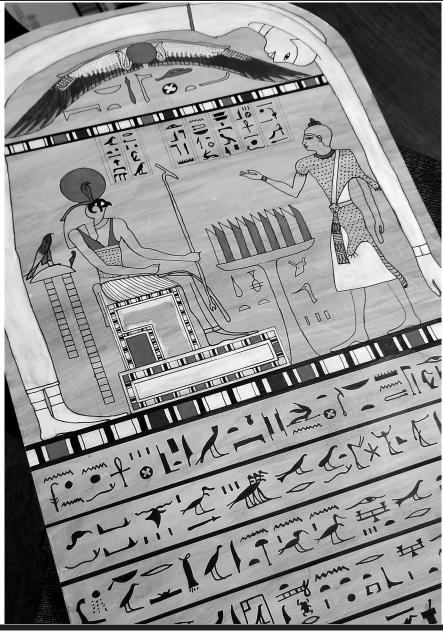
The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.





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Volume XX, No.2, 2020 EV



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Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A.





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

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FROM THE EDITOR

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

As a most unusual summer draws to a close and we wrap up publication of Vol. XX No. 2 of Agapé, I've been thinking about things that I wanted to accomplish and things I ended up doing. The world's been rather weird, and my reactions to it wholly unexpected. I've taken solace in my personal practices throughout this time, and have slowly re-acquainted myself with my creative outlets that laid dormant since the beginning of the year.

If you've been finding yourself in a similar situation, please consider submitting your creative output to Agapé. We accept articles, poetry, art, photography, rituals, and reviews. Show us what you've been up to or what you've been reading. Tell us how you're getting through this time. The deadline for Vol. XX No.3 is October 20, 2020ev.

Stay strong. Stay safe.

Love is the law, love under will.

Andrew

Editor, Agapé

FROM THE GRAND MASTER

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

Revised E.G.C. Manual

We have issued a revised E.G.C. Manual, which formally implements the Deacon-Sacerdote program (as presented in Agapé 19:3). It also includes a number of revisions which are essentially of the nature of housekeeping, such as revised language pertaining to Cakes of Light (as presented in Agapé 19:1). An approved ritual for Deacon-Sacerdote ordination, and one for sacerdotal empowerment of a previously ordained Deacon, are also now available. Ordained clergy may obtain a copy of the revised E.G.C. Manual from the Document Control Officer.

Local Body Events Calendar

The U.S.G.L. Education Committee has created an online calendar for events at U.S.G.L. local bodies. The calendar can be viewed at: https://edu.oto-usa.org/usgl-local-body-public-events/

Love is the law, love under will.

Sabazius



UPDATES FROM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

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

The College took the following actions pertinent to local body status and management at its Summer Meeting in the G Suite:

Review of Acting Masters

Confirmed Br. Christopher S. as Master of William Blake Lodge (Baltimore, MD) after serving part of a year as Acting Master.

Local Body Master Requests

Mastership of 718 Camp (San Antonio, TX) passed from Soror Gimel to Soror Helen.

Mastership of Obeah and Wanga Camp (Nashville, TN) transferred from Sr. Rebecca P. to Br. William M.

Mastership of Star Sapphire Lodge (Los Angeles, CA) passed from Br. Rafael A. to Fr. S.V.A.T.I.

Tenure Limit Extension Requests

Extended the tenure limit of the master of Alombrados Oasis for a period of one year.

Local Body Status Changes

Closed Obeah and Wanga Camp (Nashville, TN) at the request of the master.

Chartered Gnarled Oak Camp (Nashville, TN) with Br. William M. as master.

Other Business

Postponed the proposed Master Selection Process to Fall 2020 EV to allow for more time for comments from seated masters and deputies.

Suspended the lodge space requirement and minimum number of celebrations of the Gnostic Mass requirement until Summer 2022 EV.

Important Deadlines

The deadline for submissions for consideration at the Fall Meeting is September 12, 2020 EV.

The deadline for submissions for consideration at the Winter Meeting is November 28, 2020 EV.

The Electoral College appreciates all incoming and outgoing masters for their service. A special thank

you also to the officers and members of 718 Camp, Blazing Star Oasis, and Golden Thread Camp who signed up to host the College this year and were unable to do so due to the worldwide pandemic.

About the Electoral College

Appeals – Those wishing to appeal decisions of the Electoral College may do so in writing to the Supreme Grand Council through the Grand Secretary General (gsg@oto-usa.org). Those wishing to appeal verdicts of the Grand Tribunal to the Areopagus may do so with the sponsorship of a seated Elector. See our website for contact details of individual electors (http://ec.oto-usa.org/electors.html).

Those wishing to appeal Notice of Pending Bad Report at a Local Body may do so by writing to the Secretary of the College outlining the manner in which the Notice was deficient or false.

Attending Meetings – Dues Current Members in Good Standing of V° are invited to attend regular meetings of the Electoral College. We request that those planning to attend first contact the Master of the hosting body to R.S.V.P. Online regular meetings may be observed by being physically present with a willing Elector.

Communications – In addition to hosting email lists for masters, mentors, and communication with Grand Lodge, we also maintain a blog of Updates, News, and Transmissions on our website (http://ec.oto-usa.org/wp) and are experimenting with a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/ECUSGLOTO).

Initiates with specific concerns or questions regarding the operation of the Electoral College are invited to write to either the President or Secretary. See the included U.S.G.L. Officers Directory for contact details.

Revolutionary – Members in Good Standing of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the IX° living within the United States but not currently serving as Officer or Voting Member of any Governing Body of U.S.G.L. are heartily encouraged to volunteer to the post of Revolutionary by contacting the President

or Secretary of the Electoral College. Thus may progress be effected.

Website – The official website of the Electoral College can be found at http://ec.oto-usa.org/. In addition to the aforementioned resources, one may find information on volunteering to host a meeting or organize a study group in new areas, and other services provided by the College or expected of local bodies within U.S. Grand Lodge.

Love is the law, love under will.

GRAND LODGE NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

U.S.G.L. Diversity Task Force & Monthly Educational Resources

"We believe that a membership free from unfair discrimination is essential to accomplishing our Mission, and reject doctrines that promote bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance." – U.S.G.L. Values Statement #6

This statement was composed in January of 2018 EV as a first step in our goal to improve diversity and inclusion within our Order. In addition to adding this statement, we simultaneously developed a Diversity Task Force composed of minority members and allies. This task force was assembled to brainstorm and enact programs to address the needs of underrepresented people in our Order and to help us to do our work in accordance with our values.

In the past two years, the Task Force has been working on many ideas, including the diversity panel that took place at the last NOTOCON.

In the last six months we shifted our focus toward seeking learning opportunities that we can share with our membership to help us understand the challenge before us. By learning ways that we can have a positive impact on those around us who are feeling marginalized, we can become a more inviting place for a greater variety of people.

Our task became even more important to us as our nation went through the pain and struggle in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. We all feel the focusing power of this catalytic event that emphasizes the real need for us to have a conversation about racism and discrimination.

A sub-group of the task force has been inspired to come together to develop a new program providing educational materials on diversity and related topics. For the past several months they have reviewed online courses created by universities and businesses focused on diversity and inclusion. Much of this content was lengthy and complex, and seemed like too much to expect local bodies to tackle. How could we make this content accessible to our siblings?

The answer came through the resulting program, the Diversity Monthly Modules (MoMod).

A Diversity MoMod is a monthly discussion and reflection tool, designed to be completed by a small group or individual in 1-2 hours. Each module focuses on a single topic surrounding diversity and inclusion, supported by one resource, five discussion prompts, a self-reflection question, and a feedback survey. The resource is usually a video lasting 15-45 minutes. The discussion prompts are used to generate conversation about the single module topic. The self-reflection question is designed to relate the material back to Thelema. Two versions of the module packet will exist. One is intended for small group discussion and includes the MoMod and facilitator notes. The other is intended for selfstudy and includes the MoMod and a self-study guide.

Because of its compact size, the MoMods can be built and released faster than a bigger course. In all efforts, the team has strived to produce material that will challenge thinking, provoke conversation, and encourage problem solving. Their guide has been the USGL Values statements #6 (quoted above) and #4:

"We advocate the principles of Scientific Religion and Universal Brotherhood, and oppose tyranny, superstition, and oppression." I wish to express my profound thanks to the MoMod team for all of their exemplary efforts in producing this content:

- Lisa H.
- Fr. Audeo
- Sr. Cassandra Althea
- David P.
- Sorox KhonsuRa Baphomex
- Sorro Luz y

At the writing of this article, our spaces are closed due to COVID-19, we are in the midst of a heightened struggle as systemic racism is called out in our communities, and the world around us is changing. Let's take this opportunity to learn about the source of so much unrest in our society. The key to solving a problem is first understanding it.

Education Committee Update

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

The U.S.G.L. Education Committee is pleased to announce the publication of the Local Body Public Events Calendar.

The Local Body Public Events Calendar is a service to help local bodies share their public events. It allows local bodies to attract a wider audience for their public offerings and hopefully will assist with financial sustainability during the uncertainty we are currently facing. The calendar also helps members of the Order make connections within the broader O.T.O. community while seeking out classes, lectures, and discussions related to their personal interests.

We hope the calendar can also help to spread the Law of Thelema by providing access to local body events to members of the Order and the general public who do not live near a local body and may otherwise have little or no access to Thelemic events and education. Many local bodies have expressed an interest in continuing some online events even after they are able to meet in person again; it is our intention that this calendar continue to serve local bodies to promote both virtual events and in-person events (when permitted).

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All local bodies have the option to participate in the Local Body Public Events Calendar, and it is not too late to join. We will continue to add local bodies as they are ready. The Education Committee is also available to help local bodies plan and execute virtual classes. For more information on joining the calendar or assistance conducting online classes, please contact Soror Mackay (mackay@oto-usa. org).

The calendar resides at https://edu.oto-usa.org/usgllocal-body-public-events/ - please share this with your members!

We hope to "see" you soon.

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally, Scott Plyler, Secretary U.S.G.L. Education Committee

Strategic Planning Update

The latest Strategic Planning report, containing activity and planning from FY18 & 19 (through February 2020 EV) is now available at the U.S.G.L. website.

After a long season of planning, our governing bodies were introduced to a new set of circumstances, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has put many of our action plans on hold and has cast a veil of obscurity over the shape of the future needs of our Order. With that in mind, the current report serves as an acknowledgement of the significant body of work that it represents and as a placeholder for that future time when we can evaluate our priorities in a "post-COVID" Order. Accordingly, a new section has been added to the top of the report to reflect actions taken in support of our Camps, Oases, and Lodges during the pandemic itself.

The focus of this year's planning was to build on the goals of previous years, with particular focus on new goal setting for the Electoral College, Initiation Committee, and Kaaba Committee. Much progress has been made in the past six months in the Diversity Task Force, with a focus on providing education materials (see article, page 4). A new role | Sr. Melissa Holm, Strategic Planning Secretary

was established, the Policy Reconciliation Officer, with the task of auditing currently documented policy for inconsistency, to manage resolution of the same, and to recommend updates as warranted.

Current work is being focused on developing options for safe event protocols for our COVID-19 environment. More information will be provided as it is available.

To view the full report, visit the U.S.G.L. Planning web page at https://planning.oto-usa.org/fy19-ev- anno-vv.

Objective: Preserve organizational health, locally and nationally, in the face of the current COVID19 pandemic.

Goal: Support O.T.O. bodies in U.S.G.L. to the extent possible

Strategy: engage with Local Masters via current lines of communication, provide resource assistance as able

Responsibility: Electoral College, G.T.G.

Timeframe: Ongoing beginning March 2020 EV Status: Updates being sent to LMs through e-lists and through direct 1:1 communications

Strategy: Provide online resources to conduct classes and group gathering for local bodies to support Order activity in a social-distancing/shelterin-place environment.

Responsibility: Electoral College, I.T.

Timeframe: Ongoing beginning March 2020 EV

Status: In process

GOAL STATUS: Ongoing, TBD

Goal: Support the global endeavor to control the spread of COVID-19 with the secondary effect of preserving the health of our Order.

Strategy: Communicate restrictions for U.S.G.L. bodies, including local events, based on current instructions of W.H.O., C.D.C., and local/national authorities.

Responsibility: Executive

Timeframe: Ongoing beginning March 2020 EV Status: Updates being sent through U.S.G.L. blog,

e-lists, and social media

GOAL STATUS: Ongoing, TBD

MAGIC WITH OUR TEARS: AN ESSAY ON MOVING THROUGH THE DARKNESS

by Kash Mira

In nearly every magician's life, there is a crisis point where we simply feel defeated. Whether it is a health crisis, a financial crisis, a family crisis or simply a crisis of faith, it is a point where moving seems impossible and everything seems lost. The natural response by many is to let loose our tears, our sorrow, our grief. In that moment, it can feel that Darkness has seemingly extinguished all Light and thus, all hope.

So how do we as magicians handle this moment? How do we "bear the Sun in his Silence through the darkness of Night and the bitterness of Winter?" It is not hyperbole to say as of this writing, due to the pandemic, many of us are collectively in a crisis point from the horror of great darkness that has come over humanity. We are all trying to make sense of the senseless suffering. Many of us may be physically or emotionally alone and it can be easy to believe that there is no God where we are. It may even seem an almost herculean effort to grasp at the small hints of Light invisibly shining in the Darkness of Being. While it is not my goal to try to resolve all of our issues or this overall collective tragedy with a facile "self-help" essay, it has been my experience in my own personal times of darkness (both in the past and more recently) that by revisiting some Thelemic practices including reading, ritual, and reflection, one might find sustenance and comfort in these difficult times.

Many of us come from backgrounds where holy scripture would be consulted and read during times of difficulty. While our Prophet was a prolific writer, he was not wont to write pithy, easy to read, "feel better" passages. Nonetheless, there are some passages that might provide inspiration including:

Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains. (AL II:9)

Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven

or upon the earth or under the earth. Nu is your refuge as Hadit your light; and I am the strength, force, vigour, of your arms. (*AL* III:17)

Fear nothing. Fear nothing. Fear nothing... Thou shalt fear with the fear of love: I will overcome thee. Thou shalt be very nigh to death. But I will overcome thee; the New Life shall illumine thee with the Light that is beyond the Stars. (*Liber LXVI*, 58, 60-62).

And this is the wrath of God, that these things should be thus.

And this is the grace of God, that these things should be thus. (*Liber CLVI*, 17-18)

Besides the Holy Books, there are other quotes that might be useful as meditation to understand where we are in this current moment or how we might see them from a different point of view:

This is the threshold of life; this is the threshold of death. All is doubtful, all is mysterious, all is intoxicating... Whatever horrors may afflict the soul, whatever abominations may excite the loathing of the heart, whatever terrors may assail the mind, the answer is the same at every stage: 'How splendid is the Adventure!' (*The Book of Thoth*, Atu XVIII, The Moon)

"Behold, there is a Pageant of Triumph as each star, free from Confusion, sweepeth free in his right Orbit; all heaven acclaimeth thee as thou goest, transcendental in Joy and in Splendour; and thy Light is as a Beacon to them that wander afar, strayed in the Night." (*Liber Aleph*, De Harmonia Voluntatis et Parcarum (On the Harmony of Will and Fate))

The Stability of the Universe is Change, the Assurance of thy Truth.

The Perfection of the Universe is the Realization of the Ideal of thy Passion.

("The Ten Secret Joys of the Master" as written in *The Heart of the Master*)

There are of course numerous other passages one might find support in; these are but a few that I personally have used. While everyone's interpretation of such passages will be different, it is

not too hard to find a sliver of hope or acceptance in words such as these if one chooses.

As magicians we might also find support in performing rituals – those moments when we let the world go and embrace Something/Nothing besides ourselves. I recently read a profound quote from the musician Genesis Breyer P-Orridge that seemingly sums up the necessity of ritual in our lives:

"We have normal patterns of behaviour. When you do a ritual, you cut up the way you normally would respond. You reach thresholds of behaviour you would normally avoid. You're in a situation you're not used to. You can see what controls and de-controls. And where you are and how big you are and how you exist, your shape, your depth, everything else..."

As many of us are by necessity isolating ourselves to reduce the spread of the pandemic, and thus are not able to perform group rituals in person, it is easy to fall into a rut that doesn't allow us to break out of our normal patterns of behaviour. However, by doing regular ritual individually, we might be able to "shake up", albeit temporarily, our patterns and perhaps see a different point of view.

Naturally our solar adoration, *Liber Resh vel Helios*, might be a place to start. The sun continues to rise and set every day – it is a continuous reminder of the cycle of our existence, the continual return of light. In *Magick Without Tears*, Crowley wrote of Liber Resh:

"Particularly useful against the fear of death is the punctual and vigorous performance of Liber Resh. Meditate on the sun in each station: his continuous and even way: the endless circle..."

Of course, there is also the saying of Will before meals, whereby we might be reminded of doing the Great Work. As Crowley wrote:

The point is to seize every occasion of bringing every available force to bear upon the objective of the assault. It does not matter what the force is (by any standard of judgment) so long as it plays its proper part in securing the success of the general purpose. (*Book 4*, Ch. XIII, footnote)

But besides Resh and Will, there are other rituals that we might also draw inspiration from. For many, Eucharistic rituals are necessary parts of their practice. As we are not yet able to attend Gnostic Mass in person, watching online recordings or listening to dramatic recitations performed by local bodies may be ways to connect to our central ritual, though it is a much different experience when it is done through electronic forms. However, for those who wish to explore a more personal ritual, *Liber XLIV*, The Mass of the Phoenix, as found in chapter 44 of *The Book of Lies*, might offer a different way to perform a Eucharistic ritual as an individual. Its usefulness is hinted at in chapter 62 of *The Book of Lies*:

He then takes the Oath and becomes free—unconditioned—the Absolute.

Burning up in the Flame of his Prayer, and born again—the Phoenix!

Though the ritual sometimes gains a bit of notoriety for the "sign" as alluded to in the instructions, as Lon Milo Duquette wrote, "nowhere is it indicated that pain, scarring, or injury is a required element of the ceremony. It is a Eucharist, not a ritual of self-mutilation." This especially becomes an important footnote if one follows the comment in *Book 4* that the Mass of the Phoenix "should be performed daily at sunset by every magician."

But we are not limited to Mass of the Phoenix, Liber Resh, and Will for rituals to perform as individuals. I would propose that other less discussed rituals such as *Liber Nu*, *Liber HAD*, *Liber HHH* (especially part I), and *Liber YOD* might also offer inspiration. While one could argue they could be performed anywhere a magician chooses, they especially may be highly effective for those who are able to safely go into a secluded, socially distanced area to explore the Thelemic mysteries further.

But even with these rituals already prepared for us to use, I would also note that we should not feel ritual must be constrained to what Crowley wrote in toto. With a bit of inspiration from the numerous other rituals written by Crowley–*Liber V vel Reguli, Liber Samekh*, Lesser and Great Rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram, *Liber Israfel*, etc.–and drawing upon one's own understanding of the Divine, we

might develop our own unique rituals using pieces of what has already been written. While it may seem somewhat unorthodox to those accustomed to performing rituals only "as is written," in the end, if our goal is to temporarily change patterns of behaviours, using a ritual by one's own invention certainly can yield results. While I caution that the results will not always turn out the way it is anticipated, there is no doubt that ingenuity can provide fruitful harvest.

Reflection on life is the final Thelemic practice that might also provide a key to finding Light in the Darkness. It is a natural result of both reading and ritual, and can be expressed in an infinite number of ways including writing in one's Magical Diary, performing music, painting, drawing, cooking, etc. Others may find they are best able to reflect when listening to loud or cacophonous music, watching absurd comedies, performing household repairs, etc. In my own life, I have found that my reflection is best done when I am hiking long distances, listening to some select recorded poetry and music, effectively "tuning out" everything else. I am able to do this safely in the secluded area where I live, finding solace in the woods and streams that I call home. The Great Work forever lies ahead, and moving forward, both metaphorically and physically, is the way I am able to see it done.

It is not easy to be a magician and maintain our magic during periods of darkness. Certainly, during this difficult time when we are separated from one another, it might seem impossible. By reading, performing ritual, and reflecting on our journey, we might find some understanding through the confusion. I have an optimism that we will see the hard times through it, even if we have to mix magic with our tears. At the end of the difficulties, we may end up battle scarred, but the light will continue to shine in the hollow spaces. I'll end this essay with a few select pieces of poetry, writing and lyrics that I have been reflecting on recently:

This is. And thou art. There is no safety. There is no end. The word must be heard in silence. There must be darkness to see the stars. The dance is always danced above the hollow place, above the terrible abyss. (*The Farthest Shore*, Ursula K. LeGuin)

there must be a way.

surely, there must be a way we have not yet thought of.

who put this brain inside of me?

it cries it demands it says that there is a chance.

it will not say 'no.'
("the crunch", Charles Bukowski)

Across the ages, we have reigned as we endured Through the storm fronts we will ever surely pass To stand as never-ending light
Let there be, let there always be never-ending light
("Perpetual", VNV Nation)

it may not be much light but it beats the darkness. ("the laughing heart", Charles Bukowski)

FOR MR. FLOYD FROM A MOM

by Hattie Quinn, June 3, 2020 EV

When I watched the compiled video of the murder in Minneapolis, I was shocked. I was angry. How can this still be happening?! What strange hell is this?

The video went on. And on.

They told him to get up while they knelt on his neck. Despite his fears, he agreed, but they did not move.

They did not move.

When he finally called for his Mama I started crying and it would not stop. I could not stop.

In his last moments he called on the person he knew loved him in spite of anything and everything.

In the face of the hatred that pinned him to the ground as it was taking his life, he called upon that love to set him free.

We cannot stop crying. For that is how the magick happens.

We focus all we have on the thing that needs to be. Not what is. But our truest desire. The only outcome that can save us all.

We put our heart and souls into that vision. We cry every last tear in our bodies. We pour ourselves into it. We hold nothing back.

We create this ball of energetic potential and fill it with our everything. Then release it into the world to power the movement... to feed the change.

Cry for George Floyd and the countless others who came before him.

Cry so he can be the last victim of hate.

You had better be crying, motherfuckers.



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O.T.O. "does not include the A:A:, with which august body it is, however, in close alliance."

— Liber LII

O.T.O. has long worked in close alliance with the A:A:, which first proclaimed the Law of Thelema to the world. The A:A: is a teaching, testing, and initiatory system dedicated to the personal spiritual advancement of its individual members. Within A:A: all services are rendered free of charge, and no social activities are held. O.T.O. and A:A: have jointly issued the journal The Equinox since 1912 EV, now in its fourth volume. Although they are distinctly separate organizations, neither including nor subordinate to the other, O.T.O. has historically assisted A:A: with practical matters that lie outside the latter's primary mission, which is purely spiritual in nature. Aspirants to the A:A: may write to:

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