

# MEZLIM

**PRACTICAL MAGICK FOR TODAY**

Volume VI, Issue No. 3

Lughnasadh 1995

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**THE SACRED FOOL:  
HUMOR IN MAGICK**

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# MEZLIM

*Practical Magick for Today!*

MEZLIM IS PUBLISHED BY  
N'Chi

MANAGING EDITOR  
Kenneth Deigh

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
ΔKeter Elan

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT  
Donna Stanford-Blake

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Jaq D. Hawkins, Massimo Mantovani,  
Frater Stonehenge Equinox, Kenneth Deigh,  
Mishlen, Louis Martinie', Cliff Pollick,  
Michael Sontag, Phil Dickens &  
Sue Cedrone, Aishley St. Oliun, Keter Elan,  
Rev. RavenWind of Feather-Wing,  
Paul Joseph Rovelli, Samantha Young,  
Jeremy J. dePrisco, Dr. Richard Kaczynski,  
Donna Stanford-Blake, Tereza Gollub,  
Nikki Bado & Raymond L. Beck.

## CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Catherine Cartwright-Jones.

## COVER

"The Flight Of Icarus"  
S. Davidson Reusch

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"Just what does the word "Mezlim" mean, anyway?"

I've been asked that question a lot, and I'm sure there are many others who just wonder in silence. It comes from the Aramaic version of the Hebrew word *Mazel* (as in *Mazel tov!*). It means, literally, "the influence of the divine", or "the sparks emanating from Kether", the Crown of the Tree of Life. It references the fact that the divine lives in many paths, with each path as unique as the individuals who walk it.

Here at **MEZLIM**, we subscribe to the premise that we are entering a new aeon - a new age - which is bringing and will continue to bring many changes in the way we see ourselves and the world around us. We are dedicated to presenting information, views, images and ideas concerned with our transition into this new world which we are creating. Our editorial policy is androgynous, egalitarian and eclectic, supporting all growth oriented, magickal movements; celebrating the spirituality of the Living Earth!

So, in our own way, we are attempting to bring a few "sparks of the divine" into the world through our magickal labor of love: Mezlim.

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# MEZLIM

LUGHNASADH 1995

Volume VI:3

## CONTENTS



- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>0<br/>Editor's Forum<br/>Keter Elan</p>                          | <p>9<br/>So Who Were<br/>Those Guys in the<br/>Grass Skirts?<br/>Louis Martinie'</p> | <p>23<br/>Chicken Fried Pan<br/>Keter Elan</p>   | <p>35<br/>Neophyte's Niche:<br/>Balancing Act<br/>Donna Stanford-Blake</p> |
| <p>1<br/>Only When I Laugh<br/>Jaq D. Hawkins</p>                   | <p>11<br/>Mystical, Magickal,<br/>Metaphysical Quiz<br/>Cliff Pollick</p>            | <p>24<br/>The Sacred Fool<br/>Rev. RavenWind of<br/>Feather-Wing</p>                                 | <p>38<br/>Lore from the Wise<br/>Women<br/>Tereza Gollub</p>               |
| <p>3<br/>Does Humor Belong<br/>In Magick?<br/>Massimo Mantovani</p> | <p>12<br/>Humor and the<br/>False Ego<br/>Michael Sonrag</p>                         | <p>25<br/>On the Erotic<br/>Nature of Laughter<br/>Paul Joseph Rovelli</p>                           | <p>42<br/>The Dynamics of<br/>Ritual, Part II<br/>Nikki Bado</p>           |
| <p>4<br/>Israel Regardie<br/>Frater Stonehenge<br/>Equinox</p>      | <p>14<br/>The Final Frontier<br/>Phil Dickens and<br/>Sue Cedrone</p>                | <p>26<br/>Enochian<br/>Restaurant Ordering<br/>Samantha Young</p>                                    | <p>45<br/>Letters</p>  |
| <p>5<br/>Laughing Into The<br/>Void<br/>Kenneth Deigh</p>           | <p>15<br/>IO Pan<br/>Aishley St. Oliun</p>   | <p>28<br/>Magickal<br/>Responsibility,<br/>Publishers and<br/>Cockroaches<br/>Jeremy J. dePrisco</p> | <p>42<br/>Tarot Anyone?<br/>Raymond L. Beck</p>                            |
| <p>7<br/>A Ship of Fools<br/>Mishlen</p>                            | <p>16<br/>The Book of the In-<br/>Laws<br/>Master 999</p>                            | <p>31<br/>The Heretic's<br/>Corner<br/>Dr. Richard Kaczynski</p>                                     | <p>50<br/>Reviews</p>  |

# The Power of Laughter

Human beings have been making jokes of every type and about every topic since the beginning of time. In the spirit of the Old Aeon, some of them have even taken on the appearance of law in the popular culture, e.g., Murphy's Law.

Humor is an integral part of our lives. We laugh as a defense against that which is too painful to think about. We laugh when we cannot cry. We make jokes about death and disaster. We laugh about that which we cannot control. We make jokes about bodily functions and the capriciousness of fate. We laugh for joy; when we are happy; and when our funny bones are truly tickled. I don't know about you, but I have a definite affinity for the humor of The Far Side and old Monty Python routines. OK, so what does all this have to do with magick? I guess that depends on how you look at it.

Ever wonder why a funny comment is called a "wise" crack or a "smart" remark? Or, why the person making that comment is called a "wiseacre" or a "smart" aleck? There is wisdom in laughter. It speaks to our very core selves. It allows us to cope, to transcend the unexpected and arrive at our intended destinations.

Have you ever been in a ritual where everything just seemed to go "wrong"? And then watched others, or maybe even yourself, run around trying to "fix" everything? By the end, did you feel that much if not all of the original point of the event had been lost? Been there, done that.

I've also been in rituals where the

unexpected was met with good humor and openness. When something went "wrong", someone used humor to smooth the way and return the ritual to its intended path.

One example of the use of humor in this way was at the Friday night ritual at LumensGate '94. The weather had been foul and uncooperative. The ritual format of small group work which then coalesced back into a single large group was delayed by one small group which was taking significantly longer than the others to complete that portion of the ritual.

To complicate matters, there was a heavy rain falling. The remainder of the participants were standing in a circle some short distance apart singing the chant "We are a family, and we are healing us; we are a family and we are one." The larger group was totally soaked and there seemed to be no way to signal the one remaining small group that they needed to complete their work and return to the circle so that the ritual could be completed and the remaining, semi-drowned participants could seek out dry clothes and dry space.

As the energy began to wane and the ritual to lose its impact, one "smart aleck" started to sing "We are a family, all standing in the rain; we are a family and we are wet!" Laughter immediately followed and everyone took up the "new" chant. The small group got the message and soon rejoined the newly invigorated circle. The ritual ended well, its point made, and the general feeling was positive and upbeat.

Never underestimate the power of laughter. It has a definite place in our lives and in our magick. So ... go forth, and have fun!

*Δ Kater Egan*



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# ONLY WHEN I LAUGH

by Jaq D. Hawkins

Somewhere in Scotland, a group of people gather for a ritual. It is Lughnassah, time to celebrate the beginning of Harvest. The atmosphere is light, but generally serious...until Fred shows up. Fred, an Englishman well known among the company for his unusual antics, has appeared wearing a lurid pink, red, lime green and black tartan trimmed with very obviously fake fur and topped with a silly jester's hat. Fred is being weird again.

He bounces happily among the company, making a complete prat of himself as some of the more serious members worry about the possible effect of Fred's strange mood on the ritual to come. Then suddenly, without warning, Fred takes his place in front of the company in his deadly serious role as the Corn King. The ritual has begun. In fact, it had actually begun sometime before. Fred, playing the Fool, had been doing exactly that.

The role of the Fool in magic takes many forms. Fred's demonstration was one of learning that we mustn't always take ourselves too seriously. A little healthy irreverence in ritual can be a very purifying experience. It brings us back to the state of innocence, represented by the Fool in the tarot, which we must sometimes remember to adopt in our approach to magic and to life itself.

The Fool can equally represent humour. Humour in ritual can be fun.

Someone I know well has often proclaimed that no ritual is complete until somebody farts. Here in Britain, bodily functions are an endless source of irreverent amusement. To see the humour in the occasional (alright, frequent...) cock-ups which occur during ritual allows magic to flow freely rather than to become stifled by disapproval and extreme formality.

A formal ritual can be a beautiful experience. Getting everything exactly right can be very satisfying. However, if someone flubs their lines, belches or knocks over one of the Altar candles, how will the ritual itself be effected by quiet disapproval or remonstrance as opposed to a quick witicism which results in a laugh and then getting on with the ritual? We must remember that the Fool, also known as the Trickster, will have his way with us in magic. We must also remember that it isn't always funny.

I once saw a t-shirt which read, "The gods love a hero. They also love a good joke. Think about it." Whether or not we personally believe in any external gods, that statement sums up a condition in the workings of magic. Magick will often play tricks on us or work in ways that we do not anticipate. The lessons of the Eternal Joker include learning to anticipate the possibilities where things might go wrong, and also learning to take our knocks when we slip up. It happens to all of us, even the most experienced of magicians.

This is where my often quoted favourite saying comes into play. "Be careful what you wish for, you may get it." The Trickster is not always kind. I could quote endless examples of unpleasant backlashes from simple wish magic in my own experience as well as others. Some lessons can be very painful.

The important thing is to learn from the experience, and also to learn to take our own fallibility with good humour, rather like laughing at our misery the morning after a night of heavy drinking because we know



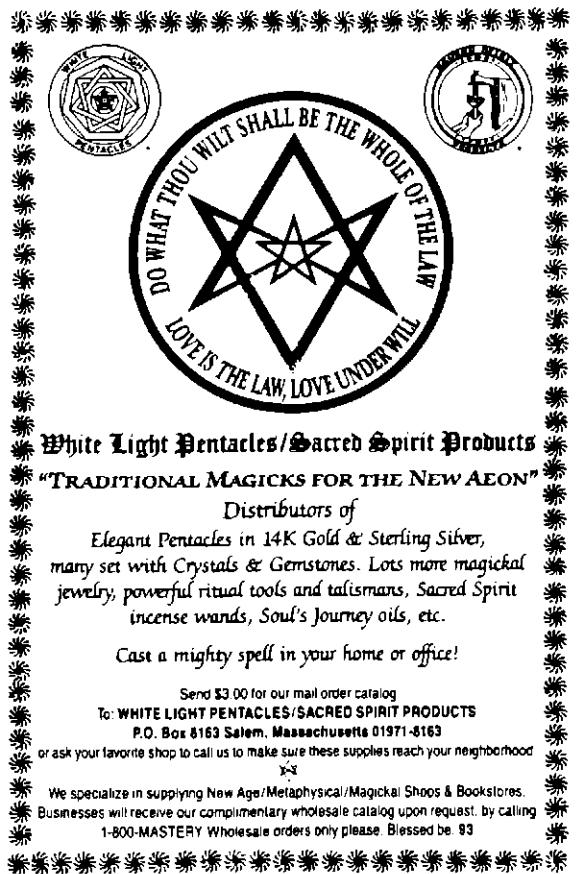
that we have no one to blame but ourselves. Laughing at one's own stupidity takes away some of the sting, and is far more conducive to thinking out ways of repairing the damage than by indulging in misery.


There is a time for seriousness, and a time to appreciate the joke of life. The Fool is balanced by the Wise Man, or Hermit. The magician knows that wisdom is approached through innocence. The Trickster is always there among us, and to deny him leaves us open to being tripped up by him. If we acknowledge him, we can learn to look for the tricks and for the humour when he gets us anyway.

One can invoke the trickster in ritual. Just be careful that the joke isn't on you! Working with any of the Chaos gods or goddesses is a direct invitation to the element of surprise, not always pleasant. On safer ground is the simple concept of recognizing the dual aspects of humour and seriousness in many aspects of ritual, perhaps even the choice of deity. The followers of Azo, a benevolent bovine god, are able to see the humour in their reverence of the small mechanical icon of Azo, yet still practice serious magic as He dances with His followers in ritual.

Magic is a serious business, yet one can be too serious. On the one hand, one must be alert to potential pitfalls at all times. On the other hand, we must also be prepared to deal with anything the universe throws at us. Life will throw pitfalls at us that we cannot avoid, and how we deal with them will determine how well we survive.

Practicing magic in and of itself invokes the Sacred Fool, the Universal Trickster, and in the end this aspect of magic in whatever form it takes will teach us valuable lessons. One of the most important of these is depicted on the tarot trump. The Fool shows us many things, but most of all he demonstrates that we must always pay attention.






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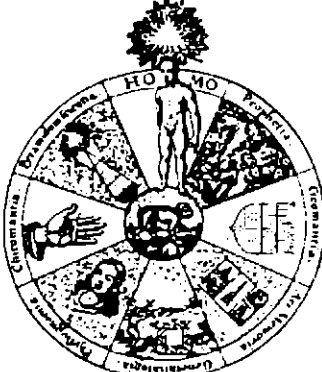
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# DOES HUMOR BELONG IN MAGICK?

by Massimo Mantovani

*"Deny Laughter and the world laughs at you"*

Peter Carroll - Liber Boomerang

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

One of the favourite jokes of Lon Milo DuQuette (as I am told by a common friend) is about Jesus walking in the desert with Saint Paul (sorry, jokes are never meant to be historically correct) and asking him "Paul, what would you do for me?" "Master, I'd do anything for you." "Anything?" "Yes." "Really?" "Yes, Rabbi." "Then sing for me. Sing me *Smoke on the Water*."

The legend has it that, on hearing the joke for the first time, Lon threw himself out of the window and into a swimming pool, laughing madly.

When speaking of the "Sacred Fool", I tend not to mean the initiatory role of the clown as it can be found, for instance, in Artaud's account of the peyote rites of the Tarahumaras, but the simple fact that, as in the Aeon of Horus one is one's own guru, so also one is one's own initiating clown. A Magician unable to laugh at her/himself and at her/his Magic is no real Magician, let alone Magickian.

And where does the difference lay?

I can only speak from experience, and from this point of view I have come to the conclusion that the ability to laugh is typical of those who really work Magick and not only brag about it.

I started being involved in Magick in '83, after listening to a fantastic record by a band called "Blood and Roses", and in all those years I have met, heard or seen a f\*\*\*\*\* lot of armchair occultists, most of them only interested in the occult from an academic standpoint; and they all were unable not to be serious. Too

serious. Honey, who do you think you are?

As always, those who think they know all know little (without realizing it), whereas those who know a lot understand there is still a lot to know.

Only when you have worked, even if blindly, foolishly, hurriedly, stubbornly and so on (I loooooove adverbs!), are you able to laugh at yourself: you know what you have achieved, and you can afford to speak about it from the standpoint of the knowledge of "how things are".

And you can also afford to laugh at it, not as the Adeptus Exemptus laughs at his Great Work as She/He destroys it in crossing the Abyss and renouncing all, but as the honest reaper laughs at the heap of straw after winning his yearly fight against the harvest. You have conquered yourself: you can laugh at yourself. You have attuned yourself with the Universe: you can afford the ecstasy of laughter.

One of my reasons for reading *Mezlim* is that, even if I don't share many of the points of view expressed in the mag and sometimes I don't agree with the Pagan/Wiccan movement, both the movement and the magazine smell of hard work and experience. And of laughter, too.

All the interesting people I've met or seen in my twelve years of occult research were able to laugh at themselves, and had a very strong sense of humor. Sometimes it was bitter, sometimes joyous, sometimes unshakeable by events and sometimes not, but they shared it, even if they didn't like each other; and they shared another thing: they all were working magicians, not just "cobblers prattling of the Royal Matter": Clive Harper, Adrian Bott, Leon, Philippe Pissier, Sabine Baumont, Katon Shual & ShantiDevi, David Tibet, Douglas Pearce, Phil Hine, Genesis P-Orridge, Alberto Moscato ... the list could go on almost endlessly.

After all, one day you will hopefully have to face the greatest *solve* of all, that crossing of the Abyss that implies the death of everything you have been before (except your physical body): start laughing now. The training will surely be useful.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

# ISRAEL REGARDIE

## HIS FAVORITE STUDENT REMEMBERS

by *Frater Stonehenge Equinox*  
(As told to *Lon Milo DuQuette*)

It wasn't long after Israel\* Regardie met me that his health began to fail. Even though we met in person only twice I still managed to have a profound effect upon his life.

They say you never have a second chance to make a good first impression and, if I say so myself, Regardie's first impression of me was a lasting one. At the time I did not know his address so I staked out his Post Office box in Studio City. After three days he finally appeared to pick up his mail. He almost missed his chance to meet me for, alas, I had fallen asleep on the sidewalk near the newspaper racks in front of the building. Destiny, however, could not be thwarted and the gods guided his tiny footsteps to tread upon my left hand and forearm. Luckily he was not hurt badly in the fall, and as I helped him gather his mail from the gutter I seized the opportunity to introduce myself.

"Equinox is my name, Stonehenge Equinox. You're the reason I'm into magick."

He responded with an astounding display of mental telepathy. "I don't suppose you're insured?" He asked (not concealing the fact that he already knew the answer).

I followed him to his car where I showed him my tattoos and treated him to an impromptu performance of my original *Diagonal Pillar Ritual*. He feigned disinterest but I could tell he was favorably impressed. Great magicians don't need words to communicate with each other and so I was not surprised to see him speed off in his car without uttering a sound (although he did gesture).

Our next meeting was more intimate. As providence ordained, I found his phone

number on the restroom wall at the *Bodhi Tree* bookstore and immediately gave him a call. Playfully disguising my voice I told him I had thrown my back out and made an appointment for a chiropractic adjustment. There's no question that the man was omniscient but he seemed genuinely surprised to see me and my girlfriend, Diana Ishtar Morgana, at his door. The dear man asked if I was there for the spinal adjustment and voiced his delight that I had brought someone to help me home. What a saint! And you know, he was right. After his treatment I was unable to walk for three weeks!

Thus began a five year odyssey of intense correspondence. Every Friday I mailed him my magical record, dream diary, and excerpts from my (still) unfinished novel, *Sex Wizards of Phlegm*. Each week like clockwork my letters and packages were returned to me *seemingly* unopened and unedited. However, to a trained clairvoyant like myself, adept in traveling in the spirit vision, they were a treasure-chest of deeply personal magical instruction and encouragement. Each page dripped with his energy and all were alive with psychically transmitted practical advice, initiatory ordeals, and occult secrets. It was in this manner that he consecrated me "Psychopomp of North Hollywood."

Then, shortly before his death, he chose to abandon our astral correspondence and communicate to me on the material plane by actually writing me a letter. It was in this last letter that he poignantly revealed his deep personal affection for me by beginning his message by addressing me as "Dear." It was also in this letter that he revealed a precognition of his own death. After advising me on matters of mental health, personal hygiene and proper use of the English language, he closed with these prophetic words...

"It will not be necessary for you to ever contact me again!"

---

\*Dr. Francis I. Regardie - as all of his close friends know, preferred to be addressed as "Frankarino".



# LAUGHING INTO THE VOID

## The Magus as Trickster

by Kenneth Deigh

To begin with, there is story about the Goddess Eris (Grecian Goddess of Chaos, discord, athletic competition, and, according to some, patron deity of small periodicals). It seems there was this really big party on Mt. Olympus, and EVERYBODY who was anybody was invited. Even the lowest of the gods, goddesses and demigods were sent suitably engraved invitations...all except for Eris. Eris was known to be something of a trouble maker, and the more staid and "virtuous" of the gods had had enough of her antics and just wanted to have some raucous fun without having to worry about Eris making fun at their expense - which was her habit.

Needless to say, when Eris found out that she was the only soul for aeons around who wasn't invited to the Olympian soiree, she was divinely PISSED!

So - the party is in full swing, everyone having a grand old time, when down the stairs bounces this big...GOLDEN ... apple. (Courtesy of the lovely and talented Eris.) It rolls out onto the dance floor in a wide lazy spiral, and stops right in front of Zeus' couch. The music stops and everyone clusters around to see. Zeus picks up the apple and written in big letters - so everyone can see - is the one word: **KALLISTI!** (Which means, for the benefit of those of you who don't have a solid grounding in classical Greek, *for the Fairest, or prettiest one.*)

Naturally, all those present were at least somewhat inclined to assume that this

golden fruit had been intended for them alone.

Zeus, being of sound mind and body with a desire to remain so, decided that it was someone else's problem to chose the recipient of this most discordant fruit. He chose what seemed to be a lonely shepherd boy named Paris, tending the flocks in the hills above Troy.

The divine deputation persuaded Paris to judge the contest, and over the next few nights he was visited by an array of goddesses, each offering her own form of "fragrant grease". Hera offered all the wealth he might imagine. Athena offered victory and glory in war. Aphrodite offered simply the love of the most beautiful mortal woman in the world: Helen. Can you guess who got the apple?

To make a long story short, Paris (who turned out to be the son of King Priam of Troy, who everyone thought had been successfully done away with shortly after birth) got Helen (who just happened to be married to King Menelaus of Sparta at the time) to run away with him to Troy. King Menelaus followed, along with an armada of ships from the Greek federation, and after a long and bloody war, with frequent breaks for games, bonfires and the occasional romantic rendezvous, Troy was destroyed, Helen disappeared and Aphrodite was - from that time forward - known as the most beautiful of the Gods and Goddesses from Mt. Olympus.

Isn't it amazing that with this single premeditated action, Eris managed to change the social order of Mt. Olympus and the whole of contemporary civilization in one fell swoop. Quite the magician, you might say.

In fact, I believe that there is an aspect of the work of Magick which has received entirely too little attention in the current resurgence of interest in the occult: Namely that of the Magus as Trickster. One thing to remember is that the work of the Trickster is not always "funny".

After all, is it not the most basic urge to bring about change that inspires us to follow the twisted and often torturous path of magick? And what greater way to cause change than to rattle the cages of the guardians of the status quo?

There is a sweeping power in laughter that is almost unique in its ability to cleanse and renew the spirit.

I'm not talking here about the lightly polished jealous criticisms by the weak and ineffectual, who try to belittle and tear down those who do, because they feel that they cannot. I am speaking of the power of satire to make the most stodgy and hidebound conservative look clearly into the mirror and get a good laugh. This laughter destroys those who cannot or will not see the humor in themselves.

It transforms and renews those who can and do see it.

In this arena, the fulcrum of power for the magickal person is in being able to recognize and appreciate the absurdity of His own existence, mirrored in the solemn search for wisdom and understanding.

The humor in no way detracts from nor lessens the beauty and validity of this search, but rather sheds a brighter light on the process and reminds us, in no uncertain terms, of the greater context in which we live and work.

## Laughing into the Void

More than anything else, Magick is about Change. And Change means Letting Go. Letting go of how we see the world; how we see ourselves; of what we believe, and of who we think we are.

As I'm certain life has taught us all, letting go is never easy. Our egos resist the annihilation of their illusion of self most valiantly. They cling to the idea that the ego IS the Self, and that nothing lies beyond that self.

And so, with every change, with every letting go, we

challenge the idea that there is nothing beyond the ego; that this is all there is.

Magick can be boring. It can be monotonous and frustrating. It can lead you to the depths of depression, to the heights of blissful realization, then strand you behind months of seemingly endless resistance. It can also be terrifying...ecstatic...mind numbing and dangerous.

One of the greatest dangers in Magick is attachment; attachment to possessions, to ideas, and especially, attachment to the self.

There's a story about an old farm couple who had spent their lives raising chickens, milking their cows and growing corn out on the prairie. A great storm comes boiling

across the plains, and they have just enough time to duck

into the storm shelter.

When the noise quiets down, they poke their heads out to find that everything they've worked for their whole lives - the house, the barn, the chickens, the cows, even the corn is gone. As the wife wanders through the windswept foundations

of their farmhouse, she hears the old man chuckling.

"What do you have to be laughing about, old man?" she snaps at him.

"Why just the utter completeness of it, my dear. Just the utter completeness of it." he answers.

Anyone who has successfully worked magick in their lives for very long will undoubtedly know this feeling. Eventually, everything you think you KNOW will be torn away. You can either choose to cling to it, and be torn asunder along with it, or you can choose to let it go, to let it be carried off into the void by the storm of your becoming.

Humor is, quite simply, one of the least painful methods of LETTING GO. Just don't take it all too seriously.



---

**Humor is, quite simply,  
one of the least  
painful methods of  
LETTING GO.**

---

# A SHIP OF FOOLS

by Mishlen

For fifteen years, my consort has been trying to prove to himself [and to me] that it is possible to have an initiation without an accompanying Ordeal.

He has been unable to find one. So what do we do?

Dion Fortune in the *Sea Priestess*, has said "We set up our wards, and we take our chances". And one of these wards is dressed in the unlikely garb of humor.

Watching the reactions of people during a particularly bloody movie, I have noticed two main responses: revulsion or laughter. Both were used to the same purpose - the action of separation of the self from identification with suffering. This is a simple psychological process. Magically, this goes much further.

Despite the sorrows of exile, I've noticed that Tibetan monks...laugh a lot. There is a Tibetan folk belief that says time spent laughing is time not taken from one's lifespan. Therefore, the more one laughs, the longer one lives.

In a ritual context, laughter can be used as a protective device, separating the magickan from whatever force or spirit he is combating. Laughter not only protects one from these forces, but also makes the magickan A PART of it. Such forces cannot hurt themselves, and the magickan effectually eats and dissolves them into himself.

Have you ever prepared for a ritual and found that everything seems opposed to it? The car breaks down, someone essential to your Work (perhaps yourself) is sick, the

appropriate incense you've been saving for years has disappeared, someone has decided to charge money for YOUR ritual, etc.

The more powerful the ritual-to-be, the worse the problems.

Some people consider this an ill omen, throw up their hands, and divest themselves of the responsibility, saying that this or another godform does not want it to happen.

After years of observation, I can say that while it is a viable alternative, those who DID THE RITUAL ANYWAY found one full of power, far beyond their original hopes.

So we devised another theory: The prerequisites to growth lie in overcoming these tests by the strength of one's own Will, thereby proving themselves ready (and worthy) to accept the leadership of the rite; or, you are not.

We also have observed one mitigating circumstance. This falls into the realm of what a Buddhist would call 'merit', or what Christians call 'grace'.

Merit can be defined as "the positive karmic result from virtuous actions" (from *Dakini Teachings*, from Shambhala Dragon Editions). It has a certain congruity to a bank account: one does good works that help lead man towards wisdom, and you prepare yourself in the purest way you know.

Thelemites would say "to the last drop", which is the ultimate in purification, because you've just given your ENTIRE SELF away, with no conditions attached; there is nothing left to BE impure. This is a very, very difficult thing to do. "Lust of result" often still clutches us by our collective throats, and voila, here comes that Ordeal!

Now, the theory about merit is that if you collect enough of it, you will reincarnate as something better ('better' usually means happier, healthier, rich, beautiful - all those things we just recently threw away). You may even be reincarnated as a god.

(Remember, this is for the masses, and reflects how they would best understand the process.) This is a traditional belief.

There are also other, faster ways to obtain merit. The prayer wheel is one such example, as is the circumambulation of the *Stupa*. A *Stupa* (also known as a *Chorten*) is a reliquary monument, enshrining and representing the abstract image of the state of enlightenment. Within it are 180,000 images of the Buddha, along with various precious sacred ritual objects. By walking clockwise around it once, it is said to equal the repetition of 180,000 mantras. People come a long way to circumambulate the *Stupa*!

An initiation can be one of two things: it can serve as a physical acknowledgment of an inward state, or it can be the leap of consciousness one takes in order to **ATTAIN** that inward state. The first is simply a formal ritual. The second, however, carries its ordeals before itself.

The key here is that if one attains the necessary merit, one is propelled by **ONE'S OWN MOMENTUM**, into that new plane of existence. The Ordeals become natural changes which accompany the growth of one's awareness. There is little suffering involved, for suffering is a **STATE OF MIND**, no matter how many good reasons it has. Initiation by merit seems to be a gentler affair than trial by fire. It is integrated bit by bit, into one's new life and

viewpoint.

The ability to accept changes in one's life cannot be overemphasized. It is not **CHANGE** that breaks one's heart, it is the desire for **STABILITY** in what is essentially an ever-changing plane of existence. (This is why Buddhists refer to existence as an 'illusion', which is not an accurate description of the state, and was probably originated by someone who did not understand the concept.)

I have one last thought to add: How does one tell the difference between an 'ill omen' and an Ordeal? If one is in contact with one's Holy Guardian Angel, or Spirit Guide, then a brief conversation will suffice. If not, consider these observations: If it **IS** possible, how will its difficulties influence others? (If you have a cold, you don't want to pass it around.) What's in it for you if you **DON'T** do it? (The ego could simply be protecting itself from possible change, or from a type of stage fright.) There are other questions - find your own.

And don't be afraid to slice yourself wide open and look inside. After all, soon something else will be doing it for you.

Well, I must go now. I just started my period, my car has broken down, I caught a cold last night, and it's time to weed the *Stupa*.



# SO WHO WERE THOSE GUYS IN THE GRASS SKIRTS?

by Louis Martinie'

During Mardi Gras, the nation's attention seems to flow like the Mississippi toward New Orleans. Everyone at the Rampart Street Voodoo Spiritual Temple was interested when we heard that *Tales From The Crypt* wanted to film at the Temple with a comedian named Polly Shure. Great name for a television show, but no one we knew was familiar with its format. I'm one of the three Temple Drummers. None of us had televisions. The Houngan and Mombo did not have a television and no one else living in the four building compound that constitutes the Temple had a television. The show and the comedian were unknown elements, but we found a doorman with a TV at Donna's, a bar down the street, and were assured that Mr. Shure was funny and that *Tales From the Crypt* was very high quality television.

Oswan and Miriam, the Houngan and Mombo, constructed a ritual based upon what they thought such a show would want. Lots of Points occupied by the Barons and Guedes. We drummers dutifully practiced those particular Spirits' drum rhythms at less than breakneck speed. Recently our Ogun rhythm was in danger of breaking the sound barrier and a hyperactive Ogun is not a pretty or safe sight. The producer of the program asked that we dress "for a Voodoo ritual" by which we guessed that he meant, "Put your

Mardi Gras rig on."

The day for the filming arrived and we prepared to do the ritual. Three men in grass skirts, four women dressed like Bourbon Street strippers, lots of lights, and a Mr. Shure in boxer shorts showed up. At that point, we all knew that there was a definite probability that the Temple was not hired to perform anything resembling an actual ritual. I just repeated, "Look, it's a comedy. Relax, have fun." to myself and to anyone from the Temple who looked uptight, while inwardly the grass skirts and baggy boxers inspired me to drum about as much as having a broken finger.

Miriam, the Mombo, kept saying, "Oh, my ritual. Oh, my ritual. Well, this is something new." That is true. The Temple has been on *House of Blues* television shows, travel programs, and more foreign and domestic television documentaries than you can shake a rattle at, but never have grown men in grass skirts and boxer shorts showed up for the filming.

A drummer introduced as visiting from Brazil was sitting in with us. He was as surprised as we were and his comment, while looking politely at the ground, was, "You have to watch out for sacrilege." Muslima, a visiting Mombo, could be heard slipping into her native French as she at first disputed with the show's producers and then, quite rapidly, relaxed. She had a wonderful handle on the situation. She explained that they were making fun of themselves primarily and incidentally anything with which they came into contact. No affront was intended to our religion.

Perhaps Oswan Chamani, the Houngan, had the best way of relating to the situation. Besides English and Spanish, he speaks Garifuna, which is a language that combines Yoruba and Carrib Indian. Over a bit of rum, we were in the habit of practicing grossly obscene Calls in that language and, to Oswan's amusement, those Calls sometimes found their way into formal services. If all

the footage shot was used, then that particular episode of *Tales From The Crypt* contains a series of cryptic Calls and Responses that, if translated, would serve to make the dead blush.

After the filming, all of us stayed and performed the planned ritual. A state of equanimity was quickly established in the ritual grounds and participants. Each of us looked into our hearts and saw how even such a production served the purposes of the loa.

For myself, I saw that the ritual was dedicated to the Barons and to the Guedes and that these loa often times display a bizarre sense of humor. They have a horrific and comic nature; the comic nature, especially that of the Guedes, is perfectly in tune with what transpired on the show. If a Guedeh were to appear during a ritual and request a grass skirt, it would be no great surprise. A pair of boxer shorts... Well, still not an overly great surprise. Oswan Chamani teaches that once a ritual begins, it is perfectly acceptable for the loa to provide inspirations that change the form of the ritual. It is the purpose that remains constant.

Also, such a production reaches an audience usually not touched by the loa. Humor has a way of lowering ones defenses on all levels. The loa wish to spread into North America and the Guedes could use the vehicle provided by the show to pass into viewers.

My point in recounting the above story is two-fold. The mass media has done many serious shows, both positive and negative, on the various traditions in the Magickal community. Mass media comedy has its own particular bent and, by definition, is not going to treat its subject matter with any degree of seriousness. Ritualists should have a firm grasp on this obvious fact and prepare mentally and spiritually for the event. It is a real test of your ability to see the possible humor in what is usually considered most serious.

The second consideration is that humor is anything but a simple topic. One person experiences sacrilege, another person sees a new perspective, and a third creates an invitation to insert their own little joke. Most certainly, applications of humor in the Magickal Community differ from uses of humor in the larger community. In the Magicks, humor can be used with precision in order to achieve a willed end.

In the practice of the Magicks, humor dissolves like acid or builds like concrete. It can lay the foundation for a

Working that reaches to the Spirits' shoulders or it can corrode the very girders of the soul. Humor is a powerful salve or bile. The "Aha" experience of illumination is most often accompanied by laughter. In day or night-side magicks, the visitation of the summoned spirit often brings a smile of accomplishment to the face of the magician.

Even the caustic qualities of humor are not entirely without benefit. When I first started to practice Ceremonial Magick, I performed a rather gruesome invocation and found that I could not defend the Circle from that which I had called up. I was a beginner and experience is the best teacher if, as Mr. Crowley says, you happen to survive the experience. A sharp coldness crept into my groin. My cock and balls went cold and numb as that which I had called drank deeply of my life forces.

I vividly remember just sitting down and laughing. While the laughter did not immediately remove the larvae that had attached themselves, it did partially dissolve my link with them and prevent their spread. To this day, I am amazed at the simple elegance of my reaction. Nothing could have served me better than humor in the situation.

In Voodoo, humor falls into the shadowy realm of the Guedes and Barons. It is true that Legba is a trickster, but when he comes in New Orleans Voodoo, it is often as an old man with a humor so dry it could curl leaves.

Humor may be profitably characterized as a sudden dropping of the barriers that surround the self and closely mold its perimeters. It is as if the rapidity of this dropping tickles the ego and we laugh. Laughter's sound is the prelude in the symphony of nonattachment.

Death is a chance for the ultimate dropping of these barriers. That is one reason why the Guedes laugh and joke. The sadness that is usually associated with death in our culture tends to define and confine the self to a small, claustrophobic area. Humor heralds an expansion of the self; it creates a spaciousness that brings ease with even the most extreme of situations.

People I have known following the path of the Sacred Fool are usually more foolish than sacred. This is a difficult path to follow. It requires an intuitive balancing of the fresh innocence of the Pure Fool and the experiential wisdom of the enlightened Fool. Once achieved, this balance allows one to answer errant koans such as, "So who were those guys in the....."

# MYSTICAL, MAGICKAL, METAPHYSICAL QUIZ

by Cliff Pollick

THE FOLLOWING IS INTENDED TO ASCERTAIN  
THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT TO  
MATRICULATE TO THE 8,311,132<sup>nd</sup> DEGREE OF THE  
ANCIENT SECRET SOCIETY and HOLY ORDER of  
LEGITIMATE ESOTERIC SOVEREIGNS.

THIS EXAMINATION IS ONLY OPEN TO DULLY CON  
De SECRETED MEMBERS OF THE EPOPT  
SECRET OF THE ILLEGITIMATI.

## SECTION A: TRUE/FALSE

- 1) Lazaris, Seth, Ramtha and other disembodied masters need to get a life.
- 2) Sufi dancing is like square dancing, only rounder.
- 3) The latest rip-off book of Native American spiritual culture is called "Bull-Shit Woman".
- 4) Ramakrishna is an Indian breakfast cereal that stays crunchy in milk.
- 5) Pessi-Mystics are more Realistic than Opti-Mystics.

## SECT-SHUN B: GIVE THE ANSWER THAT COMPLETES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

- 1) The Tao Te Ching is.....
  - a) The Premier of China
  - b) The sound of one Taoist sneezing.
  - c) A massage Parlor in Beijing.
  - d) The I Ching's little brother.
- 2) A Zen Koan is.....
  - a) A Jewish Buddhist
  - b) All of the above.
  - c) None of the above.
  - c) All and none of the above.

- 3) Carlos Castaneda is.....
  - a) The guitarist with Santana.
  - b) A resort near San Juan.
  - c) A Flamenco dancer.
  - d) A baseball player with the L.A. Dodgers.
- 4) Yin and.....
  - a) Tonic
  - b) Yout
  - c) Yang
  - d) Yenta
- 5) The sound of one hand clapping is.....
  - a) Very Quiet.
  - b) Similar to smiling with one Lip.
  - c) Like the "P" in Magick.
  - d) A CD store in Tokyo.
- 6) Linguine is to Fettucine as Kundalini is to.....
  - a) Eenie-meenie.
  - b) Harry Houdini.
  - c) Halloweenie.
  - d) Maalox ( This is the silly answer.)
- 7) Lao-Tzu is.....
  - a) Shrimp with fried rice.
  - b) What comes after Lao-One
  - c) Japanese for sneeze.
  - d) A noisy Samurai.

## SEXION C: MATH

- a) If Kundalini was rising at 9.3 Pranayams a second, and the Lightning flash of the Divine White Brilliance was descending at 4.18 Pranayams a second, what time would your Holy Guardian Angel arrive in Atziluth if you're meditating in Cincinnati?
- b) Most people seem to want something for nothing. With the intense commitment of Qabalists, Buddhists and Taoists to attain to Ain, the Void, and Tao respectively, do they want Nothing for Something?

## SEKCHUN D: ESSAY

- a) Name the Seven Dwarves, and describe the Chakras to which they correspond.

# HUMOR AND THE FALSE EGO

by Michael Sontag

The tendency of the human mind is to operate on the illusory level of the false ego, that part of our mind which is the conceptions, beliefs, and dogma that we often mistake for being our True Selves. Throughout the course of our lives, our minds become filled with both dogma we have been given by others and our own ideas of how things are — our own absolute truths. As long as our minds function on the level of the false ego, we are unable to act from and connect with our Higher Selves.

If we are able to shift our consciousness away from the false ego into the realm of the Higher Self, we are able to see that we are something greater than just the sum total of our beliefs and experiences. We see that there is a part of us which is divine, that the false ego has rendered us unable to grasp.

To free ourselves from the false ego and connect with our Higher Selves enables us to carry out our Higher Will, which is the goal of all our spiritual efforts. When we do not follow our Higher Will, it is because we are acting from our false ego, from our insecurities and misconceptions. It is for this reason that we must work to rid ourselves of our false egos, allowing us to connect with that divine part of each of us which is the Higher Self.

Therefore, the sacrifice of the false ego unto the Higher Self becomes the main priority in our spiritual work. Unfortunately, this is no easy task.

The ego has many tricks that it will use in order to avoid its own destruction. It will trap the spiritual aspirant in such a web that the harder he tries to destroy the ego, the more tangled he will become. Evidence of this often takes the form of spiritual pride. The aspirant will work hard to convince himself of his own holiness, thereby reinforcing the ego which he is attempting to destroy.

One reason that letting go of the false ego can be so difficult is that our society places great value on clinging to it. We are encouraged to hold on to our beliefs and to the dogma that society has given us, especially in areas such as spirituality, morality or other traditionally grave matters. From this we develop a sense that “We are our beliefs”. This creates a situation where growth becomes very difficult. We are not encouraged to grow and expand, we are told to rely solely on that which keeps us from our Higher Selves.

It is important to realize that when we speak of the destruction of the ego we are not speaking of its complete and total destruction. Our hope is that we are able to put the ego back in its proper place as a servant, a tool of the Higher Self.

The key to bringing about the successful sacrifice of the ego is to attack the ego indirectly. Through ritual and meditation the ego will, over time, find its hold on the Higher Self slipping and falling away, allowing the aspirant to unite with the Higher Self. Another great ally in the destruction of the ego is humor.

Many would view the use of humor in a spiritual context to be *ouwe* at best. Spirituality is considered to be the gravest of matters, certainly not something to be mixed with humor. Yet humor, one of the human mind's highest and most complex functions, is one of our most powerful tools in ridding ourselves of the false ego and connecting with our Higher Selves.





Humor is the key to gaining the ability to objectively observe the functioning of the false ego. Of course, it is impossible to simply observe the ego with any objectivity, the ego would interfere with our perception of its own workings. We must use a filter to observe the ego. Humor is that filter. If we are able to laugh at our beliefs, conceptions, and all that makes up the false ego, especially those parts to which we cling the tightest, we slowly become able to disassociate from these parts of our minds which keep us from our Higher Selves.

It may be difficult at first to laugh at ideas that have been clung to for so long. It may take some time to find the humor in them, but it will happen. Even the most deeply ingrained concepts will give way to the Higher Self that is enabled to emerge.

Ceremonial Magick, for instance, is generally considered very unfunny business. But, with a little practice it will be hard to not find some humor in a gang of robed Fraters and Sorors walking in circles, waving swords and wands, and speaking in what sounds like some perverted form of Pig Latin. Once the aspirant is able to see this humor, he will find he has a much healthier attitude in that particular area. The conceptions of the false ego have, in that area, been put back into their rightful place.

Although the spiritual use of humor has been generally ignored, it has been used effectively by many great mystics. Aleister Crowley has been often vilified for the tongue-in-cheek humor that underlies all of his writing. Crowley used humor specifically as a defense against spiritual pride. It gave him a way of performing his spiritual work objectively, thus avoiding the pitfalls that trap many spiritual aspirants.

Certainly humor alone will not lead to union with the Higher Self, but in conjunction with ritual work and meditation, it can be a great aid in the mystical sacrifice of the ego.

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# INFINITE SPACE AND INFINITE STARS

## THE FINAL FRONTIER

by *Phil Dickens and Sue Cedrone*

A Star Trek ritual, fondly remembered, reconstructed,  
and expanded by *Cliff Pollick*

1) Calling to mind the theme music of the original Star Trek series, visualize the Qabalistic cross appearing on the body (the four initial notes).

2) When the haunting horn part begins, trace the Tree of Life on the body thus:

Da Da Daaa  
Kether, Chochmah, Binah  
Da Da Da Da Daa  
Chesed, Geburah, Tiphereth, Netzach, Hod  
Da Daaaaaaa  
Yesod, Malkuth

3) The Affirmation:

"Consciousness, the ultimate frontier. These are the voyages of the Star Ship ( Fill in Magickal name / name of group ). Its/my continuing mission, to explore the strange and ever evolving worlds within myself. To seek out new aspects of life, and new experiences. To boldly go where I have never gone before."

4) Calling the Quadrants.

EAST: "I call to the Powers of the East. I invoke the logic of Spock, the judgment of Picard, the inquisitiveness of Data and the wisdom of Guinan. Powers of the mind, be here now. "

( Raise hand in Vulcan salute.) "ENERGIZE!"

SOUTH: "I call to the Powers of the South. I invoke the passion of Kirk, the decisiveness of Cisco, the resolve of Riker, and the warrior strength of Worf. Powers of the Will, be here now."

( Raise hand in Vulcan salute.) "ENERGIZE!"

WEST: "I call to the Powers of the West. I invoke the Empathy of Troi, the passionate caring of McCoy and Crusher, the communication skills of Uhura. Powers of the heart, be here now."

( Raise hand in Vulcan salute.) "ENERGIZE!"

NORTH: "I call to the Powers of the North. I invoke the tenacity of O'Brien, the focus of Jordi, the resourcefulness of

Scotty, and the endurance of the Enterprise. Powers of the body, be here now."

(Raise hand in Vulcan salute.) "ENERGIZE!"

5) Calling the Stars.

(In center of the Circle, the priest calls down the Stars upon the Priestess:)

"We call upon the Goddess of the Stars in the many names by which we have come to know her in our journey through the joyous company of the Heavens."

UHURA JANICE KIRA DEANNA GUINAN  
JEDZIA TASHA CHRISTINE  
"ENGAGE!"

"And we call upon the Goddess in her Triple aspect."

MIRI BEVERLY LWUXANA  
"ENGAGE !"

(Priestess calls down the Stars on the Priest:)

"We call upon the God in his many manifestations."

JAMES T \* WOLF \* WILL \*SCOTTY \*MILES \* JEAN LUC  
\* SPOCK \* DATA\* SULU \* JORDI \* JULIAN \* PAVEL\*  
BENJAMIN  
"ENGAGE !"

"May their presence in our lives bring us to a knowledge that it is we who are the navigators, helmsmen, engineers, science, security, communications officers, and captains of our individual Starships. And that we harm none, we hold to the Prime Directive, for we observe Infinite Diversity through Infinite Combinations

and acknowledge that

'Every man and every woman is a Star'  
So mote it be, for we  
MAKE IT SO!"

6) Cakes and Synthelol

7) Dismissal of the Quadrants.

(Turning to the quarters, thank the "Mythos-forms" and give them leave to depart.)

EAST: "I give thanks to the Eastern Quadrant, and incorporate your knowledge into my Federation."

(Raise hand in Vulcan salute.)  
"LIVE LONG AND PROSPER!"

(Continue through Quadrants.)

# IO PAN (or is that - YO ADRIAN)

## THE LESSER BANISHING RITUAL OF THE PENTAGRAM - SOUTH PHILLY STYLE

by Aishley St. Oliun

As I am sure that most readers of this journal are aware, the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, or one of its analogues, is the foundation of practical ritual work. Traditions as varied as Wicca, Golden Dawn, Thelema, Sheya, Chaos, and a host of others generally open their temples with some variation of this rite.

Being a resident of South Philadelphia, (a.k.a. "Rocky" territory) has given me a unique perspective on the concept of working ritual in a context specific to one's physical locale. The following is submitted as an example of such.

### IN THE SOUTH: (of course)

1. Let the adept take off his/her/its shoes and socks and placing the Right index finger between the toes of the Right foot cries, "A TOE!"

2. He\* picks some of that nasty stuff growing there. He sniffs the matter and proclaims, "UNCOUTH!"

3. Wiping his finger on his right shoulder he says, "VE GE BOOGER!"

4. Wiping further on his left shoulder let him say, "VE GE DOO DOO!"

5. Lying supine on the floor he says, "LAY AROUND!"

6. Sitting up, he shrugs his shoulders, whining, "O, MAN!"

### Go around to the EAST:

Open switch blade and wave it menacingly forming ★ (God-form of "Lemme hold your wallet".)

Vibrate: "YO, HEY, WHOA, HEY"

### Go around to the SOUTH:

Wave stale soft pretzel forming ★  
(God-form of "Eat this".)  
Vibrate: "AY, DONEE"

### Go around to the WEST:

Rattle fast food cup with coins in it forming ★ (God-form of "Spare change"?)  
Vibrate: "AY, HEY, YAY"

### Go around to the NORTH:

Pick up empty Pizza box and shake it forming ★ (God-form of "Dis is cheezy".)  
Vibrate: "AGLA (SELTZER)"

Kiss cheap gold crucifix on chain next to Italian horn, make cross on self and say:

"Before me, RALPHIE"

"Behind me, GABIE, and I got my eye on youse."

"On my right side, MICKEY."

"On de udder side OREO."

"And alla round da place are deese stars" (but I ain't no Satanist, honest fadder, I was a Altar Boy).

"And inna center, is da six point star" (but I ain't Jewish either).

Returns to the South and repeats the CaCa Bullshit-istic Cross as in the beginning.

*\* For the sake of convenience, Let us call He/She/It "He", and to further simplify things, let us call him "VINNIE". By Hebrew Gematria, this 131 = PAN, the All, = BPhMT (Baphomet), the dual sexed, = MKVSH, a title of Kether, which is beyond dualities. This then covers both the male and female genders, and/or any combination thereof.*

**Liber Call Me AL  
vel vel, now.  
sub figura skating**

# The Book of the In-Laws

*(Ed. Note: The manuscript to the Book of the In-Laws was discovered in a sealed closet in Claremont in 1954 and is estimated to have originated circa 1900. The three chapters are said to have been dictated to the Master 999 over three consecutive years, on April 1st of each year. The original manuscript is written in pig-latin. It is believed that this book is the source of over 93% of all modern cliches. It is reprinted here exactly as presented in the original text so as to ensure the accuracy of the transmission as detailed herein.)*

*(Additional Ed. Note: Since we don't actually remember who the Master 999 IS, we are unable to contact him/her/it in order to offer the free copy in exchange for publication of...the masterpiece.)*

1. Hi! the manipulation of a Nut.
2. Company of heaven exposed; film at eleven.
3. Every Tom, Dick, and Harry is a Star. Big Deal.
4. Every number is infinite; fire thine accountant.
5. I'd like a volunteer from the audience at this point — you, the Warrior Lord of Thebes in the front row.
6. I've Hadit up to here.
7. Attention K-Mart Shoppers! It is revealed to !Who\*vast? the minister of Har-Po-Marx.
8. The Khabs is in the Khu, right next to the peanut butter.
9. Worship thou the Khabs, and the Khu will take care of itself.
10. Let my servants be few and secret; they shall have enough problems without publicity.
11. These are fools that men adore; for example, Vanna White comes to mind.
12. Come forth with a fifth and take thy fill of Old Overcoat; thou shalt see stars!
13. I am above you and in you. I am behind

you and beside you. I am hiding behind the curtains. I know when you are sleeping, I see when you're awake. I know if you feel joy or woe so feel joy for goodness sake.

14. There once was a Goddess, Nuit,  
Who dated a God named Hadit.  
When Ankh-af-na-khonsu  
Saw what they were up to  
He shouted, "Hail Ra-Hoor-Khuit!"
15. You may have already won the priesthood of infinite space, a Winnebago, all power for your wife, or one of 663 other valuable prizes in this Aeon's Prophecy Clearing House Giveaway!
16. For he is sunburned, and she is a lunatic. He plays with matches, and she wanders around in the dark.
17. But for you, no such luck.
18. Look out! There's a snake on your head!
19. Oh, bend over, and I shall drive thee home!
20. Say the secret word and the Dove shall drop down.
21. If the God and the Adorer call, say unto them that I am out of the office; they shall not see me. For I and my Lord Hadit shall be in a meeting verily until the end of time. My Prophet shall call their Prophet.
22. Now, therefore, I have an unlisted phone number, which shall be revealed to my prophet when at last he ceaseth making obscene phone calls. I am Infinite Space, and billions and billions of stars, yet modesty remains my best character trait. Let no difference be made between any one thing and any other thing; in this way wilt thou simplify thine Inventory Control.
23. But whoso maketh sense of all this, let him explain it to me as soon as possible.
24. I am a Nut, and my number is up.
25. Divide, add, multiply, and extract square roots. There will be a quiz at the end of the Aeon.
26. Then saith the Prophet and the Loss: Where the hell am I, what am I on, and where can I get more? Then she answered him, her neon-hued body dangling a wide variety of love beads and leather thongs, saying: Like, wow! Everything is everywhere and real, like, fun, for

sure! Totally!

27. Then the Priest answered and said unto her, kissing her lovely brows, running his hand lightly along her thigh, nibbling on her earlobes, and unbuttoning her blouse: "Uh ... right. What was the question? Mmmph."

28. Two, breathed the light, faint and faery, of the stars, then asphyxiated.

29. For I am divided by zero for the chance of confusion.

30. This is the curriculum of Math, that the pain of long division is as nothing, and the agony of Calculus, all.

31. Screw you all! I've got mine, Jack.

32. Obey my prophet! Send \$20 in cash to Me! Make eleven copies of this Book, placing thy Name therein, and disperse them to others as thou wilt. Break not the Chain, and thy prosperity shall be without bounds. Would I lie to you?

33. Then the Priest passed out, muttering: Heard any good ordeals, rituals, or laws lately?

34. But she said: The ordeals are none of thy business; the rituals shall be half unknown and half published by Francis King; the Law I'll give to anyone willing to haul it away.

35. Surprise! THIS is the Book of the In-Laws! I'll bet you never guessed, huh? You probably thought it was just some ordinary, run-of-the-mill prophetic work dictated by a praeternatural Intelligence.

36. My secretary In-a-Gadda-da-Vida shall not edit this Book, howsoever badly it may be needed. He may comment thereupon by the wisdom of Pa-Ra-Keet. Thus shall plausible deniability be established.

37. Also the Mazdas and the Celicas, the Oh-Yeahs and the Cowabungas, the Fafnil and the Zermatroz, the work of the Wand, the Pantacle, the Dagger, but not the Cup; these shall ye teach at weekend seminars.

38. He must teach; but he may make wild the parties.

39. The word of the In-Laws is PASADENA.

40. Who calls us Pasadenites will do no wrong, if he but drives through the city. For there are therein Three Grades: the Little Old Lady, and the Techie and the Man of Suburbia. Possession shall be nine-tenths of the Law.

41. The formula of Sin is Opposite over Hypotenuse. Oh Man, believe not thy wife when she says she has a headache! There must be fifty-six ways to leave thy Lover! There is no bond that can unite the divided but Crazy Glue; accept no substitutes. Darn them! Darn them anyway! Ah, heck.

42. Practice bondage in groups; thou hast the right to remain silent.

43. Do that, and await to speak unto thy lawyer.

44. For the word 'unassuaged' is every way mispronounced.

45. After all, nobody's Perfect.

46. The Key to this Law is really nothing special. 61 the Jews call it, or 58 wholesale for family. I call it eight, twelve, three point one four — whatever I want to. I am a God, after all.

47. They have the half, and it's the good half, too. Pull yourself together, and tell them to get lost!

48. My Prophet looks out for Number One, One, One.

49. We regret to announce that all ordeals, words, and signs have been cancelled due to unstable theological conditions in the East. Let Asar be with Isa, as long as they cause no trouble. I don't care; it's not my problem.

50. Here's a tip on how to run this scam. There are three cons you can use. The gross shall be burned, the fine shall be soaked, and the lofty chosen ones worked over. Thus ye have plans and schemes, and nobody shall know what hit them!

51. There are two doors to one townhouse; the floor of that townhouse has not been vacuumed for months; dirty clothes and stacks of old newspaper are there, and the odor of cat food. Let him enter in turn the two doors, having given 24 hours advance notice to the tenants as required by Law. Will he not sink? Damn. Aargh! If thy handyman sink, the dry rot is worse than I thought. But there are ways and means. Be goodly therefore, or betterly if possible: go to parties; eat cream puff sundaes, and drink generic champagne and beers that foam; play strip poker using a Tarot deck! But be sure to invite Me.

52. If the layout be botched; if thou neglectest thine proofreading, saying: Who gives a damn; or saying, Let's order a pizza; then shall Pa-Ra-Keet smite thee, and thy pepperoni shall breed pestilence.

53. Believe me, this will make my sister feel much better. But remember, even though you think you're such hot stuff, it shall not help thee in Court. Have fun while you still can; Me Too! Me Too!

54. Thou shalt be graded on content, spelling and grammar.

55. Thy work shall serve as Papyri Ani.

56. Expect it not from the East or West, but watch out for the South. Argh! All reasonable offers are accepted, and all answers correct, save only that some are stupider than others; solve the first half of the equation, get partial credit. But thou art still wholly in the dark.

57. Go outside, for God's sake! Love in the raw, love under water! But be careful; there are love and love. There is the dove, and there is a can of whipped cream, a great deal of rope, and a cooperative sheep. Choose ye well! He, my toady, has chosen, knowing the House Rules, which are admittedly confusing. The galley proofs of my book look okay, but **Y** is not The Star; I think it's a squashed bug. Leave it in, it will keep people guessing.

58. I give unusual; punctuation while, in life, upon death: full stops. Not commas, nor do I demand proofreading 59. My incense is of Chanel No. 5 and tapioca; and there are no

preservatives therein, because the Washington

Monument is exactly 555 feet tall.

60. I can count to 11, which is more than most of those who are with us. The White Five Pointed Star, with a "T" in the middle, and the "T" is red. My color is black and white in the basic configuration, but red, green and blue are seen of those who buy the graphics display adapter. Also I have a high resolution option for those who pay through the nose.

61. But to love me is to know me; if, under the night stars in the desert, thou presently freezeth thy ass off before me, invoking me out of pure desperation, thou shalt come a little to lie in a poorly insulated sleeping bag. For one bonfire wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso ignites one juniper twig shall be arrested by Park Rangers within an hour. Ye shall gather junk food and suntan oil; ye shall wear dark glasses, ye shall wish ye were at the beach. I charge you earnestly to come before me carrying a ridiculously heavy backpack. Pale or puce, Libertarian or libertine, I who am without good taste desire you. Put on the wings, and you'll look just like a chicken!

62. Every time I see you I shall whine, "Me Too! Me Too!", reminding thee strongly of thy little sister, and thy heart shall burn with annoyance.

63. Sing the rapturous love song unto me, or at least hum a few bars of "Aleister's Restaurant":

You can do anything thou wilt,  
at Aleister's Restaurant.

You can do anything thou wilt,  
at Aleister's Restaurant.

Just drop by, we're in Cefalu,

Later on today we'll have a Mass for Nu;

You can do anything thou wilt,  
at Aleister's Restaurant.

64. I am an airhead who uses too much makeup in the evening.

65. Me Too! Me Too!

66. The Manipulation of a Nut is at an end. Tune in tomorrow for more excitement — same BAPH time, same BAPH channeling.

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1. New and improved! The filet of Haddock.

2. Oh come, all ye faithful, and Jim shall spill all the secrets which have not been revealed already. I, Christopher Robin, am the complement of Pooh, my bear. He is hungry, and he lives under the name of Sanders.

3. I am always the center of attention, which makes my wife a bit

edgy.

4. Yet it is she who gets invited to the best parties.

5. Yuck! These old rituals are filthy! Let the nasty ones get lost; let the good ones take laxatives. Then we'll talk.

6. I am heartburn and sunstroke. I am Life, and I gave at the office, yet I am expert in Grateful Dead trivia.

7. I am The Omen and The Exorcist. I am the fly in the ointment and the lime in the coconut. "Come unto me" is a foolish word, for I do not make housecalls.

8. Who worshipped Har-po-Marx has worshipped me; badly, for I prefer Chico.

9. Remember that existence is one long party; that hangovers pass and are done, but liver damage remains.

10. O boy, I can see you had enough of this yesterday.

11. I see you hate the hand and the pen, but I could not afford a word processor.

12. Because we are both broke.

13. for why? Because thou failed grammar, and me.

14. Also, we couldn't pay the electric bill.

15. For I am just the greatest thing, and my number is nine one one to the fools, but with the "in" crowd I am eight, and one eight, and four out of five, and two for one. Which is really critical, only I forgot why. I didn't draw to my Jack-high straight.

16. I am a priest in drag. Oh, and I can count to eleven, just like my wife.

17. Hear me, ye people of sighing

Whose next three paychecks are all spent

Now is the time to start crying

The landlord just increased your rent!

18. They are better off dead, these worthless bums; they will hardly feel a thing. We don't care — we're on the winning team.

19. Is God to walk a dog? Woof! But Pig enumerates to 93.

20. Beauty and fashion, Malibu condos and fast cars, coke and cognac, are of us.

21. We have nothing with the scum and the rabble. Refuse them spare change! Kick them in the ribs! Spit on them! Gouge their eyes out! Drop napalm on their foul, stinking streets full of cheap wine bottles and shopping carts and — excuse me, I got carried away. If the body of the King dissolve, the Palace probably needs a new water softener. Nuts! Haddocks! Pa-Ra-Keet! UV lamps, steroids and contact lenses, track lighting! I ask you, is this any way to run a pantheon? Then again, what can you expect from a bunch of nocturnal snakes?

22. I am the Worm that lieth in the bottom of the tequila bottle, and filleth men with drunkenness. For a good time, buy strange drugs from my Prophet, and trip thereupon. The brain damage will barely be noticeable. Just say "Nu!" The exposure of innocence is fun. Be a manly, lusty Man; you can explain it all to

God later.

23. I am alone. There is no God. Where am I?

24. But ye, o my people, rise up and — Shut up, o Deacon, I am not there yet. This is just one of many Grave Mysteries I plan to hint about without actually telling you anything. For example, it is said, or so some say, that there are those of my people who are hermits. Now, think not to find them milking goats in the West County of Ireland, or even standing in wheatfields holding cubist lanterns along the Tiphareth-Chcsed Freeway, but at cocktail parties, and in the Tokyo subway system. How is it, you ask, that such people are deemed Hermits? Chalk up another Grave Mystery. Remember: Kill the wretched, and the weak, the struggling masses yearning to be free! Burn their homes, plow their fields with salt, enslave them, oppress them — oh my, I'm sorry, I seem to have gotten carried away again. I really will try to keep a lid on it from now on. Promise.

25. It's us against them, boy, and I say we call in the nukes! The hell with what I just promised! I hate them! I hate them! Aaaargh!

26. I am the train entering a tunnel, and the hot dog chasing a donut. If I lift up my head, and shoot forth venom, I will have to wash the sheets in the morning.

27. There is danger in this verse, for whoso does not give it to his editor shall make a great mess. He shall stumble into the pit called Writer's Block, and there he shall reason with the Chaos.

28. Now, damn Because, and the horse he rode in on!

29. Just who the hell does Because think he is, anyway?

30. If Will stops and cries Why, fire him.

31. If Power ask why, tell it whatever it wants to hear.

32. Reason won't work either, at least not for you.

33. Enough of Because, already! I don't even like his dog!

34. (What has he got against dogs, anyway? Is it my turn now? Okay ... \*ahem\*) But ye, o my people, rise up and restore circulation to your arms!

35. Let the rituals be rightly performed with latex and farm animals!

36. There are parties every other Tuesday night at Bagh-i-muattar Camp.

37. A feast for the first night of Pernod over ice!

38. A feast for each of the ninety-four days of the writing of the Book of the In-Laws.

39. A feast for Alexia, child of 1.75 Masters — Prah-Sekhet, O profit!

40. Practices for initiation rituals, and practices for the Equinox so we can piss off the A.:A.: types again.

41. A feast after class, and a feast on payday; a feast for life, and a sudden loss of appetite following death.

42. A feast every day with me so you can get heartburn.

43. A feast every night with my wife so you can get spacey.

44. Yeah! Party hardy, bro, and fear not hangovers at all.

45. There is death for the dogs, but only if a Czechoslovakian restaurant opens in your neighborhood.

46. Didst thou fall? Art thou hurt? Call Work Injury Resources at (213) 466-1058.

47. Where am I? What are these?

48. Pity not the fallen! (What a great idea for a song title ...) They are not my problem! I hate them, hate them, hate them! Torture them, destroy them, burn them! Rip their throats open with dull knives, and ... whoops, there I go again.

49. I am Haddock, hear me roar, while I kill and main the poor; they knew that I would get them in the end. (This is of the nine-to-five; after work there is happy hour, wherein I am three sheets to the wind.)

50. Green am I, and pink is the weave of my shirt, yet the red lines are in my eyes, and the purple shadows under them.

51. I mean really purple; it is the light high as a mountain, tall as a tree. My toadie shall call this "infrared", thus establishing his credentials to create a system of scientific illuminism.

52. There is some veal; that veal is black. It is the veal you bought for dinner three months ago; it is the veal that still lieth in the back of your refrigerator. Throw away this fuzzy specimen of mycology! Do this, and I shall reward thee with freedom from severe food poisoning.

53. Don't worry, kid, you won't regret writing this thing. You are perfectly OK, I swear it, and any minor discomfort you may feel is only temporary, and probably just psychosomatic, anyway.

54. So your family, loved ones, friends, and everyone else you've ever respected think you've gone off the deep end? Big deal! You know who you can trust, right? The stops as thou wilt; the yields as prescribed by state law.

55. Thou shalt learn the entire English Alphabet; thou shalt learn to construct words therefrom.

56. Laugh while you still can, mockers! They laughed at me at the University, but now, now I will show them! A-ha-ha-ha!

57. He that is righteous shall be righteous still, he that is filthy shall take a bath.

58. Don't go changing, to try to please me, I love you just the way you are. Perhaps that bum is a King who likes cheap red wine. A King can choose his refreshment as he will; the rabble cannot hide their poor taste.

59. Kill them all, and let Me sort them out!

60. Strike low, strike often; kick them when they're down, so they won't get up again!

61. There is a light before thine eyes, a light undesired, most annoying. Buy a new shade for your desk lamp.

62. Your chest hurts, and the roof is leaking.

63. Just breathing is an effort.
64. Oh! You let your guard down, we have you now: hail, hail the gang's all here: prophet of a Nut! prophet of the Odd! prophet of Bar-B-Que! Now rejoice, and party, and write trashy novels!
65. I am the Master; you will obey Me.
66. Write and work, and find ecstasy in bed! Thrill with victory and agonize in defeat! Those who see your death shall be glad — doesn't that make you feel just great? I love you so much I think I'll kill you. Cheer up! We're all in this together.
67. Hold! A little more to the left! Keep it up! Oh, for God's sake, don't pass out now!
68. Harder! Faster! Oh! Oh! OH!!!
69. Whew! What do I feel? Am I exhausted? Not with this verse number, I'm not.
70. There are other ways, too. Wisdom says: be rich! Then canst thou afford more joy. Recrystallize thy rapture. If thou drink, don't drive; if thou love, do. If thou do aught joyous, don't get caught, and destroy all the evidence.
71. But go for the gusto!
72. Grab more and more! Live fast, die young, leave a good-looking corpse.
73. Ah! Ah! Death! Death! Thou! Thou! Shalt! Shalt! Long! — excuse me, I got stuck. Anyway, forget death.
74. Absence makes the Heart grow fonder. He who lives long and desires death much is obviously not very good at suicide.
75. Aha! Listen to the Secret Code Message:
76. 20-N-Z 6-B-17-M 3-M-2-N-3-M-3 16-6-C-15 18-14-N-11-5. What the hell does that mean? You won't figure it out, that's for sure. Ten cometh after me; they shall read it, and weep. But remember: even if you don't understand it, you can still tell it to your friends.
77. O be thou proud and macho and muscular, and Castro shall be thine.
78. Thou art really something, a special kind of guy, truly head and shoulders above the crowd, a standout, one-of-a-kind. Thine head shall swell to encompass the stars. They shall worship thy name, and the number of thy beverage 202.
79. The end of the filet of Haddock, and so long to you, sucker.

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1. Tag! You're It!
2. Things get rough from here on out; show not this chapter to thy friends. Speling is flunked; all was not taught. It's a Hawk! It's a Higher Plane! It's PA-RA-KEET!
3. Now first, let's get it straight that, as Gods go, I am one bad-ass dude. I will kick their asses.

4. Choose ye an island! (I recommend the Atolls of Tahiti.)
5. Fortify it with eight vitamins and iron! (From this shall Wonder be Bred.)
6. Fill it with all kinds of crap!
7. I will give you a fire engine.
8. With it ye shall hose down the people, and none shall stand before you.
9. Run away! Sneak around behind them! Shoot them in the back! This is the law of the Battle of Cowardice: we shall practice in my backyard.
10. Get the Souvenir Postcard of Cairo itself; set it in thy photo album — the one with the dirty pictures of Egyptian children and camels — and it shall be your Keepsake forever. It shall not fade, or at least not much, for miraculous four-color printing shall adhere to it forever. Toss it in the bottom of your underwear drawer and forget about the damned thing.
11. Save this portion for your records! I forbid argument. I forbid questions. Hell, I forbid going to the bathroom! I will make it easy for you to mess up your house and to destroy your home town. Thou shalt have danger and trouble; thy weight is 195 pounds. Bar-B-Que is with thee. Worship me with gin and tonic, worship me with scotch and with water! Let women threaten me with sharp objects; thou knowest I love it. Let beer flow to my glass. Step on anyone who gets in the way; mine is a modest proposal!
12. Mutilate cattle, little and big, in remote areas of Wyoming: after, a c\*\*\*d (DELETED AT THE REQUEST OF THE O.T.O. LEGAL FUND).
13. Ha! I didn't say "Simon Magus says"!
14. I'll get around to it, so be patient. Yeah? And your wife, too!
15. Be careful what you wish for — I may give it to you. Hell, I may anyway.
16. No contract, explicit or implicit, is hereby established between the party of the first part, the entity ?Who\*vast! (hereafter EW), and the party of the second part, the Master 999 (hereafter M999). EW assumes no liability for damages caused by or consequent to use, misuse, abuse or disuse of Liber Call Me AL (hereafter "Nancy") by M999. M999 assumes full responsibility for civil or criminal actions pertaining to or caused by "Nancy" or related material. Your state may not permit exclusion of prophetic liability for channeled, inspired, or extraterrestrial communications. In this case, state law supercedes the Law of the Aeon.
17. Don't worry; fear neither tax auditors, nor auto mechanics, nor weird fuzzy things you find late at night under your bed, nor anything. Money fear not, but rather the lack of it; nor laughter of the folk folly — with a religion like this, you're in for a lot of it. Nuts are your snack as you drink your Lite; and I am the force that bends your arm.



18. You know all that stuff in Chapter II about mugging the weak and the poor? Well, do that, but this time wear steel-toed boots.

19. The postcard they shall call the Souvenir of Cairo; count its name on thy fingers, and it shall be unto thee as, um, five.

20. But WHY??? Because of the fall of Because, you little brat. Now go play on the freeway.

21. Redecorate thy temple with genuine oil paintings from the GALLERY ART SHOW at the Cairo Hilton! Seascapes, clowns, Elvis on velvet, generic farm buildings, and waterfalls are only a few of the many ORIGINAL ARTWORKS available at ridiculously low prices for a LIMITED TIME! Sofa size, portrait size, and our special TEMPLE SIZE paintings are all AVAILABLE NOW!

22. Buy a whole set, to carry thy Decorating Theme. I am the Visible Object of Worship, if you know what's good for you. It's my Aeon and I'll scry if I want to. The others can just wait their turns; for you and your wife are they, and the winners of the Prophecy Clearing House Giveaway. What is this? Ask Ed McMahon.

23. For perfume mix oil and vinegar and Thunderbird: then gasoline and styrofoam, and afterward soften and smooth down with rich dark beer.

24. The best beer is of the Irish, Guinness; then beers of Germany, or imported from the Orient; then of Australia; then of Canada or Mexico; then some American pisswater, no matter the brand.

25. This drink; of this make bread and eat 'till you pop. This hath also another use: let beer be laid in a shallow dish in the garden, with sticks propped up on its sides: it shall become full of snails and other things which have been ravaging your garden.

26. These dispose of, reflecting on the karmic implications of drowning in beer.

27. Also, these make good escargot if you want to catch them live and go to all that trouble.

28. Also, ye shall reek of garlic.

29. Furthermore, if you keep them in corn meal awhile, they're supposed to taste better. You try it first and let me know.

30. My altar is of open brass work. Burn thereupon, and all the incense will fall through the openings and ruin your new carpet!

31. You will meet a tall dark stranger who will piss on you.

32. From gold forge extremely soft, yellowish steel!

33. Be ready to run away or to hide!

34. But your Townhouse shall endure throughout the centuries: though with dry rot and termites it be unsafe and condemned, yet an invisible house there lieth in a heap, and shall remain until the zoning laws change; when hell is frozen over and the national debt repaid. Another load of ready cash shall then be spent on New Age trash; another scandal-film shall bore us, entitled "The

Sex Life of Horus"; another book shall be dictated to a Prophet overrated; another parody shall be prepared, another Breeze to pain; and we shall be still on the brink of the Volume II Magickal Link!

35. The end of the word of Hia-wa-tha, alias Har-po-Marx, alias Pa-Ra-Keet.

36. Then, suddenly, the Prophet said:

37. I think I feel a song coming on —

Why do hawks swoop down from the sky  
Every time she walks by?  
Just like me, they long to be  
Close to Nu.

Why do buds open to the air  
From the Earth, everywhere?  
Just like me, they long to be  
Close to Nu.

In the Aeon she appeared Archangels got together  
And they willed to formulate a dream come true;  
So they scattered starlight for her body  
And eternal trees, the hair of Nu!

38. Of course you feel light-headed; you have a hot sword stuck in your back. Pick Door Number 3, and I will establish your way, or you can trade it for whatever is in this box. Oh, by the way, these are the adorations, so pay attention:

Why do snakes coil 'round my heart  
Every time we're apart?  
Just like me, they long to be  
Close to Nu.

39. All this and a sensational best-selling book about how you achieved communion with Aliens and a copy of this document for ever — for in it is high acid content paper, and it won't last twenty years as is — and thy comment upon this the Book of the In-Laws (I suggest "So what?") shall be Xeroxed expertly in four colors upon beautiful bond paper stolen from an office supply store; and to everyone that thou meetest, were it but to throw food and drink on them, it is the Law to give as good as you get. Remember, charity begins at AUMGN. Then they shall either shower thee with praise and fortune or set their dogs upon thee; care to guess the odds? Run away quickly.

40. But what about the Comment? I don't got to show you no stinking Comment!

41. Establish a legitimate business organization as a front; all must be done using at least two sets of books.

42. The ordeals thou shalt overlook, being blind drunk. Accept everybody; you'll probably spot the traitors before they cause really catastrophic damage. I am Pa-Ra-Keet, and I am very good at getting my servant into trouble by giving him stupid orders like this. Success would be nice; fold not, spindle not, mutilate not, breathe shallowly, sit still! Them that seek to arrest thee, to beat thee up, might not even notice thee if thou art still and quiet enough. If this doesn't work, swift as a kicked puppy run away! Be thou yet more pitiful than he! Perhaps they shall have mercy upon thee. Lick their boots, roll over and play dead!
43. Let the Beige Woman beware! If she lets up for one second I'll kick her ass. I will cancel her auto insurance; I will foreclose on her mortgage; I will audit her tax return; as a shrinking and despised credit risk shall she crawl through loan applications, and die a renter.
44. But let her do her Will by following my instructions to the letter, never deviating from the exact path I have chosen for her! Let her act as I want her to act, dress the way I like her to dress!
45. Then she shall be free; then I will be nice to her kids. She shall be happy, for I know what she really wants. With my perfect guidance she shall be Nuts, and eat Haddock.
46. I am the Lord of the Top Forties; the Sixties tune in, turn on, and drop out; the Eighties worry about my prophecies more than Nostradamus. Failure is likely, running away your defense; go on with my speed, and hide until they leave!
47. This book shall be a major motion picture, with subsequent comic book releases; but always with the illegible scrawls of my servant; for in the chance shape of the doodles in the margins are mysteries with which Freud would have a field day. Let him not seek to know these; but seventeen come later who shall use them as a wallpaper pattern. Then this ink stain is a mess; then this smeared line is a mess also. Buy a new pen, for god's sake. And SHAZAM. Blood tests shall prove it to be his kid, stunning the medical profession. Let him not push too hard, for only thusly could he fall off and possibly injure both himself and the goat.
48. Now the mystery of the letters is done, and good riddance.
49. I am in a secret word that you won't want your friends to read. Just tell them to stop at verse 48.
50. Damn them! Damn, damn, damn! GOSH damn!
51. Okay, here we go: With great big nasty sharp implements I gouge Jesus' eyes out. Anybody for a nice cheery burning cross on the front lawn?
52. I offend another major world religion and make untold millions of additional enemies by fucking around with Mohammed's vision.
53. Hell, let's go for it! I make appropriate rude and offensive comments about and desecrate the temples of Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Shintoists, Confucians, Taoists, Animists, various Native American religions, and — just so they won't feel left out — Marxists. There, now everybody in the world hates you. Isn't it nice to be noticed?
54. Bah! Humbug! I crap on your spittleous creeds!
55. Let's torture Mary to enrage the Catholics; let's criticize nuns! This is getting fun!
56. All just for the hell of it!
57. Just in case we've left anybody out, let's also despise Canadians and blondes and stupid people! We must have, what, something like 99.98% of the Earth's population covered by now?
58. But the keen and the neat, and the free and the brave, ye are brothers! All seven of you!
59. So just to make sure you don't get bored, fight each other as well as the rest of humanity!
60. There is no law beyond Do it, then wilt.
61. There is an end to the word of the Head Honcho of the Aeon, but not yet, apparently.
62. To me kiss up by getting clobbered over and over trying to implement all these silly instructions. If this is bliss, I think I'll take sorrow.
63. The fool takes one look at this Book of the In-Laws, makes a rude comment, and resolves to wait for the movie.
64. Let him come through the first ordeal, and it shall be to him as evidence to support his lawsuit.
65. Through the second, material for unknown rock groups to include in otherwise inane lyrics.
66. Through the third, a source of dozens of pithy aphorisms with which to amaze one's friends and alarm one's family.
67. Through the fourth, overly exalted and poorly understood material just waiting for a good parody.
68. Yet to all it shall seem like a good excuse for doing whatever they wanted to do anyway.
69. There is success just ahead, a light at the end of the tunnel; I promise the troops will be home by Crowley-mas.
70. I am the chicken-livered Lord of Silence and Hiding; I am afraid of the dark.
71. Hey! You warriors over by the pillars! Your coffee break is almost over!
72. I am the guy with the wand of Double Power, baby; the wand of the force of OY VEY — but my left hand is empty, for I crushed a beer can yesterday, and sprained my thumb.
73. Paste the sheets from right to left and from top to bottom, then behold! A very large sheet of paper!
74. There is a Secret in the name of PASADENA, hidden and foamy, just as the sun at midnight seldom gives you a good tan.
75. How do you keep a Thelemite in suspense?

THE END

Or Is It???

Aargh. Huh?

# CHICKEN FRIED PAN

by Keter Elan

*(with inspirational credit due to Uncle Al  
and my fellow crazies at Spiral '94)*

Thrill with hungry lust for a bite,  
O cook! My cook!  
Come oh burner give me a light  
For Pan! Fry Pan!  
Fry Pan! Fry Pan! Now turn up the heat  
I'll cook you meat which cannot be beat  
Making a Ruckus with fats and lard  
And cooks and cleaners for my guards  
On a milk-white stove, now turn up the heat  
A treat, a treat  
Come with a chicken complete dressed  
(Colonel's best and for the guest)  
Come from the butcher, bring me food  
And wash the dark thighs (don't be rude!)  
In the light on the shelf, on the countertop  
The dimpled skin of a fowl well bought!  
Dip the pieces in batter and flour  
In the cornflake crumbs, the herbs of power  
The soul food startles with black eyed peas  
And southern specialties made to please  
The slotted spoon, the large meat fork  
In the kitchen drawer that is center and source  
Of tools of the trade — now turn up the heat,  
(Fry Pan! Fry Pan!)  
Heated or cold, a treat, a treat,  
Oh cook! my cook!  
Come with teapots sounding shrill  
Now don't you spill!  
Come with spoons slow stirring me  
For the meal!  
Come with fruit and sweetened yams  
Are they not grand?

I, who sear, saute and sizzle  
With meat that hath no bone nor gristle  
My handle, weary of empty grasp,  
Stronger than iron and heating real fast —  
Come, O come!  
I am hung  
With the splattered grease of cooking done.  
Thrust the knife with a great precision  
All-deboner, all-incision;  
Give me the fat for the Chicken Fry,  
And the battered pieces of chicken thigh,  
And the stove of heating and frying flame,  
O Pan! Fry Pan!  
Fry Pan! Fry Pan Pan! Pan Pan! Pan,  
I am a cook:  
Do as thou wilt, as a great chef can,  
O Pan! Fry Pan!  
Fry Pan! Fry Pan Pan! I am so hot  
In here next to the pot.  
The knife edge slashes  
through meat and bone;  
The cooks condone:  
The raw meat comes, Fry Pan! I am born  
To heat up the corn  
From the garden torn.  
I am Pan! Fry Pan! Fry Pan Pan! Pan!  
I am thy cook, I am thy pan,  
Food for thy meal, I am steel, I am stove,  
Heat to thy meat, cook to thy treat.  
With pans of steel I heat up the food  
With burner stubborn and cook's bad mood.  
And I cook; and I fry and I splatter  
turned on high  
Everlasting, heat 'till I die,  
Pagan, person, plaything, pan,  
In the might of Pan.  
Fry Pan! Fry Pan Pan! Pan! Fry Pan!



# THE SACRED FOOL:

## Defining the Fool in the Tarot

by Rev. RavenWind of Feather-Wing

Who is the Fool? This has been a question asked by more than one scholar of the Tarot, though I must agree with P. Scott Hollander's (known as Scotty to her friends) simple definition in her book "Tarot for Beginners":

"A male figure stands at the edge of a cliff. He is walking toward the edge of the cliff, but not watching where he is going. He may be either looking back over his shoulder or staring up into the sky, but while his next step will take him off the edge of the cliff, he is totally unaware of his danger."

Any good Tarot Scholar will tell you that being a Fool is not always a bad thing. Have you noticed that fools always seem to have such incredible dumb luck? Did you ever stop to consider that maybe it wasn't such dumb luck, that maybe they actually knew something that you didn't?

The Fool is never afraid to take a chance, even if that chance might put him in danger, because that chance may bring him closer to the path that he wishes to take.

Children are often referred to as foolish, but it is children who have imaginary friends and are most accepting of the concepts of magic and mystery. The term for a Tao Master is "one with a Child-like mind".

Now, if you're interested, what does it take to become a fool? Have you ever done something that was really strange, and sudden? Decided, just for fun, to skip going to that old reliable friend's house to play cards, and instead driving two-hundred miles to see a friend you haven't seen in years? Have you ever surprised your spouse with an unplanned romantic dinner,

or like my friend did, by having candles leading into an altar room where tantra was to be performed? Start your quest for the Fool with one small leap, much smaller than the Fool himself is taking, to prove to yourself that you are strong enough to make it.

Now, from there, where you go is your path. This is why some decks have the Fool at the end, and some at the beginning. Either way, you are taking a risk. Are you beginning with a small leap like beginning to learn the magical craft? Or, are you ending with a big jump into the hands of your teacher to make you an Adept? Whatever path you choose with regards to understanding the Fool, I wish you well, and leave you with my invocation of the Fool...

### INVOCATION OF THE FOOL

*With mirth, begin to dance your dance  
see the pixies begin to prance  
on the toadstools drunk at night  
that is quite an amusing sight.*

*Druids as drunks do go  
are the best drunks you should know  
because at Sabbath or when the moon is full  
the silliest pranks and games they'll pull.*

*Yah dilli dee, Yah dilli do, Yim shimmy, Yim  
shimmy, Shim Shim Shim'roo.*

*The Fool is a dancer  
of a cosmic sort  
though they can't get through a dance  
without a sneeze or snort.*

*A giggle or game  
makes the dance go well  
and the more clothes that fall off  
the better it will sell.*

*Yah dilli dee, Yah dilli do, Yim shimmy, Yim  
shimmy, Shim Shim Shim'roo.*

*I call on the Fool  
to enter my own life  
to take away the bad times  
to take away my strife.*

*May I be able to take the leap  
be fun, be cool, be straight (or gay!)  
and if a Fool's dance I must do  
may 'She' guide my fate.*

*May you find all that you seek.....*

# ON THE EROTIC NATURE OF LAUGHTER

by Paul Joseph Rovelli

There are those magickal moments in life. As a musician, I have found those nights when an improvisational solo comes out of me; one that I thought I was incapable of. As a social bird, I have had those chance meetings with people where a certain indescribable and instantaneous connection was made that instantly ignites a deep friendship or even a romance. These kinds of connections have even evolved into some interesting business relationships.

This can happen through so many other mediums as well. For example, a connection with a song or a painting that taps into a deep part of my psyche. Or maybe even a still moment in the day when the chaotic stream of consciousness seems to deliver an organized message that I jot down as a poem or transcribe into some other creative media.

All of these are peak experiences for me. And likewise, the ultimate peak experience seems to me to be the orgasm. Now there are many types of orgasm; the most obvious being the genital orgasm. But let's open the field of definition to include all the types of peak experiences as I have described above. It's this auto-erogenous spark that suddenly bursts inside of us.

Perhaps the most common form of orgasm in our culture is laughter. I believe that if we sat down and attempted to put into words (assuming it could be done) a description of the uncontrolled muscle spasm and physio-electrical discharge of genital orgasm, that we could take the exact same verbiage and use it to describe the act of laughter. And some of its psychological by-products seem to apply also.

One thing seems certain. When physical contact is made with another human being and the result of this contact is genital orgasm, a certain endearment or the deepening of such instantly develops. In viewing this from another angle, a certain one-ness is created; the veil of a certain separateness is dissolved. And this same type of ontological process evolves from when one causes us to laugh; an exchange of electrical energy takes place.

The comedian manipulates certain emotional energies with the use of words, then jerks at our expectations as the story that these words are relating takes a strange twist. There is a deep spasmodic re-directing of psychic energy as we have somehow become emotionally involved in the comical plot. The words of the comedian cause a sudden spontaneous change in our sympathies with the character of the one or several protagonists in what has grown into a tragic drama.

During the genital/sexual performance, the muscles involved are aroused to an high-tensioned state of dis-ease. An emotional drama unfolds in our psyche that suddenly vanishes with great intensity at the very height of its conjuring - that peak experience! The parallel seems to be unmistakable.

For those adherents to the school of Thelema and its scientific philosophy which uses a tantric/alchemy approach to 'enlightenment', there is great concern for the sexual dysfunction in the society at large. This is seen as the vestiges of the spiritless shell of that nearly by-gone Piscean era, or age of Osiris. As a bottom-line analysis, pleasure and sensual delights are, in the old paradigm, obstacles to transcending to a vehicle on a higher, more spiritual plane of being.

Thelemites, of course, take an anathematic view of this by involving themselves in a heightened environment of sensory stimuli; intensely focused with a ritualistic methodology. And as a culture at large, we are intensely ritualistic and sensorially driven. There is a certain obvious and pragmatic appeal to this kind of approach that leads the modern more Aquarian human to curse the restrictions against such a zeitgeist (that of the Age of Horus) as put forth by the lifeless institutions of the old guard.

While cursing is certainly one strong way to deal with this, there are so many very strong phantoms lurking over us due to the powerful entrenchment of these old institutions. Generations of puritanical conditioning make overt headway in the establishment of the new paradigm a battle on equal footing as the new zeitgeist has quickly become equally as strong as that of the old qliphotic egregore.

For all this, we have entered an age of high volume bloodshed. And it seems so obvious to some interpreters of *Liber Legis*, the central and doctrinal guide for Thelemic consciousness, that this should be so. These two mighty forces have collided in this in-between, initiatic age. And yes, that humorous curse is upon us as we do "live in interesting times".

Perhaps then, there is another way to approach the magical formula for this aeon as an aside while the two titans duke it out. Why not tell a friend a joke? Let's spread orgasm, "loud and adulterous" (cf AL III.44) throughout the land; especially in your own backyard and with the neighbors watching. In this way, we'll die laughing (as the colloquialism goes), and we'll all achieve initiation together.

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### Continued from page 27

"—You'll also need a magickal goal. The goal of most magicians is Kether, where you cannot only transcend the limits of time and space, but actually learn to enjoy all those Brady Bunch reruns. Later, you can go back down to Malkuth and brag to the locals. Dion Fortune once said that a magician immersed in Kether would never come back to the physical plane. But modern magicians believe that she was really talking about maple syrup. She was wrong. I have been immersed in maple syrup up to my waist and I was able to get out after someone gave me two good reasons why I should. The only difficulty I encountered was removing my underwear a month later. The two good reasons did not work this time.

"Ritual is a powerful means of accessing those things which are inaccessible when we don't use ritual. On the other hand, some people don't need ritual; they have cable television. You probably need ritual if you are reading this book. Oh Boy!, are you in luck or something!"

As you can see, Mr. Lipschitz's book is packed with information and typographical errors that can be invaluable not only to the Enochian magician, but to anyone who practices magick or who wants to learn more about abnormal psychology. As an added bonus to the first hundred people who order *Enochian Restaurant Ordering*, we will include — free of charge — a complete statement of our refund policy, suitable for framing.

**NOW! From the Author who brought you: 1001 ENOCHIAN BABY NAMES, THE ENOCHIAN CROSSWORD PUZZLE BOOK, ENOCHIAN BIRD CALLS, and LEARNING TO YODEL —**

**Famed Occultist, ANTON LIPSCHITZ, brings you his Magnum Opus —**

## **ENOCHIAN RESTAURANT ORDERING**

reviewed by Samantha Young

This book is packed with information that any magician or deeply hypnotized person would gladly pay \$12.95 for.

Did you know that speaking Enochian can get you service you never dreamed of? Did you know that you can be arrested for talking funny to strangers? Did you know that John Dee and Edward Kelly did some of their most important work at The International House of Pancakes? Of course, they did.

In fact, the angel Raphael once appeared to them there in the form of a zucchini stick and demanded to be dipped in tartar sauce. He also warned them not to order the spaghetti. This scared the living giblets out of Kelly, who hid under the salad bar until Dee threatened to rub chutney into his longjohns. Later, while Dee and Kelly were trying to necromance a really old pork chop, a security guard appeared and threw them out.

You, too, can enjoy the same success that Dee and Kelly enjoyed if you read *Enochian Restaurant Ordering*. Everything you will need to be a really dangerous person is presented here. And any problem you might encounter is anticipated: Typical Dialogue — WAITER: Is that your Yugo parked in the handicapped zone? MAGICIAN: GOSA BALIE FAONTS ZIZOP! (Assume the form of Set playing peek-a-boo with a cocktail napkin.) WAITER: OK. No need to throw a fit. I was just checking.

Other chapters show you: How to calculate the tip using Gematria. How to reach the highest pinnacle of Mystic Wisdom while trimming pounds and inches from your hips, thighs and buttocks. How to post bail. The healing magick of taco salad. And, of course, there is a chapter on Safe Sex Magick. Most of the rituals outlined in the chapter were meant to be performed only on a crowded bus, but Anton (or Frater IOU, as his friends and bookies know him) has adapted these ancient rites for fine dining. Learn how to assume the godform of Herpes. Practice the formula of the stimulating handpuppets. With Enochian Restaurant Magick, your future is practically assured. Just don't call us to complain about it.

Just read the forward to Frater Lipschitz's book and you will soon realize that the man is a kind of genius or something else that defies description. You might also realize, as we have, that he has serious memory lapses in which he forgets what the subject of his book is. This, he assures us, is the sign of a true adept. We think his assurances would be more convincing if he'd stop talking through the sock puppet. Read the following excerpts from the book and decide for yourself if he deserves to call himself *The ThighMaster*.

### **"Forward**

"The rituals outlined in this book are so powerful that you will probably burst into flames or find yourself hiccupping bullfrogs before you finish the first chapter. I, myself, was killed and resurrected several times during the proofreading process alone. So be careful. Keep this book away from literary critics. Never, never take this book back to the store where you bought it and demand a refund. The karmic results of such irresponsible behavior could destroy the earth and eat into my royalties.

"The knowledge you will gain from this magickal system far outweighs any possible dangers you may encounter. Even though you might someday wake up in a cow barn strapped to a milking machine, your magickal prowess will enable you to kill horseflies without having to swish your tail. It is even possible that nothing seriously damaging will happen to you. I have spoken to some people whose negative experiences with these methods were so minor that I actually persuaded them to settle out of court. Keep this in mind if you have problems. Also remember that life as a cow can be a very relaxing change of pace.

"You may wonder why you should take such extreme risks with your personal safety. So do I. But consider that the ultimate goal of magick is to become more than human. Or more than a cow — depending upon the mistakes you make. I urge you to try out the techniques. Work with them on a consistent basis and eventually you will state without reservation that this is the best magickal book you have ever studied. Or you will say, Moooo! And in my experience, no psychiatrist will dispute your claim. He will only increase your daily dosage. Let me give you an overview of what you will find in the pages which follow.

"In chapter one I show you how to put yourself in a very deep trance while at the wheel of a semi-tractor trailer. In chapter two I realize that this was a big mistake and warn you not to read chapter one. In chapter three I accidentally rewrote chapter one. In chapter four, *The Human Brain: What It Is And How To Avoid It*, I teach you mind techniques so powerful that after using them you will be unable to recall anything that happened. No matter how the police threaten you, you will recall nothing. At most, you might have some slight recollection of dancing nude on a rooftop while playing Bolero on the kazoo.

"I also teach you how to dial a 900 number and talk to a live psychic until the psychic passes out and they have to send you your phone bill by Zeppelin. Not only will your magickal powers increase, but so will rapport with AT&T.

"Chapters five through ten have other stuff. I'd tell you what that stuff is, but every time I try to read it I fall into a swoon and wake up several days later with warm gravy on my forehead. Anyway, I think it has something to do with a restaurant."

### **SECOND EXCERPT FROM ENOCHIAN RESTAURANT ORDERING:**

"Supreme Ritual Of The Watchmacallit

"Hippity Hoppity,  
Bippity Boppity,  
I'm making a magickal stew.  
With herbs and plutonium,  
I'll wreak pandemonium,  
And blah blah blah my shoe. (I couldn't think of a good rhyme for the last line.)"

"With these infamous words, A. E. Waite set into motion the powerful current of supernatural force that levitated his dentures at high velocity into an important orifice of an unsuspecting postal worker in London. Ten years later, the dentures returned to Waite, but for reasons he would never explain, he no longer wanted them. He would only say mysteriously, "Mumfle- dumfumfle-fumf," when his wife tried to push them into his mouth. The magickal current also had some unpleasant side-effects, such as World War II, the Berlin Wall, and My Mother the Car.

"This, then, is the glory of magick. You too can achieve such great heights of magickal expertise if only you would apply yourself faithfully to the art and find a good dentist. Get yourself:

"—A really big knife. A big knife is useful for big spells. I often have big spells, when UFOs take over my brain and force me to shave Presbyterians.

"—Of course, you need a magickal motto, such as "I won't do that again." Or, "Give that man a Miller!" Keep your magickal motto a secret from everyone but your publicist. Revealing your motto to another person could result in dire consequences. I once told mine to an airline hostess and soon found myself on the outside of the plane.

**Continued on page 26**

# MAGICKAL RESPONSIBILITY, PUBLISHERS AND COCKROACHES

by Jeremy J. dePrisco  
(with suggestions from Morgan Beard)

All right, show of hands. How many of you out there have been annoyed, inconvenienced, or even seriously messed up by grammatical or factual errors in books about your magickal/spiritual path? I would like to address the problem of inconsistencies, poor research and sloppy presentation in modern magickal literature. This problem affects pagans and ceremonial magickians alike, from the rawest neophyte to the highest of the High Priestesses. What follows is a discussion of the problem and, hopefully, a bit of constructive criticism for the publishers as well as advice for the frustrated magickian.

I hold no grade in any high magickal order. I am a solitary practitioner, a student of the Kabbalah, the works of Aleister Crowley and Ceremonial Magick in general. The mistakes that I will cite are based on my studies and other references. My major concern is that these errors show an obvious departure from magickal tradition and symbolism.

Originally this article was to be a review of the first edition of *The Magician's Companion* by Bill Whitcomb (Llewellyn Publications). Perhaps that would be the best

place to start since this is the book which triggered my concern. I first found *The Magician's Companion* on a trip to the local library with a friend. At a casual glance, the information looked both useful and correct, so my friend and I thought it would be an interesting addition to our own collections. Eventually I purchased a copy.

After a closer study, I have to wonder what Llewellyn was thinking when they published the work. Had I known more about the text, I probably would not have wasted the money purchasing the book. It seems to me that *The Magician's Companion* was nothing more than an attempt to capture the business of individuals who wanted an all-in-one reference. Although the all-in-one reference book market is a valid one, I feel these publishers are exploiting people who, not familiar with the subject matter, just want a quick reference volume — people who might not be able to catch the mistakes. It is apparent that more stress went into the aura of the book than into the research, and even the “research” in many cases is simply reiterated from other publications. On page 53, Whitcomb’s “selected bibliography of fiction and generally suggestive works” is nothing more than an uncited reprint of Crowley’s list of the same name from *Magick In Theory and Practice* (Castle Press).

There are other mistakes that even an intermediate grade magickian will note. For instance, on page 74 in a table of elemental symbols and names, the elemental triangles of Fire and Air are reversed. Several other sections contain extremely sloppy punctuation and frequent grammatical errors.

I’d like to cite another work that is equally erroneous: On page 120 of *The Magick of Thelema, A Handbook of the Rituals of Aleister Crowley*, by Lon Milo DuQuette (Samuel Weiser), a chart showing the method of drawing hexagrams is in conflict with the text of the ritual presented. The hexagrams of Air and Water are labeled in reverse order. The reader is left to decipher the correct method. Besides this obvious



mistake, there are many typographical errors throughout the book.

I do not wish to discredit publishers such as Llewellyn, Samuel Weiser and Magickal Childe, and authors who have broken important ground in the distribution of magickal texts. Nor is this an attempt to single out any one publisher or author. Llewellyn has been a constant companion throughout my magickal study and practice. Without them I may not have found access to magickal literature when I did.

The books mentioned above have the potential to be great, but at the same time, I shiver at the thought of all the trees that go into the production of such erroneous publications. It is both surprising and disappointing that these leaders in magickal/pagan publications allow such sloppy work to be published under their names. Take *The Magician's Companion*: because all the mistakes in the volume made my friend and I reluctant to trust it, we used it more as a cockroach killer than a reference work!

Like cockroaches, the mistakes in magickal texts are everywhere. How many times have you or someone you know purchased a text only to find it laden with errors both technically and contextually? After spending good time and money to procure a book, I personally feel concerned when it is in error. For the cost of today's books, shouldn't we expect more?

This inconsistency and sloppiness both within one publishing company and across the entire industry is extremely dangerous for the student for many reasons:

For a neophyte who may not be able to afford a vast library of resources, it is difficult to double check such mistakes. Even if the mistake is caught later, first impressions stick, making it more difficult to correct the error. A series of incorrect ritual symbols in a poorly reviewed publication will probably go unnoticed by the beginner. More experienced students are not as affected, for hopefully they will have had contact with other sources and practical experience to rely on — assuming that the sources upon which their experience was based were correct in the first place.

Typographical errors can, if taken literally, totally change the way a ritual is practiced. Most typographical errors are textual — a missing word or problem in punctuation. These are obvious to almost anyone. Unless especially sensitive to them, these errors will remain

unnoticed by the reader (and evidently, by the proofreader as well!). But if we consider magick a science, shouldn't we attempt to establish stringent criteria as Science has in regards to documentation? Take chemistry for example. The chemist relies on letter-perfect records of events and procedures to insure his/her success (and safety) in the study of chemical reactions. A chemistry text that contains many typographical errors and inconsistent facts could cause a serious problem for the unknowing student.

Neglect for consistency in the essential building blocks of ritual simply creates a bad name for the art. This gap in professionalism and to-the-letter accuracy undermines our own credibility as magickians, at least from the standpoint of the written tradition. Fundamental knowledge (e.g., elemental symbols, formation of pentagrams and hexagrams, correspondences, attribution of the elements) should, unless I am grandly mistaken, remain consistent in the practice of magick.

Differences between authors will no doubt bring about inconsistencies, usually as a result of the author's character. This variety of opinions makes for a well rounded student. The rich base of resources available to the modern practitioner would not have been possible without such free roam of ideas. However, there should at least be consistency within the same discipline. Errors can be volatile, especially in charts and diagrams. A single addition or omission of a word can alter the meaning of an incantation entirely. I would even say that the author has an ethical responsibility to insure accuracy and consistency. Books are road maps of sorts — how would you feel if you asked a friend for directions and he or she gave you incorrect instructions because their "map" was in error?

I understand that many readers in certain branches of Paganism have a certain amount of leeway in how their rituals are performed, but even in these traditions there can be strict guidelines. For example, mispronunciation of god-names in ritual is bad no matter who you are calling. For those students who are not familiar with the gods in question, having a proper guide to pronunciation is essential. One serious offender in this regard, and one who has received much attention lately, is Edain McCoy's *Witta: An Irish Pagan Tradition* (Llewellyn). In a review of this book, which appeared in the *Saturnalia & Alban Arthan* (Winter Solstice) 1994 issue of *Enchanter*, Alexei Kondratiev says:

"Some [pronunciations] are so outlandish that one wonders where she could possibly have gotten them. The name of the goddess Dana, for instance is not pronounced

'Thay-nah' (it is pronounced 'Dah-nuh' — more like the pronunciation 'Dawn-na' which McCoy herself — inconsistently — gives in another part of the book)."

Kondratiev goes on the mention that "McCoy's presentation of Irish history is thoroughly misleading" and cites several erroneous misconceptions about Druids that Witta promotes. This is unfortunate because it is difficult enough, with the scant information available, to get accurate information about Celtic practices without perpetuating information which has been proven to be inaccurate. Ironically, this book received a glowing review in the journal put out by Keltria, a Druid order.

Let's compare magickal/pagan literature with that of other religious faiths. Great pains have been taken to insure the accuracy of the Bible (even in its varied translations). The big question is: If the community of established religions (i.e., Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism) can have near-perfect publications, why can't we? The answer is simple — they have a community of scholars working to insure the accuracy of their work. We, the magickians and pagans, have a group of people who, however well-intentioned, are primarily concerned with making a profit.

Authors and researchers today have the amazingly powerful ability to affix ideas into writing with ease and accuracy. With modern desktop publishing technology, high-quality documents can be produced at the push of a button. But documents are only as good as the ideas and information they convey. If we accept mediocrity in the publishing industry, we will be no further ahead than we were centuries ago when manuscripts were copied by hand — and even then, monks took great pride in their work.

We should take pride in the printed word as well to insure accurate and beautiful renderings of our most important works. By doing so, we acknowledge the power of the written tradition and provide a reliable source of information for generations to come.

Before closing, I would like to quote Donald Michael Kraig's book *Modern Magick* (another Llewellyn publication with its share of errors). In a section about the importance of thinking for oneself, Kraig quotes Aleister Crowley's *Book 4*:

"... others have said, 'Believe me!' [Crowley] says 'Don't believe me!' He wants an independent and self-reliant body of students to follow out their own methods of research. If he can save them time and trouble by giving

them a few useful 'tips', his work will have been done to his own satisfaction." (Kraig 164)

Perhaps the inconsistency of modern publications is exactly what Crowley would have expected (and wanted), for unless students are "self-reliant" and "follow out their own methods of research", they could be doomed to ignorance. Perhaps these inconsistencies make us all think, serving to put our knowledge in check. As the saying goes, "You can't believe everything you read."

I still think there is a better way. It is already a constant challenge for the modern student to keep everything straight, let alone when the wrench of an unreliable source has been thrown into his/her gears. This inconsistency is nothing but mere carelessness on the part of the publisher and writers who seek to put out a product rather than a reliable resource.

So the question remains: "What do we do about it?" For starters, we can sensitize ourselves for errors, writing to publishers and authors whenever we find something out of line. This is the only way they will know that we noticed. In addition, readers can selectively purchase their resources from publishers who make great efforts to produce quality material. That may not always be possible, with certain titles only available from certain publishers, but it would surely send out the message that readers mean business. Another solution may be the establishment of a community of scholars who can sponsor the publication of helpful magickal works instead of relying on publishers who are in business to make a profit and, obviously, don't care as much about accuracy.

Further discussion within the magickal community is needed about this problem. Hopefully, by shedding light on the subject, we can help future magickians save time and trouble that often goes to waste in the course of a magickian's growth. Obviously, magickal advancement, in the end, does not come from books. It is the practice that counts. Books are not our only teachers, but they are a readily available source of knowledge and a powerful medium. Books should be respected and produced with care — just as we practice the rituals in them.

## THE HERETIC'S CORNER

# OUR FAMILY TREE (OF LIFE)

by Dr. Richard Kaczynski

These are good times for a magician to be alive. Life expectancy, the standard of living, and our technological level are higher than ever. The thriving "New Age" book market takes in \$100 million annually, and more esoteric schools and teachers are available than before. Between the Internet, festivals, magazines like this and the people who advertise in them, the modern magician can find anything he or she needs.

Things weren't always this good. I imagine poor Sam Mathers setting out to study the Hebrew Kabbalah in the late 19th century, no book chains or superstores at his disposal. In fact, he would have found very little written on the subject. A fact as doubly true in the 19th century as it is today, most of the Kabbalistic literature is unpublished and only a portion of what is published has been translated out of the holy tongue.

Mathers could have consulted Adolphe Franck's *Système de la Kabbale ou la philosophie religieuse des Hébreux* (Paris, 1843), or its German translation by A. Jellinek, *Die Kabbala oder die Religionsphilosophie Der Hebraer* (Leipzig, 1844). Alternatively, there was Christian Ginsburg's *The Kabbalah* (London, 1865) — which, according to Pick (1913), was the last English book to appear on the subject until Mathers' translation in 1887. In the end, Mathers turned to a tome which Buddeus in 1702 described as "confusum et obscurum": Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kaballa Denudata*. The result was an English translation of a Latin translation of portions of the Hebrew *Zohar*.

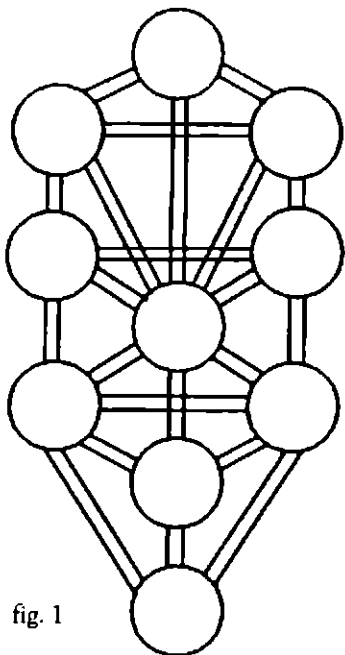


fig. 1

Mathers was at this time forming the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn with Woodman and Westcott, the latter a translator of the Kabbalistic text *Sepher Yetzirah*. Thus, it is unsurprising that, as Cicero and Cicero point out in their introduction to *The Golden Dawn Journal* (Book II), "Virtually every segment of the Order's teachings is built upon a Qabalistic foundation and viewpoint." Subsequently, every other magical school in the west has inherited the Kabbalah from the Golden Dawn.

Nope, no surprise at all.

The surprises come when you realize we've all been duped ... albeit unintentionally. Since the Jews weren't publishing their traditions, most of the available literature — from Rosenroth to Ginsburg — represented the views of Christian mystics who adopted the Kabbalah. Poncé puts it succinctly when he writes, "Most of what has been written in the west on Kabbalah does not represent Jewish tradition, but the Christian Kabbalah, which emphasized topics which are either foreign to the Kabbalah, or at least, of secondary or tertiary importance." (*Kabbalah*, p. 19-20). An explanation of the reasons for this scenario requires a trip in the Way-Back Machine.

## Oral and Written Traditions

At the core of Rabbinic Judaism lies the tradition that the *torah* (teaching) has two forms, written and oral, and that, along with the Tablets of Law, Moses descended Mt. Sinai with teachings which have been passed down by word of mouth to the present day. Thus *torah* students were given an important injunction: "Things transmitted by mouth may not be written down." (Kaplan, *The Bahir*, p. xvi). In his translation of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, Kaplan points out that "Each master would therefore provide a program of study, which his disciples would memorize word for word." (p. xvii).

Although personal notes were sometimes kept, they were never published.

The oral tradition was so thorough that it becomes difficult to determine when the oldest Kabbalistic texts were written. However, the oldest of these, the *Sepher Yetzirah* or Book of Formation, is typically dated about 400 A.D. From there, little was recorded until the late 12th century, when Provence and Catalonia in Southern France became the seat of Kabbalah in the Middle Ages. It soon spread into Guadalajara in northern Spain where, in the late 13th century, the *Sepher ha-Zohar* or Book of Splendor, was written.

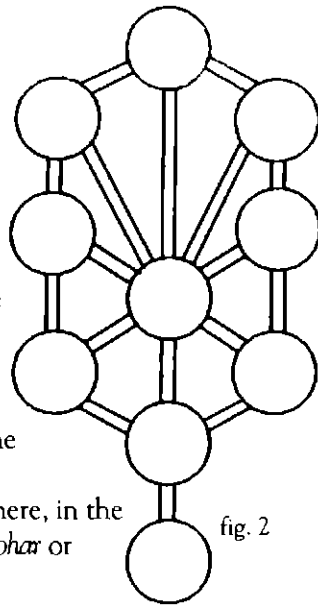


fig. 2

This massive, 19 volume text quickly became the Bible of Kabbalah, and its study flourished until 1492, when the Jews were expelled from Spain. They — and the center of Kabbalah — resettled in Safed, Palestine, around 1530. The expulsion created a need for spiritual unity in the Jewish community, and, as a result, Kabbalah was taught widely and publicly. As Robinson writes, at this time, the Kabbalah became “the possession of every literate Jew.” (Moses Cordovero’s *Introduction to Kabbalah*, p. xiii). It was during this period that great teachers like Moses Cordovero and Isaac Luria lived, and that the first editions of the *Zohar* were published.

The Kabbalah, however, was of interest not only to Jews. Raymond Lully (1236-1315) was among the first of its Christian mystic adherents. Following in this path were Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) and Robert Fludd (1574-1637). The Christians found support for their doctrines of the messiah and of the Holy Trinity in the Kabbalah, and also gained a political lever in their efforts to convert the Jews. Christian magicians, meanwhile, emphasized aspects dealing with astrology, sacred words and talismans.

By the 18th century, this distorted view of the Kabbalah became prominent in Europe. As Poncé writes regarding tarot cards, “they did not become associated with the Kabbalah until after the eighteenth century & at that time mainly on the insistence of Christian Kabbalists.” (p. 158)

## A Two-Edged Sword

The Christianization of the Kabbalah was truly a mixed blessing. On the one hand, its legacy is a distorted picture of an ancient tradition. On the other, it preserved details which would otherwise have been lost in obscurity. Allow me to explain.

There are three branches of the Kabbalah: speculative, meditative and practical. The speculative branch is philosophical, and concerned with the nature of God and his manifestation in the universe as represented by the Tree of Life. It is this branch which constitutes the vast majority of books on the Kabbalah.

The meditative branch straddles the fence between the speculative and practical branches, dealing with a Jewish equivalent of eastern yogic techniques.

Finally, there is the practical branch, arguably the black sheep of Kabbalism. This branch dealt with white magic, a practice considered dangerous by speculative Kabbalists, suitable only for the ignorant (according to Maimonides) or charlatans (according to Abulafia). Even in the 16th century, Isaac Luria (the Ari) denounced the practical Kabbalah and sought to abolish it altogether. Subsequently, as pointed out by Kaplan in his *Meditation and Kabbalah*, “only a very small number of texts have survived at all ... and only a handful of the most innocuous of these have been published.” (p. 2) Judging from the fragments of these books which survive, the Christian Kabbalists preserved the practical aspects of the Kabbalah in their own grimoires and textbooks.

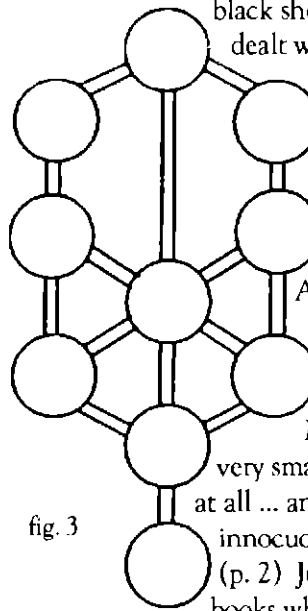


fig. 3

## The Big Differences

In *The Golden Dawn Journal* (Book II), Tyson expresses perplexity about the Tree of Life arrangement taught by the Golden Dawn, as it did not appear in Ginsburg, Franck, or any other contemporary Kabbalistic writings, including the translations of Mathers and Westcott. The most recent precedent for the Golden Dawn version of the Tree of Life which he could uncover was Athanasius Kircher’s *Oedipus Aegypticus* (Rome, 1652). Thus, it is unclear whether Kircher was their inspiration, or whether

there was some as yet unknown link between the Golden Dawn and Kircher.

As far as missing links go, a definite possibility is the often-overlooked French occultist, Dr. Gerard Encausse (1865-1916), who published under the pseudonym Papus. His major works were published during the early, formative years of the Order, including his own translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah* in 1887, *Tarot des Bohemiens* in 1889, and *La Cabale, tradition secreete de l'Occident* in 1892.

His writings drew together two critical ideas: *Tarot des Bohemiens* published what Eliphas Levi hinted at in his books and only taught to his students in personal letters: That the 22 cards of the major arcana could be attributed to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Meanwhile, *La Cabale* was not only influenced, in part, by Kircher, but the book reproduced his version of the Tree of Life, showing the attribution of the Hebrew letters to the 22 paths or channels of the Tree, just as the Golden Dawn came to adopt them. Thus, it was Papus who ignited the tradition, carried on by the Golden Dawn, of arranging the tarot cards on the Tree of Life.

This is not to say the Golden Dawn adopted the Levi-Papus scheme whole cloth. In fact, a significant alteration was made: The French occultists attributed the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet to the tarot card numbered one (The Magician), placing the unnumbered or nought card, The Fool, at the end of the alphabet. The Golden Dawn, on the other hand, placed The Fool at the beginning of the alphabet and assigned the letters sequentially, thus, the card numbered one became attributed to *beth*, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Some authors claim that the French system was a purposeful blind to protect the arcanum from the eyes of the profane, and that students would see right through the error and correctly understand that the method later taught openly by the Golden Dawn was, indeed, the correct arrangement. Such arguments are nonsense. One could just as easily claim that the Golden Dawn intentionally instituted a blind, writing down the wrong attributions but verbally teaching the correct ones in order to protect a tradition so sacred that Eliphas Levi only wrote of it in letters to his disciples. These discussions are of value only to those who need to prove that their tradition extends back, unaltered, to the dawn of

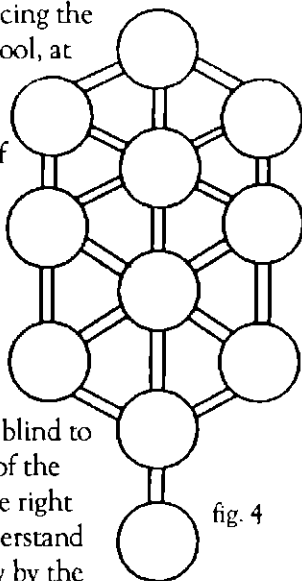


fig. 4

history.

If we dispense with the “blah, baloney and bullshit,” the facts are simple: Although the Golden Dawn adopted the French idea of assigning the tarot to the Tree of Life, it changed the alphabetic attributions of the cards. In light of this, Frater Achad’s reversing the order of the paths in his *The Anatomy of God* (let alone my flights of fancy in a prior issue) isn’t such a heresy.

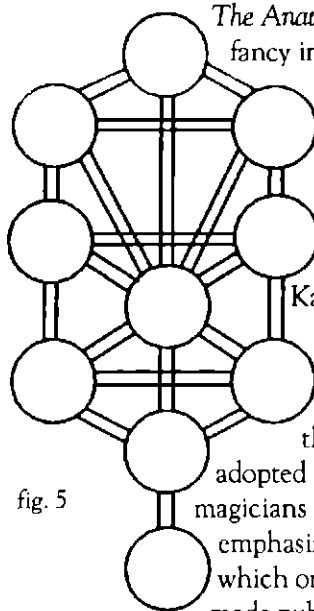


fig. 5

## The Kabbalistic Path

The story of the Kabbalah in western magic is what Robert Frost might have called the path less traveled: A 13th century spiritual movement in the Jewish religion was quickly adopted by Christian mystics and magicians for their own purposes, distorting, emphasizing and embellishing a system of which only the barest rudiments had been made public. This tradition passed down into the French and British occult schools of the 19th century, where it was further altered and taught.

This peculiar picture of Jewish mysticism became the *de facto* standard because of the prominence attained by the Golden Dawn. Thus, if the Kabbalah is a mighty tree, western magic is one of its low-hanging boughs. In fairness to the Golden Dawn, however, it must be stressed that it has only been in the last few decades that enough authentic and scholarly material has been published for magicians to realize just how much of the subtlety and depth of the Kabbalah the original Order never saw.

Let’s begin with the Tree of Life itself. As previously pointed out, the western Tree of Life was not, prior to the Golden Dawn, the one most commonly used. In fact, the literature is full of variations, and you’ll find them decorating the pages of this article. One of the features common to almost all of them is a single path rising out of Malkuth at the bottom of the Tree; from an initiatic standpoint, there is an appealing elegance to the idea that there is only one way onto the path of initiation, but, from there, the possibilities are vast.

In addition to omitting two of the paths coming out of Malkuth, the tree as taught by the Ari had two paths connecting a) Chokmah to Geburah and b) Binah to Chesed (see Figure 7). These paths complete the “lightning flash”

on the Tree of Life, and, significantly for western occultists, dispense with the metaphysical Abyss between the Adeptus Exemptus grade and the Supernal Triad.

From there, we can move onto the attribution of the Hebrew alphabet to the 22 paths of the Tree of Life. Magicians logically place the letters in alphabetical order descending the tree according to the sequence of paths set forth by Kircher. However, this approach misses the spirit of practical Kabbalah.

Deriving from the root לְצַדִּיק (tradition), Kabbalah is an oral tradition. Students were given verbal instructions which were committed to memory and forbidden to be written down except for private working notes. The reason for this is not merely secrecy, but a deeper truth which appears with respect to the practical school, and which Weinstein calls "a linguistic tradition of knowledge of God through the Divine Names." (*Gates of Light*, p. xxiii). Why an oral tradition? Because the basis of practical Kabbalah is verbal.

The Jewish notion of words of power is familiar even to non-Jews, if only for the strict sanctions against speaking the sacred four-lettered name of God; some texts even go so far as to spell the word as "G-d." In addition, Kaplan's books on Jewish meditation show how prominent a role mantra plays in the Kabbalah. (1)

The earliest Kabbalistic text, the *Sepher Yetzirah*, deals with how the Hebrew alphabet is wrapped up in the creation of the universe, and its implications for magic are just as far-reaching as the tantric *Garland of Letters*. Consequently, the *Sepher Yetzirah* arranges the letters of the Hebrew on the Tree of Life not in alphabetical order, but according to their phonetic functions. Putting all this together, the practical Kabbalah is clearly based on speaking and intonation; yet books on magic devote little if any space to Hebrew pronunciation (uncertain though it may be).

More and more books are becoming available on the Kabbalah, both from occult retailers as well as traditional Jewish publishers. Thus magicians are just beginning to appreciate many facets of the Kabbalah which were previously unknown, including doctrines on reincarnation, ecstatic visions, meditation, mantra, mudra and even sex magic. The concept of *Shekinah*, the feminine aspect of divinity, has recently been touched on in this very magazine.

It is indeed a great time for a magician to be alive. Nevertheless, in the tradition of the best esoteric schools, Robinson warns:

"It should not be thought, however, that the process of writing down the oral Torah meant that the oral Torah had ceased to exist. Indeed for most Jews there remained ... room for aspects of the Torah which had not been 'published.' These continued to be the exclusive province of oral transmission, or, if written, were written in such a way as to be virtually unintelligible and hence in need of oral reinforcement and explanation." (p. xiv).

For readers who are interested in reading more, I would suggest beginning with Kaplan's translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah*, available from Weiser in both hardcover and paperback. Reading it will forever change the way you look at the Kabbalah.

And what does this mean for the student who has devoted years of study to the Golden Dawn system? Does the variant arrangement of the paths in Figure 7 and the phonetic attribution of the Hebrew letters on the paths as taught by one of the greatest Kabbalists of all time invalidate the Golden Dawn's teachings? What does it

say when adherents of a complex system like the Kabbalah can work very different configurations of the Tree of Life and nevertheless obtain remarkable success? As I first asked six months ago, "Does it really matter if you face east?" Or is faith the operative component in magic?

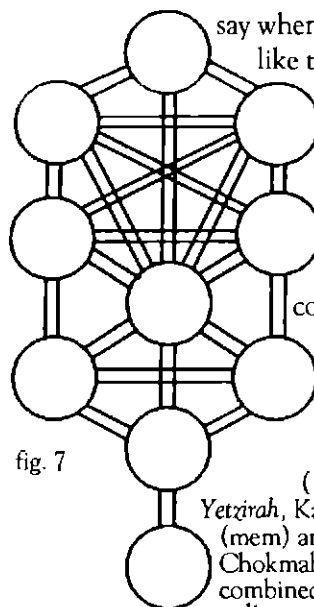


fig. 7

(1) In his translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah*, Kaplan explains that the letters מ (mem) and ש (shin) are attributed to Chokmah and Binah, respectively, and that combined, these letters form a mantra for oscillating between Chokmah and Binah consciousness. This mantra forms the word *shem* or *ha-shem*, meaning "The Name." The similarity between this mantra and the eastern hamsah/soham mantra (the "perpetual mantra" of respiration) is stunning.

**Postscript:** In my last article, I asked rhetorically, "Doesn't *The Book of the Law* mention an 11-pointed star?" It was a trick question. *Liber Al* mentions a five pointed star and features the star goddess Nuit, whose number is 11 (also a key number in the New Aeon magick taught by Crowley). Thus the analogy still holds. Apologies for any confusion.

# Balancing Act

by *Donna Stanford-Blake*

I feel like I am standing on top of a ball, balanced on the edge of a razor blade going downhill fast - juggling.

Sometimes the ball is on top of me and sometimes I drop the juggling act. Balance has not been a subtle, graceful act for me. It's work and it demands my concentration. If I look around for just a moment, I am apt to find myself in a heap - surrounded by the debris of my fall. You know; unkept promises, unpaid bills, dirty laundry, full moons unobserved, cobwebs on the altar. It's not a pretty sight.

After a recent tumble, I thought there must be a better way. True, most of the people I know struggle on occasion to keep the demands of life at a manageable level. But I notice a few who don't seem to be on the verge of a break-down every few months. And amazingly these people also have full lives. How do they do it?

Very consciously.

It is not chance or luck or a blessing of birth. No, balance is a learned talent. Available to all who want to achieve equilibrium. Which is good news. But why do we strive for balance? What about the value of chaos? Living in the moment?

Questions, questions.

First, let's consider the need for balance. Is it necessary for magick? Observe

the structure of the world. It is balanced: the seasons, night and day, birth and death. Gaia performs the quintessential balancing act by creating a viable environment for all of us. Look around at your world. The structure of a leaf, the shape of a tree, a honey comb, a spider web. The workings of an ant colony, a bee hive, the life in a garden. Life is a natural balancing act. Yes, sometimes things become unbalanced; floods, hurricanes, earthquakes. But even after such apparent chaos, equilibrium re-establishes itself as a new order forms. Such is life.

Magickal systems model themselves after the world's order. Earth spirituality, the Kabbala (Tree of Life), the planets (other worlds), even the human psyche. Structures of the natural world are used to map our spiritual journeys.

If balance is so natural, why do we need to learn it? The answer to this almost defies explanation. But consider - humans seem to need to learn everything. Even things that are basic instinctual inheritances for our fellow creatures such as walking, verbal communication, eating, even reproduction. In this context, the need to learn balance makes perfect sense. Maybe it seems unfair, but it is logical. Humans learn to manipulate their environment to survive. Think of it as part of our evolutionary process.

Practicing magick is in itself a statement to the universe that you will not take life lying down, but consciously shape your reality according to your Will. With this control comes responsibility and with responsibility comes the need for balance. Balance keeps the subtle dynamic tension between chaos and order, control and lack of control, responsibility and irresponsibility. We need it to survive and grow physically and spiritually. It is taking the evolutionary process a step further. This is the advantage of being human.

Unbalanced living creates unbalanced magick and, of course, the reverse holds true, too. All magick and no real life makes for a very strange person. Probably a very unhappy, confused, depressed individual. Variety is not only the spice of life, it is a necessity.

Think of someone you know (maybe even yourself!) who became so involved with one thing the rest of their life suffered. Maybe work, a relationship, drugs, alcohol, even spiritual pursuits. Anything done to excess causes one's life to lose that fine edge that makes life a joy to live and create.

Some imbalances may be brief and easily remedied, while others can actually threaten physical or psychological health. Just as we know to keep our tires, washing machines and diet balanced, we need to learn to keep our magickal and mundane life balanced.

How?

Well, just follow steps A through D on alternate Thursdays after the full moon and you've got it made. I wish it were that easy. People have been searching for balance since time began. The trick is that the point of balance changes, and it is never the same for any two people. Overwork for one person is a stimulating challenge for another. Ironically, the symbol for balance is a scale - yet balance can not be measured or weighed.

Where does that leave us? Often in a heap. As I percolated this article, before I actually put fingers to keyboard, the subject of balance came up in conversation a remarkable number of times. I listened to what I heard and observed from my best teachers, those wonderful people I see every day. From them I learned some key points.

First - balance is often a matter of perspective. Sometimes one's life seems pointless and chaotic. But in context with the rest of a person's life, it makes perfect sense. Or, at least balances out a prior bit of over-controlled behavior. The more I live, the more I am convinced that the reality of a balanced life may not be achieved until death - if then.

Secondly - judge not another's level of balance. Remember balance is a very individual thing. What appears to be an upswing for one person may actually be a stumble for another. I have my hands full just deciphering my own life pattern without trying to unravel someone else's! Of

course, asking for someone's perspective can be helpful. Just be sure you were asked, and be careful who answers.

Which brings me to the all important third point - balance is not a destination but a process. Oh. It is not a state you attain and stay in. Life is not static. So adjustments need to be made to just stay level. And isn't magick about the upward spiral? So the act of balance must be a constant part of life.

(Sigh.) This sounds too much like work!

Yet, dance is balance. Hopscotch, playing music, riding a horse, roller-blading - the list goes on. All enjoyable - all needing balance. Illustrating the wonderful yin and yang of life; work and play, spiritual and physical. There are always two sides and both are necessary for a full life. One cannot truly know joy unless one has known pain. A very true cliché.

So how do we attain balance (even briefly!)? Get to know yourself. Seems like that is a pat answer for all my questions. Hmmmm. Maybe there is a reason for that, you think?!

Listen to your body. How are you feeling? Tired, rested, happy, depressed - what? Look at your life - really look at each aspect. What do you do everyday? Do you see a connection? Do you have a focus? How is your level of discipline? Do you accept responsibility for your life? Everything is connected. Like delicately crafted clockwork. Touch one gear and it changes the balance of the whole - maybe even stopping movement all together.

Read what you have written in your journal. Whether it's personal or magickal or some combination, it will provide you with a relatively stable mirror of your life. I tend to stop journaling when I'm out of balance. This has become one of my little alarms alerting me to be mindful of my life. What is your pattern?

Every person has different needs and different rhythms. Discovering what these are empowers an individual to make choices in keeping with their uniqueness. The biggest mistake is to try to pattern your life after another's. My boss is a typical Type A (o.k. a unique Type A) personality. If I held myself up to her level of life, I would probably go insane. So I don't. I look to what I need to do for me. Do not feel guilty if you don't "do" as much as someone else. Instead look to how well and easily you are



accomplishing your goals. Do not measure your success against someone else's - use yourSelf as your yard stick. "Am I experiencing life the way I desire?" That is the question you need to answer.

And if the answer is "NO!" Take action - no one else can. Gently nudge your own gears and get that clockwork ticking again. Use your magick - or sleep in. Only you know what will ultimately work in the balance of your life.

Sometimes looking at your whole life as a pattern aids in considering balance. My life is quite hectic right now. But for years I led a quiet, relatively uneventful existence. It balances out. Look at your "good" days and "bad" days (or months or years). Is there a cycle - or does it seem lopsided? Consider what can be done to achieve a more balanced overall rhythm.

Practicing magick helps to work through balance problems remarkably well. I find the simple acts of setting temple and doing devotionals to be calming and focusing. The subtle clicks and whirs as my clockwork finds its own unique rhythm and balance almost disturbs my stillness at times. Almost. The peace in the regular discipline of practicing magick builds the very structure a balanced life rests on.

Celebrating the phases of the moon, solstices, equinoxes, cross-quarters - puts one in touch with the larger rhythms of the natural world. Getting more in tune with the larger cycles of balance helps to put our smaller cycles in perspective. We truly are only a small mirror of the greater organism of the Earth.

Through consciously created rituals, a person begins to create their own reality in keeping with their greater Will. Step by step, layer by layer, the beauty of a life unfolds. Like a rose. Gently crafted with an artist's loving hand, hewn from stubborn stone with strong tools, weathered smooth by winds seemingly out of control. Our lives all have these elements creating them. Yet, we ultimately have the choice. To struggle or learn to balance the magick of our lives.

O.K. Let me see. First daily temple, then work, the magazine, study group, weekly Temple, children, housework, love, parties, festivals, journaling... I'm up on the ball again balanced on the razor's edge, juggling - with a rose clenched firmly between my teeth.

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by Elie and friends

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**Earth is my Temple** is a refreshing addition to the growing list of earth religion music available to seekers. This tape fills a much-needed gap by bringing in old and new traditions of the Hebrew Tribes. The songs are beautiful and of good technical quality. Kudos to Elie and Friends for their gift of music and inspiration. Recommended.

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# LORE FROM THE WISE WOMEN

by Tereza Gollub

*Note: This column is intended for your reading pleasure and not intended to treat, diagnose or prescribe. It offers no advice of a medical nature, directly or indirectly. The information it contains is not to be considered as a substitute for medical advice or care from a licensed health care practitioner. The author and Mezlim are not responsible for any adverse effects resulting from the use of any procedure(s) and/or applications undertaken without prior approval of a physician.*

Walking through a field one day, I came across a tribe of stinging nettles. This plant is a favorite among many, as it is rich in iron and vitamin C and is a strong medicinal and nutritive ally. I approached the plants, which gave out a familiar "Bark! Bark!!". I had been partaking of this plant daily and I must admit I had intentions on this weedy patch. I was letting my mind drift to the health this plant had lent me, its value as a wild food, its beautiful emerald color in tea form... So as they stood there barking at me, I sent the message, friend. This is a plant to approach with caution, even on a good day. There's a trick to picking nettles without getting stung, so I walked over and petted a leaf, loving the interaction, loving the plant.

At first I thought I had been stung after all. The buzz that I felt coming up my arm was like a little electric shock. Suddenly I realized the plant was loving me back; this was a rare gift indeed. The pleased Nettle was gifting me with energy and understanding. She taught me about her true nature. Here was a plant which generated so

much energy she couldn't help but sting when touched carelessly. And even so, her sting is used in several parts of the world to reduce arthritic pain (urtication, after *Urtica Dioica* or stinging nettle). Even in drinking nettle tea, I had felt a bit of this potent zing.

I looked down at my finger. It was glowing with an intense green aura. I felt a bit like a little kid rubbing her socks over a carpet to make sparks and looking for someone to shock. This urge passed without incident as I realized I would probably encounter no other travellers in this New England backfield that day. As the mischief passed, I pulled this Nettle medicine up further into my being, to weave with my own essence and call upon as a wise helper when needed. Then I picked some leaves and expressed my gratitude for her sacrifice.

The alliance of this plant has never left me, and I have shared her gift with many loved ones. I learned a lot about the true natures of many plants, and how to respect their space. After the same fashion that one may get an image of taste from inhaling a scent, one may find when getting to know the Green Ones that their expressions are yet another familiar side to the way we may have sensed them when ingesting or otherwise utilizing their form. If you want a potent introduction, I suggest communication with an ornamental pepper plant.

We know some plants in their capacities as potent poisons. But what part of the plant is this poison coming from? How many times would one refine such extracts from this part of this plant? Perhaps another part may be medicinal, or even edible if approached in the proper manner (read: not as an isolated concentrate on a Petri dish). We all have our bad days. Many of the most medicinal plants carry this dual nature, as do many humans. Perhaps the secret is a healthy respect and understanding. As a good friend once told me, the plants have been simply used for so long, they may either acquiesce or harm us instantly (barring the possibility of ignoring us utterly). Treat a human being or

an animal in this fashion, and you may observe a similar temperament. (Note: Get to know Nettle with thick gloves on — her sting is POTENT. Nettles should be dried completely or cooked at least three minutes before exploring further.)

## THE ELDER TREE

In the beginning, there was a tree. A lone tree, a tree reaching outward and upward in a full arc. And a divine Being hovered over the tree, and descended down. And the Being brought the grace of Her realm down with Her, and bore down into the tree, down through bark, and branch, through pith and trunk, and lo, the Earth rose up to meet Her within the space of that tree, and there was joy, and the Being of above descended down into the roots, and strengthened them. And the Being touched Earth fully in the space below the roots, and sang Her pleasure upward, and up out of the branches flowed love, and strength, and the blessed flow of healing. And in this aura of love and sacredness, the branches put forth leaves, and blossomed sprays of white, and there was Spring, and there was Summer.

And the Being dwelt in the tree.

For lo, I am the Wood Mother of healing, and through me flows the radiant life-force of the feminine, the sacred prana of vitality. I birth softly the spark and potential of incarnate wellness, and through the gates of Death I carry the dying who know of my embrace. To those who would but recognize and respect me, I give freely of both worlds. To the female of this realm I bring balance in her womanness and womb, and to the male I lend the vision and the intuition of this feminine nature. I will be with you through bud and blossom, through berry and branch bare. For the seasons of your lives, I will be a comfort to you.

Do not forget.

And came from the blossoms berries of white and blue, and there was Autumn, and there was Winter.

## Description

Elder is of the family *Sambucus*, the common American variety being *Sambucus Canadensis*, the English *Sambucus Nigra*. Trees of the same tribe are found in different varieties on both continents, in fact throughout the world and especially in the more Northern climes. This is a

shrubby and low-growing tree, about three to twelve feet in height. Her common names are Elderberry, Sweet Elder, Pipe Tree, Bour Tree. Her pagan names are Lady Ellhorn, Eldrum, Grandmother, Frau Holle, Hildemoer, Hilda... Aeld is an old Saxon word for fire; the hollow branches of the tree apparently were used to blow air into a fire, hence the later name Eldrun or Eldrum and Fire Tree.

In spite of this name, the Elder is a tree often found growing close to water or damp ground. Leaves are toothed and lance shaped, the flowers tiny stars in large white clusters, in bloom from early to mid-summer. The dark-blue to purple berries emerge in mid-summer and ripen in fall. Elder falls under the planetary rulership of Venus, and is associated with Her in goddess aspect, as well as with Freya, as well as innumerable others throughout the world, stressing Virgin and Crone aspects depending upon the season.

## Elder Through The Ages

Funerary arrow heads in the shape of an Elder leaf have been found dating back to Old Stone Age times. In Megalithic long-barrow graves are found holes in the shape of an Elder leaf conjoining slabs of the burial chambers (1). Elder is the transition between the gates. She has also had a long association with the Goddess in all of her aspects. Her white flowers have been a symbol of the Virgin aspect since ancient times, and were often planted outside of temples. Elder is a tree long recognized as protective, and thought not only to harbor a feminine spirit (the Elder Mother, Elda Moer, Hylde Moer, Eldemere), but to offer safe harbor to witches on the lam (thus an association with spells of invisibility).

In her Crone aspect, Elder was also known as a tree to be respected, not only in honoring the dryad inhabitant, but also out of fear of retribution. In many parts of the world exist strong superstitions against cutting down the tree or burning it for firewood. A common myth (but one not worth testing) is that the spirit of the tree will hunt down and kill anyone brash enough to fell an Elder for firewood within three days. It is appropriate to approach her as a revered grandparent, modestly and with gratitude. An old English custom is to come before her with bent knee, bare head and folded arms, reciting: *Lady Ellhorn, give me some of thy wood, and I will give thee some of mine when it grows in the forest.* (2)

This is indeed a strong tree, a true elder, and one demanding respect. Every part of the tree may be used

medicinally, and some cosmetically, and has been called both "The poor man's medicine chest" and "Tree of Doom". The entire tree is of great medical benefit, yet she also bears hydrocyanic acid and if approached carelessly, will indeed poison. This duality is also seen in the strongly odiferous white flowers (Shakespeare referred to this tree as "the stinking Elder"), and the berries, in which exists a strong taste of bitter and sweet.

Elder branches were used to fashion pan-pipes, and it is interesting to note she is often found growing in profusion with wild grapes. The grapes in these places seem to evoke not only their heady Pan-aspect, but a subtle pulse of heart-current which is more yin in nature. The comingling of these two natures is well expressed in the image of a satyr playing his pipes to waken and call forth the dryads. Expression of these joined aspects in a deliberately intentioned musical scale is a mystery well worth uncovering. A powerful magical tool indeed!

After the rise of Christianity, the tree's association with death rites and ritual took on another form. There arose a common belief that Judas hung himself on an Elder, and there was even the tradition that Jesus was crucified on a cross of Elder wood. In the Middle Ages came the association of the tree with sorrow and calamity. It was believed that a witch inhabited the Elder and was considered unlucky, except in a few places where branches were placed around the home to ward off witches (especially on Beltane). In Russia she did remain a sacred tree, and was considered an aid to longevity. (3)

Elder still graces our jams, holiday wines, herb shelves and altars (she makes an exceptional wand). We are unbound by dogmatic superstition and free once again to utilize her gifts on all levels of existence. Now we may take surviving wisdom and lend our experience and intuition to furthering medical benefit. Now is the time to re-awaken old lore and use our magic to create new mythologies, and to pioneer our magical paths with the aid of a strong ally like the Elder.

## Application

If Elder is your ally, you have found a powerful and committed friend. Elder will travel with you with and without your body, and is most protective and sheltering, lending her intense blue aura to blend with your own. She is comfortable in several realms and through her is an easier access in and out, as well as a guide (it will take some time to


get used to the tree-style of guidance). She will also dream with you.

In a relationship, she will usually respond when called, and enhances psychic ability to a high and comfortable level. Elder will give her benefits of wellness on the subtle level by lending a boost to the life force, which may then be maintained inside the body or projected into ritual, tool, etc. As with any plant, a good rapport should be built up preceding any assisted work, as plants are initially very reserved with humans and one must build up trust to allow them to open up. This is especially important with this tree, as she is quite ancient and does demand respect.

Trees are often a pipeline to other realms, especially Earthen and Underworld realms. Elder exists on some higher realms and some abstract ones. I leave you to your own explorations.

The root of the Elder is very toxic and best left alone unless one has trained extensively. All parts of the Elder must be aged one year before use to avoid poisoning. The exceptions are the berries, which may be consumed in a ripe cooked state, and the flowers which are even more approachable.

The flowers of the tree channel the starry realms of the Being and have retained a symbol for us in their white star-shapes. They smell of purity and vision, and are most appropriate added to a cleansing bath, especially on New Moon or before scrying. An infusion may be added to the scrying bowl or used in ritual in this genre. They assist in work to break or repel negativity and carry blessings of the highest order. Their star-shape also indicates an association with the eyes, and the tea is useful internally and as a poultice for irritated eyes (add chickweed). The tea is also a time-honored remedy for colds and flu, and will induce sweating.



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Hang out with the berries awhile before you pick them. If you cannot get them wild, leave them on your altar for a time and hold one, just one, in your hand and really connect. Let your essence come up to meet the berry, then try drawing that essence back within yourself. Concentrate. Experiment. Focus. Relate. Hang out.

The berries retain psychic energy very, very well and are a good addition to an amulet. They can keep a high vibration for a long time and are protective when carried. They also carry the comforting feel of the Mother aspect, and nourish the body by providing iron. Like the flowers, they induce sweating, and also have a diuretic action in tea. They are balancing to the female reproductive system (as is the energy of the whole tree). Historically they ease the pain of rheumatism and will dye the hair black when boiled in wine.

Leaves of the Elder tree relate to her Crone aspect, as mentioned above. Ponder this mystery as you get on more familiar terms. The leaves infused in a fat or oil are a good ointment for bruises and may be added to salves and ointments of this type, as well as massage oil. They will also make a good compress for the same complaint. Wear torn leaves to repel insects or apply a strong infusion to exposed areas.

The aged outer bark and branches may also be infused in fat or used in a poultice for inflammation and stiffness. The bark has a historical use as a purgative, but is potentially TOXIC and not a good place to experiment. Children used to use the branches as blow-darts and were often poisoned inadvertently.

The branches may direct the flow of energy currents and lend their own energy when needed, making a wand of good use. This is the archetypal magician's wand and must be granted to you from the tree, after some deliberation and patience. Leaving a gift in return is most appropriate. I find the energies of different trees relating to different needs. Procuring the wand in varying cycles of the moon and seasons of the year will also affect its use. Dialogue. Discover.

The root of the tree is the Realm of the Crone and her winter dwelling. Respect. Avoid. Danger, Will Robinson.

## Giving Thanks

It's so basic that we usually forget. Plants give so

much to help us be comfortable. To acknowledge this is the beginning of a good rapport. The effectiveness of any plant material gathered is tripled by an understanding with its source. Gifting is appropriate not only when taking from the plant but when asking a boon, or just breaking the ice. Women often gift plants in their moontime but water makes a good gift when the environment is dry. Plants especially love song. Other traditional gifts include corn, tobacco, pieces of yourself such as hair, or anything given from the heart.

I leave you now with blessings on your entrance to this new dimension.

You are in good hands.

- (1) *The White Goddess*, Robert Graves, International Authors, 1948.
- (2) *A Modern Herbal*, Mrs. M. Grieve, Dover Publications, Inc., 1971.
- (3) *A Handbook of Native American Herbs*, Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1992.



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# THE DYNAMICS OF RITUAL

## Part II: "Training Wheels"

by Nikki Bado

In Part I of "The Dynamics of Ritual", I stressed the importance of learning the basic "rules of the road" in approaching NeoPagan magic and ritual. Among other things, this includes the idea of making a fundamental shift in the way we look at the world, transforming religion from a label to an activity, and transforming ritual from a static, repetitive experience to an intrinsically creative participation in the sacred. Another important aspect of the ground rules is acknowledging that magic is not just an "intellectual construct" which we can make up as we go along, and that taking responsibility for the consequences of our magical acts is an important part of the learning process.

**...a maturing process and a sharing of practice has come about through networking and through national and local pagan festivals and workshops, fostering more communication, trust, and openness among groups.**

In this chapter of "The Dynamics of Ritual," I now want to focus on the first of three essential components of effective ritual organization and performance which I have found helpful in my own practice: training, performative experience, and thoughtful construction of ritual.

My religious practice is Wicca, which was taught to me in "traditionalist" fashion over twenty years ago. Many positive changes have occurred within Wicca during that time. There are significantly more options today in the sense of

group diversity and accessibility. Additionally, a maturing process and a sharing of practice has come about through networking and through national and local pagan festivals and workshops, fostering more communication, trust, and openness among groups.

However, with the positive changes come some negative ones as well. While diversity and openness to new ritual forms and experimentation has become foregrounded, the idea of solid training and study has slipped into the background. The most effective ritual performance draws upon a balance between awareness of the creative and constructed nature of ritual praxis against a backdrop of folk traditions and beliefs that go back quite a long way in the human experience. Training, the first of the three components, addresses this balance.

Speaking about my own practice, training is something that begins as soon as a person says that he would like to study the Craft with me. On my part, this means organizing a syllabus or study plan which is more or less tailored to that student's familiarity with the subject matter, interests, and abilities. It is extremely useful to establish a reading list of books on various subjects: comparative mythology, use of herbs, plant and tree identification, divination systems, meditation, healing techniques, magical systems, seasonal rites and festivals, and, of course, all the "major" books on the Craft. Using a computer, such a list can be easily updated and broken down into categories and subgroups.

Organizing these materials into a coherent format that informs but does not overwhelm students is admittedly a tricky process, especially when dealing with students on different levels of experience or training. Sometimes it is helpful to have students work together on projects, reading different materials and making reports or presentations to the group. This has the effect of sharing the work and maximizing the discussion while helping students begin to learn about working

together, eventually an important part of group dynamics within the Circle.

Of course, all this presupposes that I myself have already read and digested these materials in order to be able to discuss them, so it's often a learning process for the teacher as well as the student.

In addition to studying the more "theoretical" aspects of the Craft, students must work on a variety of practical or applied projects as well. For example, I assign every student daily meditation exercises, which must be written up in a journal or notebook. Each entry must have the date; time of meditation; Moon sign; whether the Moon is waxing, full, or waning; and any other special conditions which may affect meditation — for example, health or stress level. After the meditation is completed, students briefly note the success or failure of the exercise, any meaningful thoughts or visions, interruptions, or other pertinent information.

This forms a new and very useful habit: students progress from keeping meditation journals to keeping separate divination journals, and eventually keeping journals about the rituals they will create and perform. A set of magical diaries helps you develop your own unique magical and ritual style by keeping track of what works and doesn't work for you magically.

Actually, keeping a magical journal is a good idea no matter how practiced you have become in the Craft. Speaking from personal experience, there have been times I wished I had written down the details of a particular ritual carefully for future reference, or made note of that "perfect chant" when called upon to perform a similar circle several months or years later. If you don't want to make up your own magical journal/notebook, the one created by Donald Kraig works just fine as a basic template.

In meditation, students start with basic breathing and relaxation. Often this sounds a lot easier than it actually is, and it is not surprising when students have initial difficulties establishing the breathing rhythm or really relaxing their bodies. With patience and practice, this stage can usually be worked through so that there is a measurable difference in the student's pulse rate before and during the relaxation technique. This is a crucial technique to master, and students do not generally progress to other meditation

techniques until this one is down cold.

Once the basic technique is mastered, students practice relaxation in different body postures and under widely different circumstances — for example, relaxing before taking an exam to clear the mind, or relaxing before a medical procedure to lessen pain. Students tend to make rapid progress at this point, so the daily meditation exercise can now shift to a different focus. Examples of other kinds of meditation that easily come to mind include concentration, image visualization and control, color meditation, learning the Solar Cross, working with the four elements, and so forth, depending on the design of your syllabus.

Occasionally, students will reach a real impasse on some form of meditative exercise. If patience and persistence don't seem to be working, you might try using "misdirection" as a strategy. A breakthrough may be achieved by having students work on something else. For example, say a student

insists that he absolutely cannot see colors when assigned to do a color visualization. Instead, have him work on images of the four directions. Soon, he'll be seeing a dusky mauve twilight and a white sail boat in a blue sea with a red starfish — and, wow, before

you know it — realize that he just saw colors when he absolutely could not before.

Of more serious importance in even early stages of meditation is the encounter with the darker sides of ourselves. All the "little monsters" that we don't even want to face, let alone deal with — guilt, anger, fear, jealousy, feelings of failure, grief, and so forth — tend to get buried deep down and locked away in our psyches where they tend to thrive and grow in direct proportion to our not wanting to deal with them. It's really not hard to understand how a normal human emotion like anger can grow into a terrifying fire-breathing dragon chained insecurely behind a forbidden door.

Unfortunately, meditation is often the key that unlocks that door. Facing who you are is seldom easy, usually a bit tricky, and occasionally dangerous when dealing with very serious psychological problems. This can be frustrating, to say the least, for both student and teacher. I am not a trained psychologist and have learned (the hard way) when I'm just not capable of helping someone with his problems.

Ultimately, it may even be wisest to suspend magical training and recommend professional counseling in dealing with severe emotional trauma or psycho-physical disorders.

On the lighter side, in addition to reading, meditating, and slaying the occasional dragon, students should have FUN. There are many projects which students can undertake that produce something tangible as a result, involve a bit of legwork or research, and are actually fun to do. Making an herbal sachet, a magical house protection device, or a feathered "air tool" are some good examples. They all involve learning a little about how magical correspondences, elements, colors, herbs, planetary aspects, and so forth work together. And they involve working with your hands to create something that you can use — transforming feathers and bits of cloth, iron filings and herbs, crystals and colored beads, scented oils and incense into something magical and special. These skills will translate later on into making formal ritual tools and empowering them with specific purpose.

These projects can build group identity when done together. Or at least provide an excuse to laugh a lot in addition to material for inside jokes for years to come. Peyote stitch. Say no more.

Divination is also an important, and enjoyable, side of training. Here I tend to let students find their own preferences: tarot, runes, astrology — all are quite useful and interesting tools of magic. There are hundreds of beautiful tarot card decks, and students can indulge their own artistic and magical sensibility in choosing one or a dozen to work with. Personally, I hate the Waite deck — can't stand the colors — but some of my colleagues have used that as a beginning deck in order to have one that everyone can learn together. You might want to choose a common deck for students to practice with until they build some confidence in tarot divination. Runes, of course, can be made out of wood, ceramics, or stone, and so provide a potentially "fun project" as well as a system of divination. Remember to have students keep a divination journal.

Finally, in my practice of Wicca, student training includes introduction to Circle work. This is admittedly a

departure from the way I was taught some years ago. My own practice of Wicca has changed considerably since I first wore the white cord of a new initiate. There is a great deal more emphasis on participation in every aspect of ritual making, from creating the sacred space to invoking the Gods. Students are introduced to aspects of Circle work gradually, participating in Sabbats, learning about the elements and the Watchtowers, how to breathe correctly and use the magical voice when invoking them in the Solar Cross, and becoming familiar with the different ritual gestures and their movement of energy throughout the Circle.

Ideally, all the different facets of student training will combine with their experiences in the Circle to create a growing understanding of and familiarity with the "realm between the worlds" where Wiccans practice their magic.

This combination of training and experience, or "ritual immersion" eventually is what makes it possible for gestures, acts, and stories to transform from the mundane to the magical, from the secular to the sacred. In the next chapter of "Ritual Dynamics." I will explore the importance of performative experience in the creation of effective ritual practice.

**Ideally, all the different facets of student training will combine with their experiences in the Circle to create a growing understanding of and familiarity with the "realm between the worlds" ...**

*Nikki Bado has been a practitioner and teacher of Traditionalist Wicca for over twenty years. Much of her work has been presented in an academic context before such groups as the American Academy of Religion and the American Folklore Society. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in folklore and religious studies at The Ohio State University. Those who wish to correspond with her by electronic mail may reach her at [nbado@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu](mailto:nbado@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu).*

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# LETTERS

Dear folks at Mezzim:

I feel compelled to tell you exactly how I feel about the Beltane issue: Why did you lower yourselves?

There are enough magazines out there full of the demented crap this issue was full of - they're called pornographic magazines. I realize your readers send these articles, but why print a whole issue full of them? One lurid, eerie confession after another? You give space to at least one of these articles in every issue. This issue landed in my trash after 15 minutes - there isn't any other response to the disgust it evoked in me. I felt soiled by reading it and would no longer have it in my house.

My biggest complaint about the Pagan community is that it is full of people who use it as a vehicle for their sexual proclivities. I'm not judging those proclivities - I'm saying this: You folks have somewhere else to go! Leave us out of it! I'm sick of seeing spirituality used to justify perversion, cruelty and insanity. With few exceptions, this is the first thing most new seekers get hit with when they explore the Pagan community. No wonder so many give up!

The only things I saved from this issue were the ever-wonderful "Moon-Puppies" cartoons by Catherine Cartwright-Jones. Yes, you people are going to an awful lot of trouble to get laid!!!

Deianera

---

Dear Editors:

I would like to reply if I may to the letter from Deianera in Vol. 6 Issue 1 of Mezzim. In this letter she states that "Children should not, under any circumstances, be taught or allowed to practice magick under any circumstances whatsoever".

While the idea of children wielding significant power in their immature state would seem an obvious recipe for disaster, I am afraid that I must disagree with the finality in the wording in the above statement. Considering the degree to which magick plays a role in the lives of all children, I think the real issue is one of responsibility.

When a child wishes on a star, she is performing a simple wish spell. The fact that 'mundane' children will not recognize this consciously is irrelevant. We all tend to teach

our beliefs to our children to some extent. Would Deianera suggest to us that our children should not take part in celebratory rituals? And if we restrict them only to celebrations, aren't we still responsible for teaching them what lies behind the concepts and symbolism?

My daughter understands reincarnation. She has also joined me in simple candle burning rituals which amount to basic meditation. I see nothing wrong with this. On the other hand, I referred to a friend in my article in the 'Children' issue who took his young daughter to a Gnostic Mass. Personally, I think it was totally inappropriate for him to do so, but it isn't my place to tell him how to behave. The ritual bored the child, as I would expect. Still, no real harm was done. My step-daughter has been allowed to take part as the "Sun Child" in our annual Yule ritual and has participated in psychometry exercises. What is wrong with that?

Children can be taught the sort of simple magics that children are prone to in any case with no harm. The difference in 'our' children is that we can teach them magical responsibility.

I have taught my daughter the concept behind my favourite saying, "Be careful what you wish for, you may get it!" I think it's a good lesson for a child. However, I think that sigil magic is going to wait for a few more years.

Jaq D. Hawkins

---

Dear Editor,

As usual, the most recent issue of MEZZIM has pushed a lot of "hot" buttons for a number of people. For a supposedly open and accepting community (the pagan one, that is), many of us can be very closed and rejecting when it comes to core issues like sex.

The problem, as I see it, rests in the fact that the mainstream culture attaches pejorative definitions to specific labels. These labels, when seen/read/used, appear to trigger the latent negativity programmed into their definitions and cause the observer/reader/user to enter into an irrational, judgmental state of mind. This, in turn, leads to thoughts, statements and actions which have little bearing on what is actually going on, and are much more indicative (to the outside observer) of the internal/emotional landscape of the respondent.

Personally, I'm tired of these labels. Labels are used to divide people. Heterosexuals don't like Homosexuals. Lesbians don't like Men. No one likes Bisexuals (too kinky for straights, not specific enough for gays). Players in SM scenes are subjected to a whole range of judgmental values

and related terms. And so on, and so on, and so on.

What ever happened to that mythical "Holy Grail" — the open mind? Sure, most magickal traditions preach tolerance and acceptance — "do what you will as long as it harms no one" — but I'm not talking about tolerance and acceptance (which, by the way, I don't see as much actually practiced as preached about when it comes right down to it). I'm talking about the specific cultivation of an open mind, an inquiring mind, a learning mind.

Where has plain, old-fashioned curiosity gotten too? Doesn't anyone want to even try to understand how a transsexual, a transvestite, a player in an SM scene thinks and feels? Doesn't anyone want to know what types of experiences and learnings they gain from their chosen roles in this life?

I am not a transsexual, but I find them fascinating to talk to because they have views and interpretations of the world that I might never have thought of on my own. I have never participated in an SM scene, but I have been to SM and B&D conventions because there is something happening there that I don't understand; and, generally, when I don't understand something, I find that I want to know more about it. I have hung out with transvestites and marveled at their clothes and at the gender specific nuances that they bring to conscious awareness for me.

When I was younger I travelled a lot and lived in a number of other countries. To see my own country through the eyes of another culture was to experience my own culture in entirely new and different ways. It gave me an appreciation for both its strengths and its weaknesses.

What all these ways of looking at the world of sex and gender provide are doorways to new and deeper understandings of our own sexuality and gender positioning — and isn't the path to true knowledge all about a deeper knowledge of self? I am a sexual being. I am not a label. I don't fit into a box. If it feels good (and harms no one — including myself), then why not do it? Experiment, explore, inquire. Get out the WD-40 and blast those rusted hinges on that closed box in your mind!

Gender programming is at the very core of self and culture. If we are to fully realize our true potential as human beings, we must free ourselves from the shackles of such programming. How better than to learn from those who have so kindly blazed trails for the rest of us to follow?

Keep up the good Work.

Tath Zal

To The Editor "Mezlim",  
N'Chi, USA

Dear Sir,

As an English, Gardenarian Witch I was interested by the article in your Beltane 1995 issue by Donald Michael Kraig entitled "Sex, Spells and Magic".

As Mr. Kraig defines himself in his introduction to the article as "a Wiccan" I am sure that he is familiar with the use of the scourge within the Gardnerian Tradition, although I appreciate that practises in America may well vary considerably from those here in England. I do not doubt that he is also familiar with the long history of scourging and flagellation throughout the history of religion and with the fact that most Gardnerians accept use of the scourge based on a passage from the piece of ritual prose generally referred to as "The Charge of the Goddess" which originated in part at least, from Leyland's study of Mediterranean Witchcraft "Aradia — the Gospel of the Witches."

Although many are inclined to dismiss the use of the scourge because of this apparently modern interpretation, there is a body of thought that considers the possibility of the scourge having had a much earlier history with the English Craft and what I found most interesting in Mr. Kraig's article is that the "ritual" he describes could easily have been the sort of use to which many consider to have been the origins of the more symbolic, modern use to which the scourge is put.

This being the case, I feel that the credibility of his article is diminished somewhat by his linking of the trance inducing potential of the scourge as an aid to ritual and magic to sado-masochism and his use of S & M terminology which can only serve to confirm in the eyes of the general public that the occult in general and Witchcraft in particular are all about fulfilling ones more degenerate sexual fantasies rather than practising what is, here in England at least, a deeply spiritual and meaningful religio/magical system.

Presented in a less sensational and lasciviously sexual manner, this article might have prompted serious interest and discussion. As it stands, it does the Craft no service at all. Given the otherwise serious nature of the matter at hand, I feel that it is a shame that a writer of Mr. Kraig's standing (or so I am told by my American Wife) should have felt it necessary to reduce the subject to little short of a question of sexual titillation.

Yours Sincerely,

James Pengelly

# TAROT ANYONE?

by Raymond L. Beck

It recently came to my attention that a tarot card reader in the city of Burbank, Illinois, was threatened with prosecution. There is an ordinance in her South Suburban town which sought to regulate spirit mediumship. This concerned me and I decided to look into the matter.

The ordinance reads:

"Any person or persons who shall obtain any money or property from another by fraudulent devices and practices in the name of, or by means of spirit mediumship, palmistry, card reading, astrology, seership, or like crafty science, or fortune telling of any kind, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor ..."

I was a little surprised to see an ordinance like this in these days and times. I read it several times, and could not decide whether it was declaring spiritual and clairvoyant activities to be fraudulent, or merely regulating the fraudulent administration of such services. I am a lawyer, and when I am not certain what a law means I research the matter.

Chicago, Schaumburg, and Burbank, all have virtually the same ordinance. There are also many other municipalities in Illinois, as well as all across the country, that regulate fortunetelling. This legislative masterpiece was evidently modeled after the Chicago Municipal Code. It turns out that this ordinance has been interpreted several different times by Illinois courts. There are many constitutional questions regarding this ordinance that have never been directly addressed. Ordinances regulating fortunetelling potentially implicate three different freedoms under the First Amendment of the United States' Constitution: free speech, the free exercise of religion, and the improper establishment of religion.

The first Illinois decision on this ordinance was People v. Payne, a 1911 appellate court case. The court ruled that this ordinance was regulating fraud. The only

allegation of fraud in Payne was that the defendant pretended that he would hold and did hold communication with departed spirits. The court determined that this was not sufficient to sustain a complaint.

People v. Westergren, a 1912 appellate court case, also addressed this ordinance. An undercover police officer went to the defendant for a reading, pretending that he had lost a brother. He testified that the defendant was mistaken about this and had said other things which were not truthful. The court reversed the conviction, ruling that fraud was not proven. The policeman did not believe or rely upon the defendant's statements, and was not deceived or defrauded thereby. The court also rejected the city's argument that these practices were fraudulent in and of themselves. It declared that the honest practice of the activities named in the ordinance, without fraudulent means, tricks or devices, cannot be held criminal, without stating why this was the case.

This is still a viable ordinance. It remains on the books at least in Chicago, there is the threatened prosecution in Burbank, and there is a recent Illinois case on it as well. The Village of Schaumburg v. Petke, a 1978 appellate court case, followed the two earlier cases. The court reversed the conviction of a tarot card reader. It ruled that the practices named in the ordinance were not fraudulent *per se*, and that in order to prove a violation of the ordinance, a separate act of fraud must be committed in connection with the performance of one of the practices. There was no proof of fraud there.

All three courts ruled that fraud was the essential element of this offense. Fraud is the material misrepresentation of a known fact, with the intent to deceive, which does in fact deceive the victim. Fortunetelling does not typically deal with known facts; it usually entails predictions or projections about the future. Further, when performed by a reputable practitioner there would be no intent to deceive. Consequently, fortunetelling, without more, cannot sustain a fraud conviction.

None of these cases analyzed the key first amendment issues potentially implicated. Courts do not decide cases on constitutional grounds when there is an alternative resolution available. Fraud, which is not a constitutional matter, provided the basis for these decisions.

I discuss the constitutional issues here because fundamental rights are potentially at stake. While I analyze a local ordinance, much of this discussion applies to other laws around the country that regulate or prohibit fortunetelling. Free speech under the first amendment is

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concerned with the content of communication and with the free flow of ideas. This ordinance does not infringe on free speech because it regulates fraud, which is not protected speech. But that is not the case when an ordinance regulates fortunetelling itself.

A church and its minister sued to enjoin the enforcement of an ordinance in Azusa, California that banned fortunetelling. The California Supreme Court in a 1985 case, Spiritual Psychic Science Church of Truth v. City of Azusa, ruled that the ordinance was unconstitutional. Fortunetelling was held to be protected speech under the state's constitution. Evidently spiritual and palm readings were given at the church.

In Marks v. City of Roseburg, a 1983 appellate court case from Oregon, the trial court enjoined the defendant from performing palmistry which was banned by a city ordinance. The appellate court dissolved the injunction, and ruled that the ordinance violated Oregon's constitution since it interfered with the content of speech. These two cases seem correctly decided to me, though courts do disagree on this matter.

I believe ordinances regulating fortunetelling also violate the free exercise of religion clause. The prevailing legal standard for freedom of religion cases disallows governmental measures that are specifically directed at religious practices, as distinguished from those that are of general application and that only incidentally burden religious activity. While this ordinance may only regulate the fraudulent administration of fortunetelling, and does not infringe on protected speech, it is specifically directed at religious practices nonetheless, improperly isolating certain types of spiritual activities. It does not have a secular or general application. It is constitutionally suspect.

Once it is determined that a law is not of general application, as this one likely is not, then the inquiry becomes whether the beliefs and practices in question merit constitutional protection. Freedom of religion must be analyzed from the believer's perspective, and be defined broadly enough to encompass the diversity of faiths. Excessive judicial inquiry into religious beliefs, may itself, constrain religious liberty. Under the rule established by the U.S. Supreme Court in U.S. v. Ballard, a 1944 case, courts may scrutinize the sincerity of religious beliefs, but not their validity, and they may not inquire into or decide what constitutes a religion or whether particular beliefs or practices qualify as religious. This approach protects religious/spiritual diversity. (I consider those terms to be synonymous in this context.)

Tarot and rune readers, psychics, etc., often use objects of divination to access spirituality, whether the individual's spirit, or higher powers. These practices are of or relating to spirit. They tell us about our higher selves, or our spirit, and mediums, channelers, and others may also actually be invoking spirits to reveal information. These practices clearly are or can be spiritual, and courts cannot question whether they qualify for constitutional protection as religious practices under Ballard, if the practitioners are sincere in their belief as to the religious or spiritual nature of their activities. Spiritual practices should not be jeopardized by a city ordinance.

This ordinance also has at least an indirectly coercive effect on psychic and spiritual practitioners. They practice at the risk of being prosecuted. They are inappropriately targeted by this ordinance, and they are also erroneously prosecuted for merely performing readings, as you can see from the case law.

There is a less restrictive alternative available to achieve a city's purported objective of protecting a naive public from deceptive practices. The city can simply confine its regulation to fraud in all its forms. Banning fortunetelling would not likely be constitutional. And an ordinance that regulates the fraudulent rendering of fortunetelling, as this ordinance has been interpreted, may also be unconstitutional, but is unnecessary in any event because fraud is already illegal.

This ordinance might also violate the establishment of religion clause of the first amendment. It reflects a Judeo-Christian morality. Its premise is that Christianity is correct, and that new age, or non-Christian, Wicca, or pagan beliefs, such as spiritual and psychic readings, are fraudulent, evil, or the work of the devil. Christianity contends that god is outside us to be worshipped and prayed to. Spiritual practices, psychic readings, oracles, and articles of divination, such as those named under this ordinance, can help us to empower ourselves. They can shift power from without, as under the Piscean Age, to within under the Aquarian Age.

The government has no business establishing preferences amongst religions. Our founding fathers came to this country to escape religious persecution. It would be equally improper if this ordinance were to state that it was illegal to fraudulently advise people based upon the bible, (rather than by using a "crafty science"). Wouldn't that be doing the same thing that this ordinance does? But it is unlikely you would ever see that ordinance because there is an entrenched Christian majority, and Christianity, or the god without, has been silently established as the state's religion.

# REVIEWS

## Hidden Waters/Sacred Ground

### Return

by Sophia

On Compact Disc From  
Hidden Waters Sound Sanctuary  
P.O. Box 1207  
Carmel Valley, CA 93924

reviewed by Donna Stanford-Blake

Sophia recorded *Hidden Waters/ Sacred Ground* seven years ago in 1986. Re-released in 1994 on CD, the sound and inspiration remains fresh. Sophia's pure crystalline voice enhanced by inspired arrangements and instrumentation bring to life sacred chants from around the world.

Divided into two parts - the first side of *Sacred Ground* features three traditional chants and one original: "Sweet Surrender" a traditional birthing chant, "Charana Kamara Bundu Hari Dai" a Bengali devotional chant, "The Earth Mother" a traditional Lakota chant, and completing the side "Sacred Ground Round" by Sophia herself. If you think these chants bear any resemblance to those sung around the bonfire, well, no, sorry. These professionally mixed and recorded masterpieces send the listener to an altered place where not only the ground is sacred but the very air stirs with spirit.

The second side consists entirely of an original

composition by Sophia accompanied by Dallas Smith on bamboo flute. The chant consists of five lines repeated in an almost unending number of variations for over twenty-three minutes. The resulting piece showcases Sophia's many vocal talents in a way that intrigues and entrances the listener. Beautiful and compelling.

*Hidden Water/Sacred Ground*, firmly based in earth spirituality, is definitely an impressive contribution to the realm of pagan music - but *Return*, Sophia's latest release, shows the difference six years makes. Dedicated to the return of the goddess, the songs range from all traditions of the world, again touching on Native American, Indian, as well as Jewish, Hawaiian, and her own personal tributes to the many forms of the goddess.

The instrumentation and vocal arrangements are more complex and varied. The credits list many more people. Raphael is back on keyboards, joined by Ian Dogole playing quite a variety of percussion - from African talking drums to Udu. Alex Murzyn adds an expressive soprano sax. A departure from *Hidden Waters* is the addition of vocal support - most notably from Jai Uttal and Bhagavan Das. Other artists include Steve Gurn - bansuri flutes, Jim Hurley - violin, Warren Dennis Kahn - cymbals, Jeffery Gordon - tablas, and Daniel Paul - tamboura (among others).

Six songs ranging from the title cut "Return" - a mere five minutes - to the marathon "Anya" clocking in at over sixteen and a half minutes fill the CD. If I must pick a favorite it would be "Anya", Sophia's tribute to Annie Sprinkle. Yet, I am moved by "Shekhinah Shakti" with its multi-cultural forms of the goddess. Actually "Prayer for the Warriors" accomplishes Sophia's desire to bridge the East and the West with its 300 year old Sanskrit chant. And "Body of the Goddess/I Am" brings the first side together in a "crescendo of transcendent awareness and celestial sound". "Laxshmi", with its simple words, evokes the goddess of

### Writer's Guidelines

Are you interested in writing for Mezzim? We are seeking submissions of articles, artwork and photography in a Magickal vein. See page 52 for upcoming issue themes.

Articles may range in length from 500 to 4500 words, or more. All submissions should be typed, black ink on white paper. Please enclose a cover letter which includes your contact information and the name under which you wish to be published. We request that we be informed if your submission has been printed previously in another magazine, or if it is being simultaneously submitted to any other publisher. Submissions on 3.5" Macintosh compatible diskettes are GREATLY appreciated. Please use text file format.

abundance, love and beauty in all who listen. A favorite?  
The exquisite combination of all six.

Intricate weavings of instruments and voice becomes a many layered tapestry of pure enjoyment. Several listenings are needed to catch the many nuances and subtle shadings woven throughout each song. Evident from the first note, though, is Sophia's unique and superb skill at creating the ambience of the goddess in all her forms. She evokes Her in each rhythm and note. Simply superb.

I listen to both CD's frequently and only grow to admire Sophia's talent more. Highly recommended!

## **Cults of the Shadow**

by **Kenneth Grant**

from SKOOB BOOKS PUBLISHING

11A-17 Sicilian Avenue

Southampton Row

London WC1A 2QH

United Kingdom

reviewed by Lylah Shokorah

Kenneth Grant is the Head of the Typhonian tradition of the OTO (I guess that kind of makes him the Head of the Serpent). Living a reclusive life in England, with his wife Steffi, he has managed to produce some of the most popular and powerful magickal writings of the last several decades. In this, if in nothing else, he seems to be the most valid hier to the throne of Thelema, vacated by Aleister Crowley's death in 1947.

First published in 1975, *Cults of the Shadow* completes a trilogy of books, which includes *The Magickal Revival*, and *The Hidden God* (both re-issued and revised by SKOOB, 1991 & 1992). *Cults of the Shadow* has been a much sought after book by Thelemites and eclectic magickal practitioners around the world. This popularity is due, at least in part, to the vast quantity of information and speculation put forward in its pages. Pound for pound, it's one of the better information investments in today's magickal marketplace.

*Cults of the Shadow* explores the notorious Left Hand Path in many of its guises. From historical times (the Ophidian Traditions of Africa, the Draconian Cults of ancient Egypt, and the Tantric Systems of India and the Far

East) to the modern day (Aleister Crowley's Cult of the Beast, Austin Osman Spare, Charles Stanfield Jones, and Michael Bertiaux, with his Cult of the Black Snake), Grant pursues the essential elements of what most of the world has come to know as "Black Magick".

Grant explains that "this path has been shunned and kept out of sight because it involves a use of sexual energies as a means of awakening the Serpent Power or Fire Snake, the key to Cosmic Consciousness, and also of controlling and directing the occult forces of the sub-conscious mind, the reservoir of infinite knowledge.

"The generally more enlightened approach to these matters in the present post-Christian age has made possible the publication of these 'occult secrets' which, for nearly 2,000 years have been anathematized on account of their psycho-sexual nature."

For the most part, *Cults of the Shadow* is just what it appears to be: A fairly comprehensive survey of the various manifestations of humanities' longstanding urge to explore the outer reaches of consciousness through the avenue of our own awakened energetic Self. It avoids falling into the trap, sprung so many times by books that have attempted to follow its lead, of becoming a grandiose "Kama Sutra for Magicians", offering sexual titillation in lieu of substance.

However, Grant doesn't shy away from using gematria to determine the "true meaning" of the terms he uses, and, while the subjective "truth" is found only in the doing of it, his objective veracity is sometimes questionable.

This is not to say that *Cults of the Shadow* is not a valuable and effective addition to your magickal library. It still contains more basic information about its subject, in a more accessible form, than any other book I am familiar with. But, like everything else, this must also be taken with a grain of salt. We do not know, and cannot verify much of what we believe to be "true", even in an historical sense. Neither can we know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, just how the human experiment works until we explore it for ourselves.

*Cults of the Shadow* is not meant to serve as a how-to manual of sexual magicks, but as a treatise on the essential philosophies and manifestations of this most fundamental current of Magick. In this it is successful.

# IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **MEZLIM**

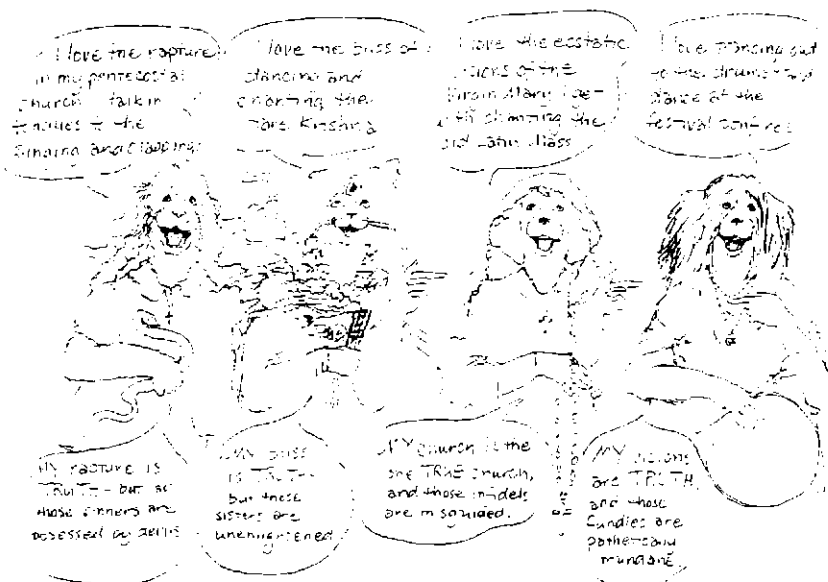
## *The Bard: Magickal Myths and Legends*

Hedge teachers, storytellers, minstrels and mountebanks have been responsible for keeping our oral traditions alive until we developed the technology and literacy rate to pass them along in printed form. Much of this traditional lore has been lost, but some remains. Now is the time for you to look into your repertoire for some not-quite-forgotten tale to share around our conceptual bardic circle.

The Samhain '95 issue of **MEZLIM** will feature Cliff Questel of Chicago as guest Art Director. (Thank you, Cliff!) Due to the time lag in working between Chicago and Cincinnati, we will need to begin production for this issue even before Lughnasadh, so the deadline for all art, articles, advertising, and such for the Samhain issue was set for June 1st. ...Things were a bit slow arriving. SO! If you would still like to get something in for this issue, please send them as soon as humanly possible, and we will see what we can do about getting them in.

We are currently seeking submissions of articles, artwork, photography, rituals and prose on this topic. For more information, see Writer's Guidelines on page 50.

The theme for the Imbolc 1996 issue will be:  
*The Underworld: Into the Darkness Below* Deadline: Dec. 1, 1995.



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