

True Will

An essay fully developing and analysing the Thelemic concept of “True Will,” contrasting it against some alternative definitions, and giving an indication of the nature of the path to its discovery.

by

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WILL is, clearly, *the* fundamental concept of Thelema. It is what the Greek word $\Theta\epsilon\lambda\eta\mu\alpha$ literally means, and it figures in all three of the core statements of Thelemic conduct:

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.¹
So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will.²
There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.³

as well as in:

For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.⁴

Love, naturally, is the second of the two fundamental concepts of Thelema, but as we know from AL I, 57, it must be “under will,” and subordinate to it. As Crowley puts it in *Liber II*, “Love is as it were a by-product of that Will; it does not contradict or supersede that Will; and if apparent contradiction should arise in any crisis, it is the Will that will guide us aright.”

It would behoove us, therefore, to give some thought as to what this “will” of *The Book of the Law* actually *is*. We can begin by returning to *Liber II* and examining what the “Message of the Master Therion” really says:

Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will. (2) Do that Will with (a) one-pointedness, (b) detachment, (c) peace.

¹AL I, 40

²AL I, 42

³AL III, 60

⁴AL I, 44

From this statement, we can identify some of the characteristics that this particular idea of “Will”⁵ (and there are other ideas which are both useful and instructive) must possess. On a basic level, whatever this particular idea of Will is, it clearly must be possible to do *something else*; that is to say any definitions of Will which entail all actions soever being in accordance with it do not fit this statement. Further, from the first injunction, whatever this particular idea of Will is, it clearly must be possible — at least in theory — for an individual to “find out what” it is; that is to say it must be something relatively *definite*, and reasonably *knowable*.

These observations are confirmed by *The Book of the Law* itself. The very fact that the reader is exhorted to “Do what [he] wilt,” and that he is told he has “no right but to do [his] will” implies directly that it is possible to do something else, and the statements in their entirety would have no discernible meaning if it were not possible for the individual to discover what his Will is.

With these characteristics in mind, we can begin to speculate in some more detail as to what the nature of this Will actually is. The most obvious place to start is the dictionary, and American Heritage defines “will” as:

The mental faculty by which one deliberately chooses or decides upon a course of action.

This is the most commonplace usage of the term, that an action is in accordance with will if it is *freely chosen*. Upon closer examination, we instantly run into difficulties with this usage. The use of the term “*deliberately chooses*” implies that we should exclude from our definition of “willed acts” those which are instinctive, habitual, impulsive or otherwise *involuntary*, which would exclude an awful lots of acts, including basic bodily functions such as breathing and “automatic” practised responses; under this definition, a strict reading of AL I, 42 would suggest we have “no right” to perform these actions.⁶ It also implies we should exclude any acts which are *forced*, which sounds obvious enough, but is in fact not quite so. When we walk, for instance, we are “forced” by the law of gravity to do this only on the ground, and not up into the air, but it would seem odd to conclude that walking is therefore not a willed act. Furthermore, it is quite possible

⁵Throughout this essay we will capitalise the first letter of “Will” when referring to the Thelemic concept, to distinguish it from more mundane and common interpretations of the word. *The Book of the Law* itself does not do this, neither does it at any time employ the term “True Will”.

⁶Although it’s always possible to argue that we don’t *need* such a right in order to act; “unwilled” acts are not actually *forbidden* by *The Book of the Law*.

to deliberately choose to perform some very silly and self-destructive acts which we would intuitively want to exclude from our definition, although there is no *a priori* reason why such acts must necessarily fall outside of the scope of the usage in *The Book of the Law*; if “pure will . . . is every way perfect,” then we may suppose the results or consequences of any willed acts to be irrelevant.

The biggest problem with this definition, however, is that it fails the test of being something reasonably definite and knowable, since any act whatsoever would classify as “willed,” provided that it was deliberately chosen. Whilst it is possible to perform acts that are not in accordance with this definition of will, it is clearly not possible to *deliberately choose* to act against the will; any transgressions would have to be either automatic, accidental or forced. But under this definition will is something neither definite nor knowable, since in the first instance it consists of *all* deliberately chosen acts, whatever they may be, and in the second instance the fact that it is arbitrarily contingent on something else precludes its knowledge. The dictionary definition of “will,” then, does not fit the concept of Will as used in *The Book of the Law*, and we may conclude at the very least that there must be something more to it beyond simple deliberate choice.

We must therefore start to look further afield in our search for the meaning of Will. There is a natural tendency on the part of many Thelemites to ascribe the Will, or “True Will,” to some sort of *supernatural* origin, ranging from some nebulous “cosmic plan” that “plays through us all” at one end of the scale, through vague romantic notions of a “Higher Self”⁷ somewhere in the middle, to the definite orders of some “divine being” at the other end. Needless to say, such tendencies should be strenuously resisted. The entirety of our knowledge of the universe to date has not revealed the slightest hint of the existence of either a “cosmic plan” or of a “divine being.”⁸ Not only has it not revealed any *positive* evidence of the existence of such things, but our best models of the origins of the universe (primarily relying on the premise that complex things arise over time from more simple things) simply do not contain any *room* for the existence of such things. This leaves any such ideas grounded solely in a position of *faith*, and faith is not a sensible basis upon which to decide such questions, especially when that position of faith requires one to go against everything we

⁷Which Crowley described as “a damnable heresy and a dangerous delusion” in *Magick Without Tears*.

⁸Neither, for the benefit of a particular group of readers, has it revealed any hint of the existence of extra-terrestrial aliens which are currently able to communicate with humans.

think we know about the universe.

“Personal experience of the supernatural” is no fallback here either, since although experience is the only real thing we can ever come close to trusting, our personal interpretations of that experience are not so reliable. Any phenomenon which appears to smack of the supernatural can be explained in a myriad of other ways, with abject hallucination at the far end of the scale. Regardless of the strength of the experience, there is usually a natural explanation which at the very least is as likely. Neither is the absence of such an alternative explanation grounds for going with the supernatural view; in the absence of a sensible explanation, the proper course of action is to withhold judgment, no matter how romantic and attractive the supernatural hypotheses may appear, since “logic” along the lines of “if I cannot explain it, it *must* be God” has been the source of much mischief throughout the history of thought. As Crowley put it in *Liber O*, “By doing certain things certain results will follow; students are most earnestly warned against attributing objective reality or philosophic validity to any of them.”

Many people are fond of saying that “magick is just science which hasn’t been proven yet” in an attempt to give some form of credence to their delusions, but this position turns out to be a red herring. Even in the presence of strong theoretical grounds and seemingly confirmatory empirical evidence, science has frequently throughout history turned out to be massively wrong on fundamental points, so the fanciful speculations of the magician, with neither of these supporting grounds to his credit, are overwhelmingly unlikely to be eventually proven correct. Magick can only ever claim to be the incubation chamber of science in the arena of *process*, never of *explanation*, and even then the claim is usually on extremely shaky ground.

Moreover, the “divine order” notion of Will is flatly refuted by *The Book of the Law* itself:

Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this. I am alone: there is no God where I am.⁹

Even the much more vague “cosmic plan” notion appears to receive little support:

O be thou proud and mighty among men! Lift up thyself! for there is none like unto thee among men or among

⁹AL II, 22-23

Gods! Lift up thyself, o my prophet, thy stature shall surpass the stars.¹⁰

We can assume that one is hardly able to “surpass the stars” if one is subject to a “cosmic plan”. The account of creation itself also seems to reject such a view:

For I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union.¹¹

It is reasonable to suppose that the “chance” of union is not subject to some overarching plan, or it would not really be “chance” at all.

The supernatural explanations, then, appear to contradict both *The Book of the Law* itself and everything we believe we know about the universe, and in discarding them we are forced to conclude that if we are to have any hope at all at arriving at a sensible definition of Will (which we must do if we are to implement Thelema as a definite practical scheme, even if we end up later having to revise that definition), we must restrict ourselves to definitions which are at least not inconsistent with our current best knowledge of the universe, and preferably to ones which actually find some degree of support in that knowledge. As Crowley himself said in his editorial to *The Equinox, Volume III, Number I*: “The science of Thelema is orthodox; it has no false theories of Nature, no false fables of the origin of things.” We can and should leave faith in wild, romantic, and exceptionally unlikely tales of the supernatural to the slave religions, where they belong, and at least attempt to ground our system in some measure of reality, however difficult that might appear at times.

Our discussion of the dictionary definition, whilst ultimately rather unenlightening, has not been entirely fruitless. We now have three characteristics that we know our definition of Will must possess. Firstly, it must be something relatively definite and knowable. Secondly, it must be possible to act against it. Thirdly, we know now that it must be possible to *consciously* and *deliberately* act against it. This gives us a key insight into our idea of Will, since the third quality implies that, whatever it is, *it cannot arise from the conscious mind*. The natural question, therefore, is from whence *does* it arise?

Conceptually, there are three broad possibilities; it can arise from within the individual, it can arise from without the individual, or it can arise as a combination of the two. The supernatural explanations we discussed all fall squarely within the second category, including the notions of “Higher Self,” since if that self is “higher” then it clearly

¹⁰AL II, 77–78

¹¹AL I, 29

resides somewhere outside of the self we usually refer to. This category is immediately troublesome from any perspective, since any workable definition of Will must refer to the Will of the *individual*, and it is difficult to reconcile this with the idea of something imposed from the outside. We may rightly consider that the environment may have an *effect* on the Will, since every action the individual performs, willed or otherwise, is an interaction with his environment, but we can easily discount the idea that the Will arises *solely* from something external to him.¹² For the same reason, we can also discount the idea that the Will can arise *purely* from *within* the individual, since if the environment were not able to place restrictions on his Will then it could be his Will to perform actions which are physically impossible, which is nonsense.

The only reasonable alternative we are left with is that the Will must somehow arise from a conjunction of the individual himself with his environment. This gives us cause to re-examine one of the observations we made when looking at the dictionary definition, which was that it is clearly possible for a willed act to nevertheless be subject to some form of *restriction*, and we used the law of gravity as an example. Upon further examination, it turns out that not only is it *possible* for a willed act to be subject to restriction, but that restriction is in fact *required* for Will to have any meaning.

If we assume that any act is an interaction between an individual and his environment, we can see the reason for this. To take a trivial example, imagine that an individual is faced with a choice between two mutually-exclusive possibilities of some kind (such as eating an apple, or an orange). In order for him to make a “willed” choice between those two possibilities, there must be some compelling reason *outside of his control* for him to select one over the other (for instance, because he likes apples, but does not like oranges, or that he simply prefers oranges to apples). If there is no such compelling reason, then he has no basis for choosing one possibility over the other, and if he has no basis for choosing one possibility over the other, then whatever choice he makes, be it a conscious choice or otherwise, must by definition be *random*. *Random* acts cannot be *willed* acts under our model, since we have already determined that our idea of Will must be something relatively definite and knowable, and patterns of pure chance simply do not qualify.

The notion of a “totally free willed act” is therefore revealed to be impossible, and that some form of restriction is required for Will to be present. This conclusion seems curious, especially when we consider

¹²This is another good reason for discrediting the supernatural explanations.

the admonitions against restriction in *The Book of the Law* itself, especially in AL I, 41. Closer examination reveals there is no contradiction at all, for “there are restrictions, and then there are restrictions.” If we accept that some form of “restriction” is required for the existence of Will, then we can clarify our terms a little; we can say that this type of constraint does not in fact *restrict* the Will, but it *defines* it. For example, we can rightly say that a resistor in an electrical circuit “restricts” the flow of current, but if electrons are not constrained into following a well-defined and continuous circuit in the first place, then there will be no current at all, and nothing to restrict. This latter type of constraint is not a restriction at all, but an *enabling condition* which is necessary for the current to even exist, and necessary to give “life” and “being” to that current.

Similarly, the northern pole of an iron magnet is so constituted as to give it a natural tendency to attract and be attracted to southern poles of iron magnets, and a converse natural tendency to repel and be repelled from other northern poles. We can personify the magnet and say that its “Will” is to “seek out” poles of an opposite nature, and to “avoid” poles of a similar nature. Moreover, we can see that this “Will” arises *wholly* from the magnet’s *nature*, and that that nature is the “compelling reason outside of [its] control” that we introduced two paragraphs previously, the “compelling reason” which not only *allows* for its “Will” to exist, but which *creates* that “Will”. If an object were not constituted so as to interact with its environment in relatively well-defined ways, then its interactions would either be random or positively non-existent, and both of these possibilities are inconsistent with our idea of Will.

Of course, it is easy for us to turn this around. We have said that the “Will” of the magnet arises wholly from its nature, but we can just as easily say that its nature arises from its “Will”. Indeed, we defined that nature in terms of the magnet’s “tendency to attract . . . and repel,” in terms of what it *does*, rather than what it *is*. In fact, it is apparent that in the cases of these examples at least, Will and nature are actually two sides of the same coin; not only can one not exist without the other, but we can’t even *define* one except in terms of the other. What a thing *does* is a function of what it *is*, and what a thing *is* can only be described in terms of what it *does*, and neither of these things can have any meaning at all unless we consider the thing in the context of its present environment.

Naturally, the situation becomes considerably more complex when we try to extend this analysis to humans. The northern pole of a magnet will *always* attract its opposite colleague, and it will do so

in an extremely predictable manner. Conscious beings, or course, are nowhere near as reliable, and it is their very consciousness which causes this. It is quite possible to postulate that any conscious being is, at the end of analysis, no less regular in its actions than our humble magnet, but that it is so much more complex that the pertinent conditions of any given situation cannot be ascertained with sufficient reliability to perceive that regularity, and that its actions therefore appear unpredictable and conscious. This postulate requires the assumption that “free will” is in fact an illusion, that we only *appear* to have free will because of the complexity involved. This idea has long been a subject of debate, and even quantum mechanics has not been able to dispel it (although the Uncertainty Principle appears to have put practical application of it outside the realms of possibility).

However, even if this idea is fundamentally true, our requirement that it must be possible to act against our Will prevents us from adopting this idea fully; we said right at the beginning of this essay that we must exclude any definitions of Will that imply “everything that is, is willed,” even if such definitions may have merit in other contexts. Even if conscious agency is an illusion, therefore, a practical definition of Will requires us to make a real and substantial development from our simple and straightforward idea of “Will equals nature.”

At the same time, we have seen that there are very real reasons why Will cannot exist separately from nature. Therefore we cannot discard our original conclusions, but we must somehow reconcile them with both our requirement that it be possible to act against Will, and with the simple everyday observation that individuals do at least appear to have conscious volition. If our idea of Will is to have any value at all, it must be of some assistance in answering the fundamental question “what do I do?” so at best it will be singularly unhelpful to respond “anything, since everything you do is willed.”

Our further analysis has revealed a fourth quality that we know our idea of Will must possess. We added the characteristic that the Will cannot arise from the conscious mind to our original two characteristics, and we can now go further by saying that as well as knowing that it must be possible to act against it, we now know that it must be specifically possible for the *conscious mind* to be a cause of that impediment. If it is purely the existence of consciousness which disallows the simple “Will equals nature” hypothesis, then it must be something within that consciousness that is causing that hypothesis to fail. In other words, if an unconscious object must always do its Will, but a conscious being may not, the difference has to arise from the fact that it is the conscious mind which is thwarting that Will.

This simplistic reasoning does, however, exclude the possibility that something *other* than the conscious mind may also thwart the Will by stating as a matter of edict that “an unconscious object must always do its Will.” This exclusion is unwarranted, and we will integrate this possibility shortly.

The natural (excuse the pun) objection to the simplistic “Will equals nature” model in the case of a conscious being is that if the conscious mind can frustrate the Will, and the conscious mind forms part of the individual’s nature,¹³ then it is logically impossible for Will to equal nature. The objection to *this* objection, of course, is that if the Will is *not* nature, then it isn’t anything at all, as we have already concluded. We appear to have reached an impasse.

Since we seem to have good reason for suspecting that Will and nature are in fact equivalent, one obvious avenue for further investigation is to question the assertion that “the conscious mind forms part of the individual’s nature,” strange as this might sound. If we could successfully do this, it would certainly give us an “out”. Whilst it may be the magnet’s Will to seek its opposite colleague, we can certainly frustrate this Will by nailing both magnets to the workbench; if we can conclude that the conscious mind is not part of the individual’s nature, but that in a similar way it can nevertheless frustrate that individual’s Will, then we will have resolved the impasse.

But have we not just said that “nature” represents *all* the individual’s qualities? Certainly. Does this not prevent us from excluding the conscious mind from the individual’s nature? No, it does not, because importantly, we have a degree of flexibility in defining the *boundaries of the individual himself*. We could argue that one of the individual’s qualities is that he has hair, but it would be stretching the bounds of reason to suggest that this hair is part of the individual’s nature, since he can cut it off and remain unchanged as an individual. We can take this further and say that his arms, legs, ears, eyes and nose are similarly not part of his individuality, for the same reason. To resolve our impasse, we need only include the conscious mind in this list.

Clearly the objection here is that the mind is of a completely different order to the hair, limbs and sensory organs. Surely without a

¹³At this point, the reader should pause and take special care to understand that when we talk of the individual’s “nature,” in this context, we are not referring to what may in other places be described as “animal nature,” or “baser instincts,” or “lower impulses”; we are referring to the sum total of *all* his qualities. If, for instance, he has a tendency to “rise above his animal instincts” and live a life of noble asceticism, then we are considering that tendency to be part of his nature; his ascetic life is not the “transcending” of his nature, therefore, but the *fulfilling* of it.

conscious mind, the individual cannot be individual? Without a conscious mind, wouldn't the individual simply cease to be? Wouldn't he be, in a word, *dead*?

The answer is, in fact, a simple “no,” as anybody who has a degree of experience in the “sitting still and being quiet” type of meditation will be able to tell you easily. Experience shows it to be quite possible — even simple — to temporarily shut down the conscious mind, to stop its incessant chattering, to be wholly free of its influence for a while, and yet remain aware as an individual. It is no objection at all to protest that the conscious mind cannot be wholly shut down if the individual remains aware, since we can just say that *by definition* whatever it is that is still perceiving is something other than the conscious mind.

It is quite possible, therefore, to classify the conscious mind as a *tool*, just like a thumb or an eye, something that *belongs* to the individual, but does not in fact form a *part* of him. To do so is to assert that there is something underlying the body and conscious mind, something deeper and more elusive, that is actually the individual himself. To do so is to assert that the boundaries of the “individual” can be drawn in a much more narrow fashion than is commonly done. And to do so is to assert that whatever that “core individuality” is, wherever it lies and whatever form it takes, it is the nature of *that* individuality that is equivalent to Will.

This is where we come across our first real obstacle in our attempt to pin down the nature of Will, because in our current state of knowledge, the exact form of this individuality remains elusive. We cannot make an easy distinction as to what must be either inside or outside of it. If we exclude the mind from its boundaries altogether, then we would appear to be left with nothing but the unconscious parts of the body, which seems to contradict its ability to maintain self-awareness. It also appears unlikely that the nature of this individuality could not be modified through experience, since otherwise, as we are born with none, its Will would be entirely incomprehensible. If we do include a part of the mind, our current poor understanding of the mind prevents us from having even a reliable model, let alone from being able to place an exact line within that model which separates “individual part” from “not-individual part”.

Is it possible, therefore, that this “core individuality” of which we speak simply isn't there? From an epistemological standpoint, we have to admit the possibility, but from an experiential standpoint the plain fact remains that we can *perceive* it. When we shut down the mind in meditation, that's what we're left with; the mind has stopped working,

there are no more thoughts or emotions, yet there is *something else* there, and that something else is *aware* of itself and its surroundings. Experience forces us to admit its presence, regardless of our inability to define what it is. This admission does not contradict our earlier criticism of relying on “personal experience of the supernatural,” of drawing conclusions despite having no rational explanation. When we talk of this “core individuality,” we do not offer explanations. We make no pretense that we understand its nature, or that we know what its boundaries are, or that we know exactly what constitutes it. All we know is that, whatever it is, it is *there*, because direct experience tells us that it’s there, and the experience is so convincing (as almost anybody can discover for themselves with a little application) that it would simply be folly to deny its existence.

Yet, the fact remains that that is about all we can say about it. We know that it is there, and we know that it has awareness, but that is as far as we can go in terms of knowledge. There is, however, one quality that whilst we cannot *know*, we can *infer* with a very high degree of likelihood: it has *preferences*. To take a trivial example, I despise the taste of spinach. As far as my memory allows me to delve, I am not aware of ever having been abused with a can of spinach as a child, I was never force-fed spinach in a cage full of rats, and I was never traumatised by an episode of “Popeye the Sailor Man.” This leads me to conclude, with what I consider to be a high degree of likelihood, that the root of my dislike for the taste spinach does not arise in my mind. I further conclude that the source of my dislike for the taste does not arise in my tongue; the senses interpret stimuli, and pass them along to the brain, but they cannot by themselves *judge* stimuli. To judge stimuli (e.g. this tastes good, but that tastes bad) requires *perception*, and perception requires a *perceiver*. I know without a shadow of a doubt that my dislike exists. Furthermore, I conclude with a high degree of likelihood that the dislike does not arise in my mind, and that it does not arise in my tongue. Yet I know it is there, so it must arise somewhere. I conclude that it arises *within my “core individuality,”* that it is my “core individuality” that possesses the preference, because once I strip away all the other possibilities, it is the only thing left. To make a trite statement, I may therefore consider that it is inherent in the Will of my “core individuality” to not eat spinach. Yet, I also know that I can force myself to eat spinach using my conscious mind. In a very elementary way, therefore, we can see how the conscious mind can frustrate the Will of what we from hereon in will refer to simply as *the individual*.

We are therefore now in a position to tentatively make a positive statement about the Will. To recap, through our analysis we have determined that there are four qualities our idea of Will must possess:

- Will must be something relatively definite and knowable;
- Will must be something it is possible to act against;
- Will cannot arise from the conscious mind; and
- The conscious mind must specifically be able to frustrate Will.

If we define Will as:

The tendency to act in accordance with the preferences of the individual, as defined by his nature.

then we now have a definition which fulfills all four criteria. We can obtain knowledge about the preferences of the individual by quieting the interference from the conscious mind and simply observing how the individual reacts to its environment. Over time, and through a variety of circumstances, we can observe patterns in these reactions which we can use to infer the Will. Evidently the conscious mind is able to frustrate the fulfillment of these preferences by directing action in a contrary manner, and we have excluded the conscious mind from our definition of the individual.

As well as satisfying our drawn out analysis, this is, in itself, an extraordinarily satisfying definition to have. Crowley categorised the “Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel,” success in which is functionally equivalent to discovering the Will, as:

the essential work of every man; none other ranks with it for personal progress or for power to help one’s fellows. This unachieved, man is no more than the unhappiest and blindest of animals. He is conscious of his own incomprehensible calamity, and clumsily incapable of repairing it. Achieved, he is no less than the co-heir of gods, a Lord of Light. He is conscious of his own consecrated course, and confidently ready to run it.¹⁴

How better to become “conscious of his own consecrated course, and confidently ready to run it” than to gain an in-depth knowledge of

¹⁴ *One Star in Sight*

one's core individuality, and the deepest preferences of that individuality? How better to escape from being "the unhappiest and blindest of animals" than to open his eyes to his own being, and to learn to prevent his body and mind from frustrating the nature of that being? How much more superior is this conception to the idea of a "cosmic plan" to which one has to reluctantly mould one's own individuality?

Furthermore, the work of Crowley is absolutely swimming with this idea. In *Liber II* once more, he defines Will as "the dynamic aspect of the self," which is in substance identical to our own developed definition. According to Frank Bennett, Crowley described the Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel as "nothing else but the integration that occurs when the conscious and subconscious mind are no longer separated by repression and inhibition."¹⁵ In *Liber Samekh*, his own ritual for attaining to this Knowledge and Conversation, he remarks that through the method described:

the Adept will be free to concentrate his deepest self, that part of him which unconsciously orders his true Will, upon the realization of his Holy Guardian Angel. The absence of his bodily, mental and astral consciousness is indeed cardinal to success, for it is their usurpation of his attention which has made him deaf to his Soul, and his preoccupation with their affairs that has prevented him from perceiving that Soul.

The consistency of all this with our own developed definition is beyond striking, and its simplicity sublime.

Our definition also concurs with *The Book of the Law* itself, on multiple points. "Every man and every woman is a star," explains AL I, 3, referring to the "core individuality" we have described, or the "original, individual, eternal essence" as Crowley puts it in his commentary.¹⁶ By locating this core where we do, we also have a definition consistent with AL I, 8–9:

The Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs.
Worship then the Khabs, and behold my light shed over you!¹⁷

¹⁵Reported in an endnote to *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, as edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant.

¹⁶Published as *An Extenuation of The Book of the Law* in 1926, and posthumously as *The Law is for All*.

¹⁷My essay *The Khabs is in the Khu* gives a far more detailed analysis of these two verses.

since we need appeal only to our inner core, and not outwards to some “god” or “cosmic force” whose existence we cannot even detect.

This, then, is the Will of Thelema, the “True Will,” and the discovery of it is the “next step” of which Crowley spoke. To discover it is to approach an understanding of what your “self” really is, to penetrate the veil of illusion which surrounds it, and for the first time to perceive, free of all distraction, who you really are, and what you really want. It is a discovery of monumental significance; when Crowley wrote that “none other ranks with it,” he was right. Even better, we can see there is nothing mysterious about it. Discovering the Will is not an impossible task, and is well within the abilities of the average person given a degree of application. By far the biggest obstacle to discovering the Will is a complete misunderstanding of what it actually is; chasing dreams of “cosmic plans,” “divine beings” and aliens is a surefire way to keep your Will veiled from your perception. One need not look elsewhere for the Will, one need not slavishly follow some bogus moral code, and one need not pay attention to the fantastic descriptions proffered by those who have never attained to their own. One need only quieten down, and as the waves of the mind begin to still, the self — and hence the Will — will make itself known. The Will is always accessible to those who know how to listen.

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