in strictly Christian terms, as an act of charity and "noble" self-sacrifice (akin to the false superiority of the O.T. description), both of which are really shams used to "interfere with True Will" and to "enslave" the needy—i.e. *to convert them to Christianity* (the work

. . . [Crowley] recognized both fear and guilt as intrinsic aspects of [Christianity], and reasonably drew the conclusion that these must equally motivate Christian compassion.

mercy and forgiveness of Jehovah. For example, we read in 2 Chronicles 30:9—"For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him." In 1 Kings 8:49-50 we read "Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them."

This concept of mercy was anathema to Crowley's Thelemic sensitivities. He expresses this clearly in *Magic Without Tears* (Ch. 46)—"The word 'compassion' . . . implies that you are a fine fellow, and the other so much dirt; that is, you insult him by pity for his misfortunes. But 'Every man and every woman is a star'; so don't you do it! You should treat everybody as a King of the same order as yourself." Here he describes the O.T. version of compassion, which presumes a station of superiority and which ignores every person's inherent right to Kingly respect—an attitude he rightfully disparages. The lesson in this case is simple: do not presume yourself to be of higher rank to those in need, nor offer help out of a condescending pity.

of missionaries and the Salvation Army come to mind. These types of Christian charity organizations were very popular in Crowley's day, and some were a legitimate response to the more horrible manifestations of the industrial revolution, such as child labor and rampant urban poverty).

When Crowley used his Christian filter to examine compassion, he also drew upon the various aspects of that old aeon religion that he found most distasteful. For example, he recognized both fear and guilt as intrinsic aspects of that faith, and reasonably drew the conclusion that these must equally motivate Christian compassion. He reflects this belief in *MWT* (Ch. 46)—"Let me insist that 'pity' is nearly always an impostor. It is the psychic consolation for fear, the 'pitiful man' really is a pitiful man! for he is such a coward that he dare not face his fear, even in imagination!" In the same chapter he notes, "[Pity] is the twin of 'moral responsibility,' of the sense of guilt or sin." It is here that we find the basis of suffering for the Christian—that sin is the ultimate source of misery—a concept that Thelema utterly rejects.

The third major filter that Crowley used to frame compassion was a theory called Social Darwinism. This was a very popular theory amongst the wealthy in Europe and America from the mid-1800s until about the 1940s EV. The idea is that natural selection, which works on a biological level, also works on a

social level. Survival and evolution were seen as a vicious battle wherein the weakest members were selected out, thereby advancing the entire species. With the rise of industrialism and urbanism came an increase in poverty and terrible living conditions. As society tried to correct for these side effects, a new wave of public welfare and charity efforts came into play. Social Darwinists began to say that these efforts were holding back the “race,” since the “strong” (i.e. the wealthy) were squandering their rightful resources on those that nature would otherwise “select out” (i.e. the poor). This theory was used to justify everything from free-market capitalism, to racism, to genocide.

Here are a few examples from Crowley that illustrate the influence of both Christianity and Social Darwinism:

“We have a sentimental idea of self-sacrifice, the kind which is most esteemed by the vulgar and is the essence of popular Christianity. It is the sacrifice of the strong to the weak. This is wholly against the principles of evolution. . . . There is here a conflict between private and public morality. We should not protect the weak and the vicious from the results of their inferiority. By doing so, we perpetuate the elements of dissolution in our own social body. We should rather aid nature by subjecting every newcomer to the most rigorous tests of his fitness to deal with his environment. The human race grew in stature and intelligence as long as the individual prowess achieved security, so that the strongest and cleverest people were able to reproduce their kind in the best conditions. But when security became general through the operation of altruism the most degenerate of the people were often the offspring of the strongest.” — *Confessions* (Ch. 49):

“Evolution demands exceptional individuals, fitter to their environment than their fellows. Species prosper by imitating efficient eccentrics. Mediocrity, self-styled morality, protects the unfit, but prevents progress, discourages adaptability, and assures the ruin of the race.” (“On the Education of Children,” in *The Revival of Magick*.)

“The reader will find it only too easy to think of a hundred cases where the error of unfitness, the violation of what we may call biological law in its widest philosophical sense, threatens the well-being and even the very existence of the individual.” (“The Method of Thelema,” in *The Revival of Magick*.)

This idea that the “weak” (i.e. those who need assistance from others) are somehow biologically inferior is, however, a concept that has been long proven wrong. The fantasy of raw individualism has been replaced by the knowledge that humans are highly interdependent, requiring cooperation at every level to succeed. Problems like poverty are far more influenced by social forces (e.g. discrimination, education, economics, etc.) and a lack of social support systems (e.g. a healthy family or other supportive group) rather than any inherent flaws in the individual. Moreover, there is no scientific evidence that groups evolve as do individuals. In fact, this theory was finally put to rest in 1966 EV when George Williams published *Adaptation and Natural Selection*, where he showed that any selection happening on a group level would be trumped by individual adaptations.

There is also the problem of altruism, found not only in human society but in many other species. The observation of altruism was a sticky point for evolution, since it seemed to go against the very mechanism of natural selection. The riddle was finally answered in 1964 EV by William Hamilton and then again in 1971 EV by Robert Trivers. These researchers developed the ideas of *inclusive fitness* (dealing with kin) and *reciprocal altruism* (dealing with non-kin), respectively. Their work finally explained why altruism is such an effective evolutionary tool and why the idea behind Social Darwinism—that altruism holds back the race to assist the “naturally inferior”—is a scientifically incorrect interpretation of Darwin’s theory.

To summarize what we have so far, Crowley had three primary filters that colored his understanding of compassion:

- **Buddhism**—wherein compassion might be seen as over-identification with others (leading to the neglect of one’s own True Will)
- **Christianity**—wherein compassion is either the mercy of God (leading to undue moral superiority) or self-sacrifice as symbolized by the Crucifixion (which is possibly insincere, since it’s root is more likely fear, guilt, or the desire to convert the recipient).
- **Social Darwinism**—wherein compassion is a modern, artificial tool used to support the inherently “weak” at the cost of the “strong,” thereby holding back the advancement of the race.

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We know that Thelema does not identify with Buddhism or Christianity, and Social Darwinism has been shown to be an unscientific idea that was used primarily (by others) to justify racism, economic exploitation, and sometimes genocide. So, the question becomes: with these three frames out of the way, is it possible to define compassion in strictly Thelemic terms? In other words, is there a Thelemic compassion?

I believe that the answer is yes. Science shows us that the drive to help others in need is a product of natural selection, not morality or religion, and as such is a part of human nature. Since this drive exists, our duty as Thelemites is to channel it in a way congruent with the current Aeon. We can do this by understanding what suffering is. To the Buddhist, suffering is founded in attachment to the illusion of existence. For the Christian, suffering is ultimately a result of sin. From a Thelemic point of view, I suggest that suffering results from restrictions on the ability to learn and manifest one's True Will.

Thelemic compassion, then, is the drive to help others by removing either social or individual barriers that restrict the free expression of Will. As Crowley wrote in *Duty*—“The distress of another may be relieved; but always with the positive and noble idea of making manifest the perfection of the Universe.”

hatred. True Will has no truck with these poisons, and fighting them is a true act of compassion—for why else fight them but to eliminate the suffering they bring?

To be clear, this essay does not call for a mandate of compassionate acts for Thelemites in the vein of Good Works of the Roman Catholic Church. Nor does it suggest *when* or *how* one might go about being compassionate. That is a matter between you and your Holy Guardian Angel. I have tried to show, rather, how our natural drive to relieve suffering in others can manifest in responsible ways, without contradiction to Thelemic principles.

Crowley wrote in his *Commentaries*, “It is necessary that we stop, once for all, this ignorant meddling with other people's business. Each individual must be left free to follow his own path.” While he was discussing America's penchant for cultural imperialism here, I reference it to point out that we all ignorantly meddle in people's lives every day, and often in ways that end up restricting freedom of Will (via economics, law, war, pollution, *et cetera*). The way we spend our money, the politicians we vote for, the products we use—these affect people; no one can avoid it. We are all interconnected, and Thelemic responsibility insists that we aid those who are afflicted with

“[The] sentimental idea of self-sacrifice . . . is the sacrifice of the strong to the weak. This is wholly against the principles of evolution. ”

—Aleister Crowley in *Confessions*

Within this model of Thelemic compassion, the object is not to force others to become what we want, since we do not know or care what one's Will might actually be. It is not motivated by selfish rewards or social mandates. Thelemic compassion arises out of the interplay of one's own Love and Will, and never guilt or fear. Thelemic compassion can comfort, but it does not coddle. When necessary, it has the strength to inflict more pain before suffering can be relieved. It seeks to remove barriers to self-sufficiency, not to create dependency. It promotes a view of self *with* others (i.e. Universal Brotherhood), not self *as* others. It is practical, not sentimental. It is, in effect, a battle against tyranny, superstition, and oppression!

It is not the impoverished, minority, disabled, helpless, or ignorant that “hold back” the human race; it is poverty, discrimination, intolerance, abuse, and ignorance that does. They are our true enemies, along with their elders—greed, fear, and

undue barriers to learning and manifesting Will. As Crowley wrote in his *Confessions* (Ch.87), “The main ethical principle is that each human being has his own definite object in life. He has every right to fulfill this purpose, and none to do anything else. It is the business of the community to help each of its members to achieve this aim.”

Compassion is the natural drive to relieve suffering in others, which is often caused by external forces, such as poverty, illness, and isolation. This drive is biological, not Christian, Buddhist, or otherwise. Our duty as Thelemites, therefore, is to act upon that drive in mindful ways that are informed by Thelemic principles. I end with words of wisdom from the Master: “When you can [help others] as it should be done, without embarrassment, false shame, with your whole heart in your words—do it simply, to sum up—you will find yourself way up on the road to that royal republic which is the ideal of human society.” (*MWT*, Ch. 46.)

On The Nature of Service in the Order

by Frater Alandru

"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." (*Liber CXCIV: An Intimation with Reference to the Constitution of the Order.*)

On reading the above, the casual reader may think, "Well, what a relief." With these words, he might believe that the member of the Man of Earth triad is released from responsibility. Consider the words carefully, however, and you may realize that the service a M.o.E. performs for his body of the Order is even more important.

The average member of an active O.T.O. body is 2nd or 3rd degree. The degree requirement for Camp or Oasis master is 3rd degree. None of these people have been called upon to give their life in service to their body or their Order. You would be very hard pressed, though, to find a body master who has not poured every ounce of their life's blood into the work they do. Quite simply put, a local body does not run itself, no matter how efficiently it may seem to run.

The next time you go to an event at your local body or at any other body, consider the following: How clean is

the environment? What foods are made available? How practiced is the ritual team? How close to the stated time did the event begin? How prepared were the officers? Were implements shined or dull?

Then ask yourself: did you ever have to notice these things? Every activity that transforms a warehouse, living room, garage space, or office suite into a magical environment is done by real people. Nine times out of ten, it is done by a Man of Earth. And he wasn't called upon to give his life to do so. At least not by the Order.

He did it because the calling came from within. It came from a love of the work being done. It came from a desire to participate in his own way to help make this magical environment come to life; to do work that may in some manner connect to his or others' Great Work. If you read the stuff they publish, this is really what we're all here for anyway.

The nature of true service does not come from being asked to do work, being begged to do work, nor most importantly does it come from an expectation of ingratiation. One does the work because one loves the work. The result of the work is the only payoff, especially when the

work is more valuable than result. One doesn't work for the result; one gets the result from the work.

The day to day operations of a local O.T.O. body present bountiful opportunities for people to make things run easier. From event setup and teardown to meal prep, from ritual writing to veil sewing, there are always things to be done. If there is a talent you have that isn't already part of a volunteer position at your local body, create a job around that talent. Innovation can always result in responsibility, and the offer of passionate work is almost always appreciated.

So, the next time you find yourself at an event, look for the work that you want to give. If the work isn't there to give, find something to contribute. The body doesn't run by itself, but it looks like it does when everyone is too busy contributing to notice.

True work and True service, like all True things, are Willed acts.

". . . So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will. / Do that, and no other shall say nay. / For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect." (*Liber Al vel Legis*, I:42-44.)

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