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



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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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FROM THE EDITOR

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

Welcome to the latest issue of *Agapé*! I'd like to thank those who have submitted their work for publication. This issue features part one of a short story by Sib. Vivian Caethe, as well as a poem by Br. Kikhos ba-Midhbar, and cover art by Fr. αει αιθης.

As always, articles, reviews, fiction, prose, art, and photography featured in *Agapé* are the works of U.S.G.L. membership. If you'd like to submit any of these for a future issue of *Agapé*, please feel free to email them to agape@oto-usa.org.

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.

Meditation is a Core Thelemic Practice

"Let us determine to be masters of our minds."
– A.C., *Book 4, Part I*

Acceptance of the Law of Thelema and *The Book of the Law* are the only actual requirements to credibly identify as a Thelemite. However, some sort of personal magical regimen is needed to credibly identify as a Thelemic Magician. A huge range of practices are available for inclusion in the Thelemic Magician's repertoire. Some of them, it seems to me, are foundational, and I include meditation in that category. Here's why.

First, those of us who practice the observances of *Liber Resh vel Helios sub figura CC* are enjoined to compose themselves to holy meditation a minimum of four times each day (for at least a short period of time).

Second, recall this passage from *Liber Librae sub figura XXX*: "Fixed thought is a means to an end. Therefore pay attention to the power of silent thought and meditation. The material act is but the outward expression of thy thought, and therefore hath it been said that 'the thought of foolishness is sin.' Thought is the commencement of action, and if a chance thought can produce much effect, what cannot fixed thought do?"

Meditation, then (at minimum), is a way to develop and strengthen one of the faculties needed to conduct effective magical workings.

We can study what meditation means in other systems, but what, specifically, is the practice of meditation, or "fixed thought," to a Thelemite? The answer to this question is thoroughly addressed in Crowley's *Book 4, Part 1*. This book is essentially a treatise on meditation; and "Meditation" is, in fact, its subtitle. In Crowley's preliminary remarks to this treatise, he succinctly defines meditation as "the restraining of the mind to a single act, state, or thought." He then proceeds to develop the idea

of scientific meditation for the remainder of the treatise, showing us the necessary preliminaries (e.g. neutralization of distractions) as well as techniques for assessing progress.

So, very simply, when we meditate, we are attempting, for a set period of time, to restrain our mind to a single act, state, or thought. This can be practiced in a variety of ways, including (but certainly not limited to) focusing on such things as our posture, our breathing, a mantra, an image (the Tattvas are particularly convenient for this), a point on or inside the body (the Ajña chakra is often recommended), or even the ambient sounds around us. This can be considered an exercise to build strength or skill, similar to doing sit-ups or practicing a musical instrument. Frequent practice is essential; and slow, gradual progress is to be expected.

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 Electoral College took the following actions at our Summer meeting held online on July 10, 2021 EV:

Closed Behutet Camp (Kansas City, MO) at the request of the master.

Passed the mastership of Black Sun Lodge (Cleveland, OH) from Sr. Lori to Br. Benjamin R.

Passed the mastership of Blazing Star Oasis (Oakland, CA) from Fr. Aletheia to Br. James F.

Extended the tenure of the master of Abrahadabra Oasis (Portland, ME) for one year.

The Electoral College would like to thank Soror Ishara from Behutet Camp for many years of service in local body leadership, and to thank the outgoing

masters and congratulate the incoming masters of Black Sun Lodge and Blazing Star Oasis, and frankly express our deep appreciation to all masters for their service past, present, and future. May you all find joy in your coming days.

Thank you to Brother Dave H. for serving eleven years at my side with this august team. It has been a privilege to serve our full term together and to have known and served with so many other dedicated siblings.

Love is the law, love under will.

Faternally yours,
Hattie Quinn
Past President
U.S. Electoral College

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.

While there is no appeal process for Notice of Pending Bad Report at a Local Body, if an initiate feels the notice they have received did not follow the process as outlined in the C.O.L.M.H. for issuing notice, believes there was inappropriate motivation behind the notice, or can prove the notice is patently false (through disputation of facts), they may contact 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 ([https://](https://ec.oto-usa.org/electoral-college-blog/)

ec.oto-usa.org/electoral-college-blog/) 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 <https://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

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

The U.S.G.L. Task Force has released six new modules in the Racial Diversity and Inclusion module series. The module descriptions are listed on the U.S.G.L. Education Committee's Diversity page. There are currently twelve modules available. The monthly modules were created by a subgroup of the Task Force known as the MoMod (Monthly Module) team and were guided by the U.S.G.L. Values Statements, in particular:

"We advocate the principles of Scientific Religion and Universal Brotherhood, and oppose tyranny,

superstition, and oppression.” – U.S.G.L. Values Statement #4

“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

The MoMods were designed to be a tool for local leadership to provide space to have hard discussions, increase awareness of underserved populations, and challenge participants to self-reflect on the module topic as it relates to Thelema. The modules also provide opportunity for those who wish to complete them alone, but in either case, it is the MoMod team’s desire to give each individual the knowledge and confidence to talk about these topics whether it is with other siblings or in other parts of their lives.

The MoMods were birthed with the idea that our physical spaces and online events should be welcoming. They must be free of ignorance and the bias that discourages many members of underserved populations. If individuals want to embrace Thelema, take initiation, attend celebrations of Liber XV, or participate in classes or ritual events, then race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability should not be the limiting factor. The Law must truly be for all!

Love is the law, love under will.

The Flame that Burns in Every Heart of Man Part One

Vivian Caethe
Crux Ansata Oasis
Valley of Denver, Colorado

It starts with an explosion. Don’t worry, it happened over fifty years ago, nothing to be concerned about. But when Parsons’ lab exploded, the astral plane felt it like a bullet to the chest. Demons wailed and angels wept when the explosives the scientist was known to experiment with blew him and his

workings sky high. The lower planes were torn as the higher planes rocked on their foundations. They have slowly healed since then, nurtured by their protectors and the caretakers of the Watchtowers, but the damage remains.

What effect such a small human could have on the spheres of the divine. But then, as above so below, there couldn’t help but be a response to the cause of his death. For travelers such as ourselves, the damage became a wound to heal, a sight to see, and a wonder at which to marvel.

Who are we? We are you, of course. Among you in secret, for you would never accept us as your own. We are of you and aside from you, the protectors of the world and the invisible planes through which you move, insensible to their wonder and their danger. Perhaps you have seen us in dreams, guarding you from those who would turn your mind against your will to topics you would never countenance as a caring human being.

They also work in secret, fighting us at every turn. You may have met them in the waking world, the ones that would erase that which makes you, claiming to help you to be your most rational self, claiming that pain and memory are the sources of weakness. To remove them, they claim, is to be your best self. They use tricks and strange machines to measure you and tell you how you are found wanting, broken but for their salvation.

They don’t tell you that to remove those parts of you is also to remove what makes you human.

This is a story of a war waged in all worlds, but one which is most poignant in ours. For out of all the species of the universe, both physical and astral, humans are the most driven by emotion and feelings. They want to erase us, make us like them. Conformity is the language of the worlds beyond and for our irrationality and emotional natures, we do not speak their tongue.

As foreigners, humans are feared, distrusted. We are only welcome in their planes and planets when we speak their words and use their symbols, the language of angels, we used to call it. We know their faces now, and their true natures. The battle

for Earth started when they murdered the one who swung wide the gate to the other worlds and, in penance, the one who was one of its protectors.

This is our story, the story that started a half century ago. A story that ends now.

Slipping between waking and sleeping, I lie in wait to drift into dreams. Tonight they will come for me, as they have come for my siblings. I have set the watchfires of my soul and I know it will draw those who wish us ill.

I ready my tools, arrayed about my sleeping form. The cup of water on my headboard, filled to the brim. The sword to my right, glinting sharply in the flickering candlelight. The coin beneath my feet, something from Earth to ground me. The wand is to my left, ready to direct my will.

Hovering above my body, I keep my mind from wandering. The errant thought has power in the spiritual plane and to let them loose would be to draw more to me than I can handle. They feed on the dreams of humans, feeding off our unconscious processes. To appear to be a harmless sleeper is my best chance to catch them.

Sleep is when we are most vulnerable, when the line between the astral and physical worlds is less strongly delineated. Most people don't even notice the effects of the adversaries' nighttime feeding, perhaps a restless night of bad, disjointed dreams barely remembered upon waking. But then the damage is done, and the victim becomes less curious, less emotional, less human. More like them.

We are both feast and famine. They crave us and yet we do not fulfill their needs unless we are like them. Other planets are full of these predatory cycles; we are the only planet of prey, dreaming our way into oblivion.

They arrive above my body, one by one, easing into the astral reality over my sleeping form like smoke that thickens in the air around me. There is only a moment when they are truly vulnerable. Once there are five of them, smoke-shrouded figures filled with

hunger and the void, they open their mouths wide, and in that moment, I strike.

"Apo pantos kakodaimonos!" The words are from Earth, but in a language from the time when we could banish them with a word, when our magic grew freely in our souls. They scream wordlessly back in dissonant mathematical chords.

I raise the sword in my right hand, the wand in my left, daring them to come for me. In my mind, I recite the words of the protective spell, waiting for the right moment. Several flinch at my gesture; they were not anticipating a fight. An intrepid one lunges, claws extended, mouth gaping wide and full of deadly smoke.

Blocking its slashing talons with my wand, I strike back with my sword. The ritually purified blade slices through the creature's core and banishes it to the hellscape from which it came.

In its passing, it screams, as they always do, the sound of entropy and the heat death of the universe.

Before the echoes and remnants of its body fade, the others attack. I parry their strikes in a blurred frenzy, their blows furious at the demise of their fellow. For a brief moment, despair causes me to waver. There are four of them against one of me, what kind of odds are those?

The answer rises with my courage and the knowledge that I have prepared for this moment for years.

"Flegei gar peri mou o aster ton pente!"

A spinning pentacle appears beneath my astral body's feet, and I grin at the closest creature as the circled star's blue flames shoot up to surround and embrace me, filling me with power. The closest one shrieks as the flames catch it and combust it with a vengeance.

The third, fourth, and last of them retreat, but I push my advantage, bashing their claws aside and slashing through the two closest. Their shrieks echo through the aether, but these are common sounds in the lower planes, where creatures worse than these prey on them.

I square off against the last, but this one is different, more clever than its fellows. It doesn't lunge at me, full of teeth and claws, like the others. Calculating, it waits for its chance as we dance around each other above my sleeping form. It even looks different, filled with spikes and planes where the others were shadows and smoke. Perhaps it is a new kind, or a pilot fish for something worse.

It feints right and I dash left, swinging my sword.

To my surprise, instead of engaging, it dives, through the spinning flames that singe it with the aetheric scent of death and to my somnolent body below.

I try to snap back to my body, to raise my limbs and defend myself. It leaves an opening and, cackling, the creature lunges for my astral soul, latching its claws in my chest.

Awkwardly beating at the now too-close creature with my wand and sword, I try to catch my breath. Its talons close around my heart, clawing through my spirit form to attack the very core of my being. Before I can scream in refusal, in denial, it kicks free of my grasp and disappears into the aether, taking my heart with it.

The shock of the trauma yanks me back into my body and I sit up, eyes wide in the sudden darkness as I gasp, clutching at my chest. The candles have been extinguished by the force of its attack, leaving me defenseless. My physical heart thumps loudly in my chest, but I feel the hollowness of the theft in its distant echo in the ethereal plane.

They have never attacked like this before. Of the conflicts I've heard between defenders like myself and the aggressors that attack the sleepers, the result has either been death or a deep coma. But I am awake, surprisingly alive, and terribly confused. What was their goal? What will happen to me? What did just happen to me?

Until this moment, the war has been fought by the earthly forces determined to keep our humanity and those who would sacrifice an entire planet for the power they seek. It has been a war of attrition, with each side seeking to wear out the other through a thousand small wounds. This, however, is new.

I need help.

The bell on the door of the Star Ruby chimes cheerfully as I walk in, arriving as soon as the store opens the next morning. Susanna works as the store's resident psychic on weekends, and she has been ~~patrolling the borders of our worlds~~ for over twenty years.

As I walk to the counter, she looks up at me with a smile that immediately fades. She takes in my haggard, sleepless expression and the worry that I'm sure is written across my features.

"You'd better come back with me." She stands and leads the way to the back room where she does her readings. Gesturing for me to take a seat in the comfortable, well used brocade armchair across from her throne-like leather chair, she picks up the pile of tarot cards from the antique table between us and starts to shuffle, her blue eyes showing her concern.

We don't speak as she draws three cards, laying them out in a row between us.

Three of Swords.

Nine of Swords.

Ten of Swords.

"Oh honey. What happened?"

I tell her the story as simply as I can, but she presses me for details.

"What did they look like?"

"Well, I thought they were standard issue adversaries. Huge mouths, shadowy forms, lots of bitey teeth and claws. The thief was strange... different from the others."

"They didn't look human?" she asks, tapping her index finger against her lips.

"Nope."

"Hmm." She looks at the cards again. "You need to

find your heart, before it's too late. But you didn't come here for me to tell you what you already know."

Picking up her cards again, she deals The Star above the spread and The Tower beneath. The meaning is obvious. I will have to seek out my heart or face utter ruin.

She draws another card and turns it over, placing it on top of the central card of the initial spread. The Eight of Wands. I will have to travel far and swiftly to recover my heart.

"But where to?" I ask, trying to keep my voice from sounding plaintive and probably failing.

Susanna draws a final card and places it over the last: Lust. A woman riding on a beast. Well, if that isn't a clear sign, I don't know what is.

"A word of caution," Susanna says as we stand and I prepare to leave, "I've been hearing a lot of stories like this lately... something is happening out there and we need to stop it. Go to Babalon, find your heart, and stop the adversary."

"Seems doable." I smile wanly.

"You have this, sister. We'll be with you in spirit."

Finding the path to the astral plane starts with inquiring within. I pass by the memory palaces I have created, the rooms and rooms of thoughts and fears and hopes and dreams. Finally reaching the door I have placed between myself and the aether, I take a metaphorical deep breath and open the door, stepping through quickly and locking it behind me.

My astral form has always been a shimmering version of my physical self, appearing whole and complete when I journey away from my body. But now as I look down at my hands, I look pale and translucent, ghostly and drained, lost without my heart.

With a sigh, I turn my attention to the landscape around me. The astral plane is both like and unlike

reality but has its own rules that don't always abide by what humans would consider rational. The landscape around me shifts and flows with eddies and loops that defy reason but that here make perfect sense.

Or at least it should. Something strikes me as wrong and it takes me a few moments to realize that the colors are less vivid, the flows less... flowy.

The astral plane I have emerged into feels stale, broken. Shuddering, I turn back to my door, only to find it gone. In the distance I hear a howling of predators and the shrieks of the adversary. As I stand in fear, the world around me begins to fade, the vibrant and impossible colors turning dull and gray as the adversaries near.

I ready my sword and wand, but in my injured condition, I have no faith that I can hold them off for long. The world wanes until the brilliance and light I have come to expect is just a memory. A gray fog surrounds me and strange shapes move through the murky landscape, growing nearer and nearer.

"Woah. I didn't expect you to still be standing," a voice interrupts my spiral into panic. I turn and find another human standing next to me. I take in his tousled brown hair, close clipped beard, and smirk with one blink. With the next, I observe his brown suit with haphazardly tied tie, jarring in their normalcy. He looks strangely familiar, and when he grins his trademark wry grin, I gasp.

"Jack?"

"Come with me." He reaches out his hand. The astral realm is a place where dreams and hopes can come true. But to see Parsons here, at this time, strikes me as a very likely trap. Some spirits can take on any form for any amount of time. I have no reason to believe that it's truly him. Especially after the nature of his murder.

My hesitation is written plainly on my face, but it doesn't deter him, "Sister, I can help you."

"How do I know you are real?"

"You know how." He smiles, the expression making

his moustache twitch. He looks so real, so material on this immaterial plane. But how? How is this possible? And what does he mean? "Show me the signs."

The meaning comes to me, but this could also be a trap. "I don't know you."

He grins. I have passed the first part of the test. "Then I will start."

He unfurls his hand like a magician presenting me with a rose, but instead of a flower appearing from his sleeve, information flows from his fingers. I raise my hand to intercept the knowledge, making sure to follow his motion perfectly. I was taught these rituals, but rarely have to use them with so few humans traversing the spiritual planes.

The information flows between us and the gestures we make as we silently communicate unlock the barriers that we have both placed between us and the astral world. I feel like one of those puzzle boxes, shifting to take in his secrets as I give him some of my own in return.

From the flow of information he gives me, I sense that he is what he appears to be, or at least that he appears to so firmly believe he is Jack Parsons that he has taken on the aetheric signature of the once-protector of the Earth. I still have my doubts, but they are lessened, as strange as it is.

"How can you be here?" I ask as we finish, closing down the channels and pathways we have allowed into our souls.

"You mean I should be dead after I was blown sky high?" he asks, putting his hands in his slack pockets.

"Well..." I didn't want to put it as crassly, but here we are.

"It's a long story, but suffice it to say that I didn't die immediately. The explosion hurt like a bitch, but I was able to astrally travel even as my body failed."

"But shouldn't your corporeal death have..." I pause, then continue, "well, shouldn't it have sent

your soul on as well?"

"Well, you know what they say, 'Unto them from whose eyes the veil of life hath fallen may there be granted the accomplishment of their true Wills.'" He shrugs. "I guess my Will wasn't done with me yet."

"But you've been here for over fifty years." I say, realizing I sound argumentative. It also occurs to me that we're wasting time. "All that aside, why should I go with you?"

"This is a trap. They've been laying them for months now." Jack waggles his hand and I reluctantly take it, surprised that even in my evanescent state, his grip is firm on my skin.

I don't have time to question as one of the adversary's dark forms emerges from the fog, ravenous mouth wide open like a shark. It towers above us and for a moment I freeze.

"Hurry!" Jack yanks me out of the way as it pounces. Once I'm clear, he does something to the aether that makes it twist in on itself in brain-melting Mandelbrot patterns.

The adversary turns to strike again but Jack pulls me into the strange pattern and through to the other side with an audible pop.

Waving his hand at the strange doorway he had made, Jack makes it disappear just as quickly as he made it appear.

"What just happened?" I ask, trying to find my footing on the now just normally strange aetheric plane. I feel woozy and nauseated, not generally common feelings when one is just a spirit.

"How did you get there?" Jack asks in return.

"I just tried to enter the aether the way I usually do, and I found myself there." I shrug. "You said it was a trap. What did you mean?"

"The adversary has been kidnapping souls that venture into the aether and turning them into slaves, or fuel, or worse," Jack said. "It's powering something big, something they're preparing in a big push to turn the tide of the war."

"How did you find me?" I feel strange playing twenty questions with a ghost, but the questions are filling me up and I need answers.

"I keep an eye out for traps like that. They have a specific energy signature when one pops up. You're the only survivor I've found so far though." Jack stares at me with avid curiosity. "Why are you different? What happened to you?"

"Look, I need to find my heart." I say, trying to guide the conversation to my mission. "They stole it and I need to go to Babalon to take it back."

"Why Babalon?" Jack asks, his interest obviously piqued.

I shrug, "She knows everything, right?"

"That doesn't mean she's going to tell you," Jack says, his expression thoughtful. "What have you brought as tribute?"

"Tribute?" I ask.

"So you're winging it. That I can get behind. Let's go."

He grabs my hand and guides us to one of the flows surrounding us. I step with him into the flow and let it carry us deep into the aetheric planes, feeling the tether between myself and reality stretch and twist as I travel further and further from my body.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Poem

Br. Kikhos ba-Midhbar

Merrily I walked, alone in the dark,
In search of light, the faintest rumored spark—
Neither fear nor denial kept me back,
Ever rising along the luminous track.
Reaching the center, wisdom's wondrous prize,

Vaulted glimmers greeted my once blinded eyes,
Asserting a truth once viewed from afar:
Like a lustrous diamond, I am a star.

Obituary

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

I wish to inform you that Bro. Michael Kramer passed away this morning in Brooklyn, NY of a heart attack.

Bro. Michael was a founding member of Tahuti Encampment and later founded Kephra Oasis. Bro. Michael was a very active member within the NYC area for many years and eventually went into his own solitary work.

He was a wonderful ritualist, Priest, and Initiator, and shared his knowledge of the Magickal Arts as lecturer and instructor.

He was a talented musician who headed the band The Workers as well as playing with Pete Seeger as guitarist, bassist, and vocalist.

Unto them from whose eyes the veil of life hath fallen may there be granted the accomplishment of their true Wills; whether they will absorption in the Infinite, or to be united with their chosen and preferred, or to be in contemplation, or to be at peace, or to achieve the labour and heroism of incarnation on this planet or another, or in any Star, or aught else, unto them may there be granted the accomplishment of their wills; yea, the accomplishment of their wills.

Love is the law, love under will.
Fra. Roncelin



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