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## A Word From The Editor:

By Frater Z.T.G.A.

### *Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be The Whole Of The Law.*

This is my first issue of Ophiuchus, and, I must admit, I have found publishing this thing a little more difficult than I at first imagined. I was unfamiliar with any kind of publishing software; how naive of me to think that it would be vaguely like a word processor. I'm afraid that I am not nearly as computer-literate as some of my brothers and sisters; I tend to view computers with just a touch of suspicion. Not that I'm paranoid. I just find sitting in front of a computer screen for hours and hours a completely unfulfilling occupation. It's right up there with painting a neighbor's house or breaking large chunks of concrete.

On the other hand, I truly *love* the printed word. I have a great enjoyment of language used effectively to convey ideas and pictures. I love to read such language. I love to write such language. So this whole publishing thing is a delicate balance for me. That being said, I think it behooves me to give the reader some idea of where I hope to go with Ophiuchus over the next few years; what I am and

am not willing to do, etc.

I plan to use Ophiuchus as a vehicle to spread Thelemic ideas and knowledge. Sounds pretty axiomatic--that would be the general purpose of any publication, I suppose. So, I ought to get a little more specific. Okay, how's this: I plan to rapaciously attack every bookstore owner, small print publisher, and ordinary Joe who even looks crosseyed at this publication. I will defend it tooth and claw; I will rape, pillage, steal, and perform strange alchemical experiments on the stuff that accumulates between my toes in the hopes that weapons of mass destruction may be the result. I will do impressions of Al Sharpton drunk and singing bawdy songs to the wee hours of the morning to confound my enemy! I will adopt Enochian as my everyday language, and with it, I will turn the earth into a giant spinning toad! I will learn the occult mystery of Lee Press on Nails and publish it despite any mystical oaths I may take! Soon, Ophiuchus will be the only publication left on the face of the planet...er, Toad! You will all cower before me as I stand nude in a vat of clotted goat's milk singing songs from "The Sound of Music" and other family favorites! Because when that glorious day comes, I plan to weigh fifteen thousand pounds (I am

currently using a repulsive mix of weight gaining powders to achieve this end) and smell like used motor oil and Pine Fresh cleaning solution! I will reformulate the tarot with characters from "Welcome Back Cotter!" Then I will get on an enormous horse and gallop through the treacherous warts on the back of the world Toad, masturbating furiously with three hands (I hide one in my shirt) as I disappear over the horizon...er, forehead.

But I will not, under any circumstances, kiss a donkey on either end. Unless it is required by some future initiation.

Now that you know me and my intentions a little better, I would like to encourage those lucky few to whom this publication is sent to let me get to know you as well. But be warned: should you choose to insult me, I am capable of verbal Jiu-Jitsu the likes of which hath seldom been witnessed by the eyes of people. Then again, I am also a rather good sport, and don't mind getting clobbered now and again. So please, write to the lodge using the most mysterious contact information given somewhere in this most mysterious newsletter. Let us know what (that is, if) you think.

*Love Is The Law, Love Under Will.*

## Confessions of Co- Body Masters

by Soror Ixel Balamke and  
Frater Hunaphu

Pseudo-science. You know: the supposed use of supposed scientific facts, that sleight of hand fiction that does so well at the box office. For example, the transporter of a certain famous starship that will go unnamed transforms matter to energy and back again, infinitely, with no loss. Of course, we all wish that we could do things like that, and it is my understanding that several American companies have invested a lot of money to try and make it work. One big problem with this concept, however, is the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. This principle states that there is a fundamental limit on the precision of knowledge you can ascertain about any subatomic particle. In other words, if you wish to try and precisely locate, say, an electron at any given precise moment in time, you could know nothing about its velocity, and vice versa. Thus the transporter is a device that works on a basic fact of life in this manifestation ( $E=mc^2$ ) that performs a function that is beyond the limits of the physical sciences ( $\Delta p \Delta x \geq \hbar/2$  and  $\Delta E \Delta t \geq \hbar/2$ , where  $\hbar$  is  $\hbar$ -bar). While this transporter device is an obvious work of fiction,

other forms of pseudo-science are not so apparent.

The first example that pops to mind is a recent show on PBS called "Mysteries of the Sphinx Revealed" (ever noticed that any time someone says the words "mysteries" and "revealed" in the same sentence they are often getting ready to feed you a line of bullshit?). This supposed new revelation on the Sphinx was hosted by none other than Charlton Heston. Mr. Heston told us that by using the "methods of science" it can be proven that the Sphinx is well over 10,000 years old and maybe even as much as 100,000 years old. He stated that one such "proof" was the erosion patterns on the Sphinx, which are highly consistent with the erosion of stone by water. But the last time there was significant rainfall on the Giza plateau was thousands of years before the first dynasty. Therefore the Sphinx had to be older than Dynastic Egypt.

But, there are problems with moving the date of the Sphinx back this far. First, humans simply did not have the technology or the numbers that would have been needed to create the Sphinx between 10,000 to 100,000 years ago (Perhaps E.T. created the Sphinx? Quick, call Mulder and Scully!). The earliest cities anywhere in the world date to 7000 B.C.E., but Egypt did not

give rise to a city until around 5500 years ago. Second, an Old Kingdom Dynastic Pharaoh Ra'dejedef (he ruled after Khufu, he is better known as Cheops) had the Sphinx built sometime during his reign which was from 2528 to 2520 BCE. The Sphinx was carved from a single block of limestone. Near and around the Sphinx several artifacts such as broken tools, pottery, lumber, etc. have been found. These artifacts support the Old Kingdom dates.

The so-called signs of water erosion can also be explained. Several times during Dynastic Egypt sand covered the Sphinx (this process continues today, and it costs approximately \$2,500 a year to keep the Sphinx swept clean). The earliest well documented clearing was undertaken by the Pharaoh Tuthmosis IV who left the "Dream Stela" between the forepaws of the Sphinx as a record of his work. This action also left a definite picture of power in the minds of his subjects to view the Pharaoh with such a powerful symbol. To clear the Sphinx of sand they used a type of bellows mechanism, large manually driven air compressors used to move water and sand through tubing made of linen. This helps clean off the sand deposits and it also leaves impressions on limestone that are very similar to natural water erosion.

The Sphinx was made by Old Kingdom Egyptians, not superhumans or aliens. Points such as this are important; we must demonstrate that there is too much pseudo-science going on in the world of the occult, too much fantasy and not enough fact. Admittedly, most of it goes on in the touchy feely New Age Shirley McClains of the world that need some superman or alien to save them and to make their lives worth living. Well, we don't. We are Thelemites. The only sin in our book is to knowingly and willingly disregard the truth, even when this truth doesn't fit what we imagined the world to be. What makes the Sphinx any less of a mystery if Egyptians built when they built it? It makes it that much more remarkable that ordinary people created an extra-ordinary object.

However, the rise of scientific illiteracy is growing at an alarming rate. One only has to watch a bit of TV, read a novel, or communicate with co-workers. We have seen it on various threads of email on the Internet. The absence of the scientific method is escalating at an alarming rate.

We don't mean to go on a rant here, but when we find enlightened persons going on about some super-secret government conspiracy theories involving UFOs and the lost continent of Atlantis helping

Egyptians to build the pyramids of the New World using pseudo-science to hold up their claims, we tend to get irked. Someone is ignoring the truth. We are living in a culture that lives off tabloid fiction and half baked truths like they are Moses' other commandments. Fifty percent of people in this country don't know that it takes a year for the earth to revolve around the sun. Our culture is headed down a very treacherous path. We have a spiraling rate of scientific illiteracy, backed by a collapsing interest in the sciences among our youth, which must be stopped if this country is going to remain a viable contributing member of the Information Age. On *The Equinox* it states "the aim of religion, the method of science." Science teaches us how to think and reason for ourselves, in a manner capable of inventing the tools to derive the truth. However, many Thelemites are not even familiar with the scientific method, despite the fact that the saint Roger Bacon practically invented it. But the scientific method is very important in learning to evaluate the results of one's magick. As Thelemites we are set to combat tyranny, superstition, and oppression, but if we do not have logic, reason, and the scientific method working in our favor, we are not poised well for success.

## Softly Sing the Walls

By Frater Z.T.G.A.

Tones of reds, oranges, brilliant yellows, infinite shades and subtlety, all of it in my eyes. The eyes of the poet, the eyes of the dreamer. The eyes of the city, as it sits in decay, like some overgrown beast, fatted and killed by a nature too cruel to allow bloat. Rain comes sometimes, sometimes like sand, other times like ghosts, others like thoughts winding through the cement husks, the skeletons of steel, melting in the heat of the setting sun, giving themselves over to nature. To my mind. To death. All the same.

Time is of no value, I am a snake, or a robot. Time is of the essence, so essential that I do not notice, as I walk; how it seems to slither between me, between the legs of cobblestone or brick that rush like broken rivers into some distant ocean, some place of paradise, alien to me. The streets are my only paradise, they are the only thing I know. The dead streets. The creatorless universe of which I am the only living part. Every one else seems to have come disjointed, fallen to pieces.

Not that I don't see them sometimes, as I wander, they come to me, reflections in the air, thin and foggy, nebulous. Reaching out their

hands to give me their souls. A package of light and shadow, and thousands of memories. Memories, a field of them, fertile, from which spring the golden wheat of emotions. Romances long gone. Hatred given over to blood and then dust in some back alley. I know what I know, but no one knows me. So I wander, gathering the ghosts into my arms as if they were my children, my offspring. They fill me with such a longing I cannot tell you, I cannot even understand it.

Within my soul is such a monument of curiosity, a great gleaming tower of mirror bright glass that becomes a flower at the top, and the flower seeks blood, the blood which is knowledge. That is why I roam, for around me is nothing but desert. Misshapen sand, tendrils of chaos...

...Seem to surround him as he walks through the back alleys of the dead city. He cuts a slim, dusty figure in the canvas of warm hues that explode like grenades through the shattered windows and ragged wounds in the steel and brick among which he walks. What does he eat? Where does he live? These are but details, ones he has learned to overcome long ago, else he would never have survived to this moment. For now is the greatest moment in his life. The last of the ghosts has long since come to him, to whisper forth

its secrets breathlessly into his ear.

The tears have dried up, leaving only dirty tracks in their wake. His hair is a nest of cobwebs and lice, swimming in the heat-driven air. The heat from the fires, burning him from so long ago, has never left, through the years and years they have shouldered like an ancient grudge, smoking from just under the topsoil. It sends the air rushing this way and that, between the leftover castles of once great men. Now merely dust to be carried to and fro.

But now the air carries something else. It maybe that he has heard it now for years, ever since the madness began, as he found himself huddled in a remote corner of the sewer as the rock and rubble crashed in around him, a womb of reinforced concrete to keep him safe from the heat of the world. He was the sewer's child, a man from underground, and now that man realized that upon the air sang music.

How long had he picked through the rocks, going over territory countless times, before he heard it? How long had it taken to burn the shape of every rock, to dull the edge of all the sharp shards of metal and glass, to impress the map of buried Manhattan into his mind before he could turn his attention to other things? How many cats had he to chase, turning now left, now right, stumbling over

what his prey leapt gracefully, before he caught the sweet drops of music in the night?

Slowly (for the fire slows everything down), his mind crawled through the swamps of ignorance to a shining star of understanding...

...the kind of star that hangs in the night between the twisted wrecks. I call them my trees, for they shield me from rain and occasionally drop fruit upon the ground. None of it can I eat, but right now I do not care. Could this be a ghost, one whose secrets I do not know? I cannot tell any more than I can tell how many fingers I have on my hands. Yet how do I see what I cannot name? Sometimes I look at the light and know that one light is the color of skin while another is the color of metal. These things pass.

I am one now, one with the music, the consecutions of notes, the way they are strung together, just as I am. They draw me, away from what I know. The fields of stone no longer hold meaning for me, I am a walker in the land of twilight, I have traded my poets eyes for those of the soldier, the explorer, the scout. And well do I think on it, that I am no longer my equal, only a better thing, a rapid to a river, a field to a tangle.

How do I find my way, so far from home, in darkness. The shadows are my own, I

know them, for I have sent them away. They are sleep and fear and anger and sloth and lust. They are the body, and I have sent away my body, for I no longer have need of the vehicle of dense flesh. But now, as I pass through its land, it howls to me, haunts me with its glowing eyes and spiced breath. Drums of panic beat with my heart, train it to dance, to do what I sent it away so long ago for. Is there never end to the land of shadow? Even now they send forth their emissaries saying...

..."Please," the hoarse voice canted into the graveyard silence. He stood, tattooed, scarred hands raised to ward away the beast, as it bared forth its weeping fangs, thick with the blood it had sucked from men of greatness so long ago. Time chipped at the edifice of its fine features to reveal beneath it a crawling mass of rot and suffering, grey and brown and red and pink, all alive, shiny, smooth, wet, twisting in on and around itself like a placenta.

"Please, stay," the voice whispered. "I will teach you what you need to know. I can show you things, such *things* you have never *seen*. I can guide you. Much have I learned since you..."

Sent it away, sent it away, *sent it away*, SENT IT AWAY! I cannot think, It is like a vast palace of...something. My mind is

fading, leaving through the portals of my eyes, tearing a ragged edge around my soul, so tender I reach to touch it and feel only a lost, frightened boy, burned, crying in the streets for his mother and father. Never finding them. Wandering, directionless, searching the restaurants in the suburbs for food, seeking out someone, yelling at the walls, the walls of the city, imposing, impenetrable, weapons of subdual.

So powerful I can do nothing but stay. So the boy falls to eating rats and cats and dogs and pieces of other things, mushrooms growing in the alleys. And all the while his thoughts are like grains of sand on a dune, shifting away from his grasp, falling into pits of dust until where the dune was is now only empty air, filled with the mere odor of sand. And the heat of the waves coming from the desert, the twisted tendrils of chaos, the sand...

"Is what is life! I tell you, I can feel your heart, in my hand, such a delicate thing, to crush it, to squeeze the blood from it, would be so easy, such a simple thing I must force my breath so low to speak....Please, stay." He looks around at the rosebushes of burning eyes, cutting tracers in the darkness, the forms behind them only dimly visible as they fade in and out from the light. Hungry shapes, famished, waiting for

the words to fall from his lips in stutters of sorrow and defeat. The vine of fear grows from his groin like an evil seed and wraps its milky white tendrils around the cartilage in his throat and squeezes, holding the sound behind an event horizon of compression and worry.

The beast reaches toward him with a single hand, eaten through with maggots, stinking of embalming fluid and caramelized sugar, parting the air with its touch. Thunderclaps roll forth as it finally makes contact and touches...

...The little boy. He screams as the hand crawls like a lizard on his shoulder, gripping his soggy T-shirt and ripping the corrupted fabric like a cocoon tearing away from a butterfly. The man is badly burned and stinks of infection, sickness. He smells the same as the city. The boy tries to run, his little legs pumping viciously against the ground, but his predator is hungry. Down the alleys and over half melted fences they race, flying over obstacles, under beaten in doorways, past overturned cans of garbage, laying in a pile of soot and ashes. They leave shattered doorways and heaps of fallen leaves skittering behind them as they run. His legs are strong but they cannot compete with the man's superior height. In an instant he has the boy again, holding him like his mother once did as he pulls the

rusty knife from his wasteband. Where is safety, where is his mother, where is his father? Now the man raises the blade as he smiles a ruinous smile and plunges it toward him, and all the while the boy is thinking that this time he does not have to have the knife, that this time he does not have to feel the blade pierce his chest and still his beating heart. He does not have to feel the final darkness steal over him, washing away his body, making him a ghost, he doesn't have to go through anything. He can make the bombs go back, can make his mother and father stop burning, can stop the people from screaming in the streets as their bodies blister and boil, can give them back their little house.

But the darkness comes, and takes away the pain, the substance, and leaves him a ghost. Did he die? He does not know. How can he? He has no notion of the fingers on his hands, they seem all to blend in with the colors, the blackening veins to match the steel, the burned flesh to match the painted sky. Only now colors climb out of the black, fairies from the filth, flying wonders of light and humor, levity, love, liberty, truth. And like a tide rushing back to sea, the darkness leaves, rushes back out, over the sand, leaving it to dry in the heat of the sun, and he is back with...

...The beast takes away

his hand and smiles, and I see for the first time the beauty in the smile. The darkness gathers itself into the monster, as the rosebushes grow little fairies that carry the beast onto its hind legs. The rusty knife is at home in my hand as I plunge it into his heart, letting the blood spill over me. I lap at it like an unashamed animal, for now the blood is the blue of clear, clean water, the knowledge of what is right, what is true. And from the water, even as the beast sinks, the sun rises.

I am whole, and now, Oh! I shudder! I can feel! I can hear now the tones, so bright in the blue day, pulling me on. And so I go, letting myself be carried by the buoyancy of the new day, the fragrance of roses in the air, the spring in my step. Now the rocks move aside, for I am their master, the master of the beast. My voice echoes from the resonant skeletons like the babble of a brook through a primeval forest, untouched, unsullied. I have given over my hands to their own wills, letting them feel what they will, for as they feel, so do I feel. As they grow, so do I, until even as I walk the flowers begin to droop down upon me from the tops of the trees and I sense the stone becoming silk.

Carved smooth, so smooth, by hands long gone, burned, or perhaps buried, so they tell my hands what they



want them to know. And they say that silk is better than stone, that skin is better than steel, that...

...the draperies shined in the noonday sun, a lively crimson, gleaming like rose petals or long flows of blood in the vertical valleys of the dried bones. They gave the illusion of flesh accreting, heaping itself against the mineral latticework that would be its frame. He walked on, surrounded by the pleasure of the hot wind blowing the fabric onto his naked body, caressing him with the touch of a feather. Running a loving, gentle touch over his neck, down his back, and over his buttocks to land neatly at his feet, piles of rose petals, fragrant, beautiful, memorable, falling behind him in the air.

The streets turned and intersected, wound and danced, their cobbles and paving reaching up to tear at his soles, but these things to him mattered little. He knew where he was going. Her fragrance filled his thoughts, teased his eyes with images he could only guess at, shadows that flickered and wove into nothingness only to slip around the corner and fly past him again, weaving the fabric around the columns of broken steel with their motion.

And then the shadows twist into a single rope, its weave a thread of gold, its weft a promise of youth. He pulled

himself along it as the sun burned into afternoon, as it rounded the corners and snaked through the avenues. Then it ended...

...and there she was, a vision of the uttermost beauty. Naked in the bright light, her skin glistening with little drops of water, her skin bronzed and smooth, wrapped around such lithe muscles that even as she danced her thighs tensed and rippled like the waves of an ocean. Her hands wove such delicacy in the air I knew that it had been her all along, she had carved the stone, had woven the cloth. With nought but her eyes she drew me on. As I watched her dance, her breasts firmly whirling through the air to be followed in their wake by the arc of a foot lifted high, and for a moment I could see what she wanted me to see, could seem to make out the womb that...

...had made him now turned to vapor in the fire. That was how he always imagined it. She began to dance around him, even as the ghost of his mother wove in little tendrils of spirit-smoke through the palace of lust. She had come to him long after, as he had expected her to, for they all came to him, all of them, seeking after him like homing pigeons. He was their home, the place they could rest their weary feet and sleep, find rest. His arms had been, in death, constricted with the nails of hunger, dishonor, and

cowardice. He was the forgiver, the responsible one, the one to take the sins of the world. A little boy. The sins of the world.

She had showed him the manner of her death, how the storm of rolling flame, a great orange demon, rushed through the streets, insubstantial, thin as mist, yet forcing cars into the air before it, warping the towers of steel and scorching away the wood. Like a snake striking the flame licked at her, melting her hair and turning her skin to charcoal. The burning seeped into her body, as she cried for her lost son and husband, cried for the life she would never finish, never put to rest.

The cry vaporized in the roaring air, just one more eddy in the vast current of sadness that swept the city, and even the world. And then came the familiar blackness, and she was...

...the ghost that swam in the air before him was no ghost, she was real, a thing of illusion perhaps, nothing but a moonbeam, perhaps, but substantial as stone. Which thing itself may be only illusion, but I care little, for now I can feel her, as she presses close her dance, against me, my new born naked skin, stretched over the frame of a man, the feelings of a man, the longings of a boy trapped in a man's body. Her breasts touch my back as she spins around me, her taut

stomach now to mine, her arms floating through my hair and over my neck, a dance of flesh so new, like the first taste of chocolate. My body gives way, and as I think of her flesh she becomes like a womb, darkness, warmth, around me, protecting me from the heat, so silent, so soft, a bed of rose petals. Kisses rain from her lips like feathers from a flock of swans, floating gracefully in the water, the water that is the lake of my skin, the moonlight a pale ghost dancing on the ripples. Howls, little snippets of sound, of fear, purr from her throat as if from some distant shore. But she is around me, and I am in her, and the darkness so subtle, so still, all there is, is nothing, nothing but...

...now the pain comes in a sickening wave of nausea, pushing him out of the dance, out of her body, away from the water. He erupts from the circle of the dance like a pistol shot, and she is moaning now, moaning with the pain as her little baby falls to the ground, spent, a wasted shell, a man asleep with poisoned dreams. How can the longing heal him now? She crawls to him, a dirty rag, through the sandy streets, through the soot and the ash and the bits of garbage, over the rose petals that fall like scabs from heaven, and she shakes him, tears welling to her eyes.

She is behind the bars, now, the bars she sees before

her have no weight, no shape, only they are there, and she remembers how frail she has been, how only the whisper of air can disintegrate her, and she begins to fade. Her cries become insistent, frightened, she needs him.

But he only stirs, a remnant, trying to breath, pushing the fluid out of his lungs only sprinkles at a time. The fluid forms a spreading lake around his body as slowly the blood leaks out, and flows forth, soaking into the ash and sand, shaped by the twisted metal and fallen brick. Now holes begin to burn into her, and she is blackening, her beauty fading, her bones oxidizing and going brittle, unravelling, cracking away into dust. She calls again, this time with a deep thrust howl of intimacy from within her very soul, from the ghost she is becoming, and something within him hears. Is it his own ghost, or the ghosts of the others he has seen? No, it is the ghost of his mother that pounds on the velvet walls of sleep, the pale mirrors of his dreams. Her hands, so insubstantial, so wispy, avail nothing at first, but then she finds the weakness and breaks through.

The woman is nearly nothing now, but his mother flies forth from the portals of his eyes and lends the woman her own little mass, so insignificant as to barely tip the scales of a

feather. But it is enough.

The woman finds voice again, a silent steady hum, and he wakes. The bars, thickened into weights of steel shatter and fill the city as he crawls to her barely breathing form. The lake spreads below them and bares them upon the shoulders of its waves. Dark forms swim below them, the beast, his minions, and the fairies are fireflies on the surface, each one a star, faint but steady. He kisses her cheek, for now it is he that must save her, if he is to be saved at all. Around them the glass begins to twitch from it's resting laces, the metal seems to move as if animated, the cement flows again, but nothing holds form.

He whispers to her as he bears her upon the lake, whispers how much he has missed her, tries to tell her not to give up. She swallows but says nothing, her eyes closed now, watching the distant events that may mean so much or so little, he cannot tell anymore than he knows how many fingers are on his hands. But with his hands he begins to caress a simulacrum of life from her cool body, to tease a hint of the dance that they had practiced just minutes before.

But it is only illusion. What does she need? A thought nags him, the fairies whisper to him, but he cannot hear them. The rhythm of the lapping of the waves begins to take shape in his mind, to

suggest something deeper, a deeper ocean, something within himself. And suddenly he understands, knows...

...what she needs is my blood. I tear at my wrist with my bare teeth, feeling the beast's fangs within my mouth, their foul stench a cleansing unguent to release forth the flow of fresh, red blood upon the water. I hold the hole in my skin to her mouth and eagerly she drinks. The warmth comes back to her body even as the eastern sky lights with subtle hints of grey against the steady midnight black. I feel the strength flow from me into her, but I get even stronger now, more real. The distant clinks and groans of something I know not what cuts through the steady rhythm, but I hold to it until she is done. And then we are dancing upon the floor of the city, the rhythm of the waves far above us our only cue, and she is pushing me inside her, into her warm flesh as she kisses my neck, soft as a rose, wispy as a ghost, insistent as the flame that once wrought madness upon the city.

And at last, when we are both ready, I take the water into myself and then push it into her. It rushes from me as if I were a burst dam, holding back all the potential of the universe, all the energy. And then, upon the dried, deadened valley floor, I gush forth the waters of life. Into her. Into her. Into her.

She is healed, a thing

of beauty to rival even the sun, now rising in glory over a whole city, a clean city. Gleaming towers of steel and glass and cement and brick tower over us, their sides smooth as carved stone, polished with driven sand, a chaotic scrabbling which brings forth an orderly birth. For this is the way of the world.

But we are alone, the two of us, in an empty city, devoid of sound or happiness. Devoid, but for the music that sings on through the day. Woven like an insistent priest, a father of order, of light, of life, droning forth his collects and elegies. With sincerity, something I have never till now believed in. For these tones are so sweet, sweet as the memory of an apple, sweet as the memory of...of life. And she hears them as well, and smiles in the sunrise. Her face is tan as the sand, only she is full of life, life I have given her. Or that she has given me, I do not know. I know it no better than whether this life will end, or whether to hope for anything more. But the music goes on, a fabric of air and tone, and so I must follow.

She has never been burned, not once. I notice this as we go on, over the bridge now, between the cables that once were frayed and useless, over the healed concrete skin, the dry columns that once sweat burning blood...

...that looked so like the

sunlight glinting from them at midmorning, bouncing and shattering in a million pieces to dance in the sky like fairies at night. And then, the other side, and smaller buildings. A sense of accomplishment fills them, for they have gone now farther than either of them have ever been. He, out of fear, her out of death. But life is with them now. And now they are skipping, singing with the music, making up the words, humming verses or saying what is on their minds or in their hearts. Trees begin to show their buds, as if spring has come back to the land, once so covered with the filth of hatred and loathing, anger and fear, desire and insanity. And fire, and ash. Now living, now healed. A perfect container for life.

His step upon the walkways is light as a dancer's, turning this way and that, as she follows, leaping through the warming air. If he had remembered clothing, they might have been ashamed of their nakedness, but they were free. Free to go where they wanted. For no reason, they stopped at an empty house, full of furniture that once had been burned to cinders. Water flowed clear and cold from the faucets, and food sat temptingly in the refrigerator. She chose grapes, green and juicy, he took a hunk of cheese and some bread, and a bottle of pineapple

juice. They ate smiling, laughing, loving each other, playing footsies. It was good. For a moment, the house knew life and the sounds of simple pleasure again, and somehow it too seemed to grow happier.

He spoke to her of finding their way to the country, where the ghosts had told him that people still lived, in ragged, isolated groups. How easy it would be, he said, to bring life to the world, so long thought gone, wasted, a desert. She smiled, and agreed. They left the house again, their bellies and their hearts and their souls full, the sun high in the sky.

It took another half an hour to come within sight of the wall. The music flowed over it like smoke over a rooftop. But it soared into the air like a great butcher's knife into the warm flesh of the sky. And doubt crept into their minds, little mice of fright, fear, hopelessness. The wall could do that, that was its purpose. How could it still be standing? The fire should have burned it away, so long ago should it have been a vapor of segregation, nothing solid, a mere shadow in the insubstantial air. And then he understood...

...without was life, real life. Within was nothing but death. Or perhaps not death, only illusion. The city was a garden, and we have restored it. But I know now that we are

people only within other people. And two could never be enough. How could we fill this garden, once choked with life, with our too-small tendrils of love and life? Maybe our children's children's children's children. Until then the flowers, the skyscrapers, the bridges, the tunnels, the parks, the ponds would be simple, uninteresting, similar, and fading. The poets eyes would become the explorers eyes, to become the lovers eyes, to become the blind man's eyes. Without others to make them see. Without others to define the shapes and engineer the lighting, to shape the art and to paint the pictures. How could I see, or hear, or taste, or touch, with nothing around me? There would be her; there would always be her. But she was no bigger than I, and even together we could never be enough. I could not show her eyes all that there was, nor she mine.

But we had healed the city, and it was we who healed the wall, who raised it out of the ashes laid down so long ago, we who had made the wound, we who held the spark of its creation. How could we find it again? I knew not. But this I knew: that we could not stay inside the walls forever. So to the walls we went, hand in hand like birds flying, the thoughts of death, real, absolute, filling our minds.

The golden rays of

darkness close fell upon the mirror sheen of the wall when I first touched it. Wailing, the voices of so many millions, all of them cut off, destroyed in their ambitions and dreams, shot through my arm...

...like a razor parts skin to reveal the bloody undersoil beneath. The wall rippled, vibrated through the colors, a sculpture of sand and heat. My hand sunk into the searing flame that consumed the wall from the inside, and I felt the bite of centuries of mass darkness, sewage, repulsion. It was as if I had plunged my hand into a bowl of acid-soaked fleas. Quickly I pulled it back. She gasped first, before I saw the bones bared from my rotting flesh.

The wall laughed. And still the music continued, coming from somewhere beyond, softly through the cackle, a textured backdrop of liquid gold amid all the dross that lay before me. She looked at me, tears welling in her eyes. I knew the question she was asking, she did not have to use her voice. Will we ever get out? I couldn't tell.

We slept the night there, on the soft grass, listening to the wall in our dreams as it laughed and whispered and screamed and cried. It was a spoiled child, I realized. But how could we do anything, though we were its parents? What it wanted, we could not

give, for it wanted everything that made us who we were, who we are. It wanted the trees to go back to ash, it wanted the buildings to become burned weeds, sticking into the sky, raking savage wounds of heat and smog through the wispy clouds. I knew then that we fought an enemy that could never be defeated, we could stay where we were and be destroyed, or go through the wall, and be destroyed. Our act of creation had created our own destruction. Before, I was a god, immortal, alone, everywhere unique. Now, just a man, a poet, an explorer, a lover. Dead even as I came crying from the womb. The madness became a worm, slick and evasive, working into my mind, digging tunnels in my head where none should have been, letting air in, making the laughter louder. I began to cry, to heave, to spasm. She knew what was happening, and through the madness, as I listened to the echo of the wall, the darkness creeping over the horizon day after day, the sun an impotent disk in the sky, I knew we were finished at last.

People, zombies, husks, statues pushed out of the wall, out of my mind, into my eyes, into my soul, my hope, crushed away as my ears bled. They rushed for me, hacking away my limbs, tearing out my intestines, crawling with maggots, I aged, melted away,

withered gray and then black until I was a carbon carving. A mummy. I could feel nothing, floating on the river Lethe, images coming to my mind this way and that, snippets of running through abandoned alleys, feeling the grainy kiss of satin against my back, letting her touch me, letting her...

...scream, for it was the only thing she could do. She looked at her hands and watched as they turned to dust, the rest of her washing away in the air. The scream died away as the darkness stole over the horizon and the air took away her windpipe, then her hair and ears, leaving only a dry skull where she had been. And the darkness was absolute, neverending, flawless. All eyes were banished from the universe, everything sterile, unscented, unremarkable. The same, a soak of black lukewarm space, or not-space. It did not matter.

He was somewhere, but nowhere, not himself, not anything. He could feel her, a mere memory, something lost, uncategorical, a drift at the bottom of the ocean. The sensation of movement was everywhere, and the inertia was ubiquitous. But the music went on, a part of the darkness, not opposed, merely a part. A way the darkness could be.

The sleep came upon him as he felt the darkness move beneath him. He fought

to stay awake, for with sleep came fear, with sleep came the thing that moved underneath him, the thing that could destroy him. But the darkness was light, the darkness was heavy, and it sent him rushing downward in the same way he had always slept.

Only this was not the land of dreams. A great maw, lined with vicious teeth, opened before him as he drifted. The sight of it unnerved him, the teeth shining with an unknowable light, sinister, ready to cut him in half if he should fail, bigger than the city itself. These were the wall, he felt it, within himself. The mouth spoke to him in chattering phrases, who was he, it asked, the vibrations of the darkness sending the sound to his ears, drowning away the music. Within its throat he saw worlds, universes, torn to bits, the inhabitants howling with their disjointedness, their pain, their lost dreams and hopes, their cold, silent fears. They were the way the city was, everyone lost, wandering without any sense of where they were going. They were like he was.

This was the womb of the wall, the place it had been born, and the mouth was its offspring. It was the wall, as this entire *place* was the wall. Was it a place? No. His thoughts...

...came in not-language, and I cannot make anyone

understand them now. But the mouth spoke over and over, asking who I was, challenging me to find an answer. It was the sphinx, the guardian. Who was I? How could I define myself? I am nothing without others, but there were no others, not anymore. But here I was, away from everything, something. I didn't know.

So I said. And the mouth dripped with venom, great puddles of green ichor floating through the darkness, glowing green with the signs of bones and sand and madness and flayed hands. It moved closer, threatened to eat me. This was the wall, and it had beaten me. Go ahead. What else could I say?

The scream rocked the darkness, pulling it away like a crumbling edifice, light spilling forth first in strands, then rays, then beams, then whole continents, washing away the darkness. I saw the creature, a twisted little man, green and black, wet, alone, trembling, dying. I watched him suck in the newly fresh air, scented with drying hay and country wine. His chest rose and fell in great earthquaking spasms as his eyes turned like gyroscopes in his head, the pupils falling away into infinity. Finally the breaths came no more. He shuddered and died, his body falling into itself, growing ever smaller, fading into a spark of light, and then nothing.

I saw the earth, floating like a beautiful blue and tan marble in the midst of the great darkness, now lit with a million million million other lights. Other lives, exotic, unimaginable, wonderful. We are children, mere children, reaching out of our cribs for the first time, barely comprehending what it is to have minds, or to have loves, or to hear music. Everything we do, we complicate, we obscure, we fight. We follow the convolutions of our own development with the scarcest vision of what we might be. How could it be otherwise? How can anyone doubt? Yet only children, with the light in their eyes and the life in their hands, really believe. Their world is so large, vast as the universe, vast as life, vast as everything we can never imagine. Yet for a brief moment, I understood, and I wanted, more than anything, to bring that understanding to the world, so lost, lost as any of us.

Down I went, plunging through the atmosphere like a bullet piercing flesh. The land rushed to meet me, faster and faster it came, the charge of a thought, the language of a poet, the eyes...

...of Edward Tate lit up as the understanding came to him. He was sitting on a bench in the park when it happened. He had always been a dreamer, a poor, lonely dreamer.

Handsome, but lost among the crowd.

Yet the thought that had only occasionally peeked at him from behind a cloud smiled at him now. He felt the shackles that had bound him, made him merely a ghost among so many others, so many other ambitions and plans, burst and scatter into pieces. The sun warmed him as he tapped his fingers in time with the music, the music of the city, all around him. For the first time, life was good. He knew what no one else knew.

Leaves rustled around him in the late august heat, blowing through central park to gather at Belvedere Castle or on the surface of one of the ponds. It all had meaning, it was all connected. The leaves, the grass, the woman sitting beside him.

It wasn't too startling. She was beautiful, a vision. He knew he had seen her somewhere before. But the memory was not as important as the reality. He cleared his throat.

"Excuse me, would you-

"Like to have dinner? Why do you think I sat here. I remember. I think."

"Me, too. I'm glad. I wouldn't want to do it without you."

"Me neither. Dinner, and then we'll show people. We'll give them light, together."

"My thoughts exactly."

## A Magickal State of Mind

by Frater Oisinn MacFinn

The greatest tool that you have at your disposal is your mind. This is true in all occupations which people turn their hands to, magick included. But in order to use your mind to its fullest potential you have to master it and reclaim it for your self. To do this, you have to start out anew, day one, as the day you were born; and rid it of the fears, hangups, traumas, hatreds, and basis that are the natural result of life's experiences. In a single word, you must *deprogram*.

The source of all magick is the mind. It is the mind that creates the action that the body and will do that 'cast the spell' that causes change to occur; as Magick is "*the art and science of causing change to occur in conformity of will.*" Under this broad definition, every action, every word written, every thought is an act of Magick. To harness the fullest power of this Magick, is to harness the power of Self that is within us all, to adopt a whole picture of your entire being as a singular force and entity, and to understand the parts of the being that make up the Self and how they interrelate to each other. Crowley called this Self 'Thelema', which is Greek and means 'Will'. As we all know, the two

pillars of Thelema are summed up in the book of the law as "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law," and "Love is the law, love under will."

Over the past years there has been much debate and strife between Wicca and Thelema that I find entirely unwarranted by both parties. It is time that the past should be just that, and we should move forward. For myself as a Wiccan, Witch, and Mage, I find within Thelema a deeper mystery and understanding of what makes me 'tick', and in doing so I grow to understand my Self better; and this serves me in that it makes me a better Mage than I could otherwise be without. It was said by George Patterson, and I quote, "If it works, it is good." This is my attitude, and undoubtedly you will find me quoting this to you many times in spoken word in due time. I have found that those two pillars help my understanding of Self; they work, they serve a reason and purpose unto me, hence 'it is good'. And if a principle of another system works, we are free to re-discover it, use it, learn from its wisdom and grow as beings. Thus, for me, a further admonishment: just as long as what we do, we do within the context of Wiccan Ethic.

But to get from one place to the next, we must start somewhere. The viewpoint that

I shall take in this text is that you the student are 'brand-spanking-new' to the Craft and Magick, that for you this is day one of year one. The beginning is to first and foremost reclaim your life and mind for yourself, to unbrainwash and deprogram yourself from past religious teachings, fears, and mind sets. This is not something that you will do overnight, it will take a long time to unwind the past mental and psychic damage that my have been done in the past. Do not expect overnight results for it may, in fact, take a lifetime.

The first step is love. You must love yourself. This is true for all things, family and friends, work, religion, and all aspects of life; to be a success you must first love yourself. To do so you must be honest with yourself always, accept your strengths and own up to your weaknesses. Within the Craft we do not have a word for or concept of 'sin', 'heaven', or 'hell'. Thy do not exist for us. Neither do we have a need for a savior, personal or otherwise. There are no guilt trips, nor is there any room for any egomaniacal superiority complexes that are the result of the division of 'the damned' and 'the saved' which is the direct result of the predominant Judeo-Christian religion and its many sects.

What this means in plain-speak is that it is up to

you to forgive yourself your past errors, misdeeds, and mistakes. Not only forgive yourself of them, but grow and learn from them; there is no sense in having to learn the same lesson twice in a lifetime. Also, it means that you must seek out a way to undo any harm you may cause, to own up to your errors and make peace with whomever or whatever it was that you transgressed against. This is only right, to attempt to restore peace and balance to your life and to the lives of others. There will be times and cases in life where it is impossible to correct an error; you just have to get on with life and accept the outcome, pardon yourself, grow from it and get on with life. This is not a 'shit on the world' attitude either, it is just acceptance of the things that are beyond your power to change. As well, there will be times in life when somebody will not accept your efforts to change and undo a wrong that you have done, this, too, is fine. As long as you know that you have done all that you can do to undo the harm, and most of all you have learned from your mistake, then you are free to forgive yourself and your transgression; they will just have to get on with life and heal themselves in their own way and in their own time. Meanwhile, your life must go onward and so it shall. Don't be too hard on yourself either,

and never accept the role of scapegoat, if you are blameless do not let anyone lay blame upon you. We do and shall make enough mistakes of our own in a lifetime without the need for accepting the blame of errors not of our doing -- love thyself.

Regarding past religious indoctrination; most of us in the Western Hemisphere have done our fair share of time within the temples and churches of the mainstream culture that dominates our society. It just becomes a matter of degree of how deeply you were indoctrinated into it. This part of growth for many, nay most, is the hardest part; it is the cutting of the mental and emotional bonds with that prior religion, it is the 'unbrainwashing' of yourself from the dogmas of the past.

For myself, it was a matter of disproving the Christian church and their text-to-writ, the Bible. And I, fortunately enough for me, did so while still a newly fledged Christian. Being the objective and empirical student that I always have been, I began researching the Bible to prove rather than disprove what was within. But as it turned out, the harder I tried to prove it using in-context study the more quickly disproved itself. For the longest period this left me in a state of denial, this state of denial is called blind faith. Only

in time and with much soul searching did I come to terms with my self, and it took much mental strength to break the emotional hold of blind faith. In the end, I came to a point where it was either truth or a lie. I found it to be an untruth. The thesis of my Genesis paper is from that perspective; one man's search for the truth and the final theorems of it are the result of the passages being read in their context. The conclusions drawn in it are the result of all the above. I present it to you, not as a 'Bible bashing' text as that is not the intent of it, but as an unbrainwashing tool. Why Genesis? Because Genesis is the foundation of the entire Bible, and it the text of the Bible that forms the many religions of the Bible. And if the foundation be untrue, then the entire structure is untrue and crumbles like a house of cards. You will find that it is not pleasing at all to read; the rantings of a mad heretic, nor should it be pleasing to read. It should shake you up emotionally, that is what it is for.

The controversy; do I, and should you, I, and other Pagans have any ill will towards Judeo-Christianity? I bear them no ill will, nor should you. They have the same right to choose to be what they are as we do. Yet, where I do fault them is that they would deny me



that same courtesy. Are they wrong for being who and what they are? No they are not; that is never for us to say, that is a matter of personal choice and freedom. However, I have noticed that within the Pagan world that many of us tend to treat them with kid gloves, apologetic at times and fearing any verbal discourse out of fear of confrontation. Confrontation is good sometimes, it tests your mettle. I do not mean that you should go out looking for a fight with a local Bible thumper. What I am saying is be true to yourself, don't cower down unless it is the wise thing to do -- there are times in life when it is better to walk away. So, let Christians be Christians and Pagans be Pagans and remember, we are in this world and cosmos together -- nobody walks their path alone.

Pro and cons, strengths and faults, powers and weaknesses, we all have them. Yet, the Wise person knows what their pros and cons are, owns up to them, and seeks to change them sooner or later. The easiest way to know what they are is to chart them and keep track of them. On a piece of paper drawn out a T diagram:

Next; list at least five Pros/Strengths in the Pros column, then list five Cons/faults in the Cons column. This requires you to keep your ego in check and to be entirely

honest with yourself. Then rate them on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 meaning 'needs little work' and 5 meaning 'needs much work' with 2, 3 and 4 being degrees between 1 and 5. Use only one rating number once as this is what establishes the order of importance. Something with a rating of 5 should be worked upon first and given the most attention, while the rest should be dealt with as well in the manner of degree upon which they fall. Keep this chart to yourself, it is for your eyes only; if there is some problem on the Con side of the chart that you need help with, feel free to share your chart with your teacher or someone you can trust with your secrecy. Make a chart once a month, keep your old ones so that you can monitor your progress.

Summation: Y o u must love yourself enough to forgive yourself and grow. You must let go of the past, the past is gone by and there is no way to take back time no matter what you do. You have try and fix your errors in life, to grow from them and learn from your mistakes. You have to develop high regard for yourself and emotional esteem for yourself as well. When you do, you shall find a quiet inner strength within yourself as it is the mind that is the mast of Magick, you must come to master your own mind.

# The Magickal Way of Life

by Frater Z.T.G.A.

What do I mean by the "magickal way of life?" Well, we all do ritual, sit for long periods of time in meditation, say Resh, go to mass, and so on. And many people see this as the magickal way. But I think the undertaking of these things is not the essence of the magickal way, however indispensable they might be. Baptists go to church on Sunday, pray before every meal, perform actions they consider "moral" in their communities, and so on. Yet, most magicians would claim that they are nevertheless spiritually bankrupt, at least most of them. The same might be said for Catholics, Nazarenes, and many other "Christian" sects that have lost the true essence of their tradition. Had they not lost this essence, there would be no need for anything new. For we posit (and I doubt I'll get much dissention here) that the essence of any spiritual tradition is the same as ours; indeed, the essence is from beyond the abyss and therefore has nothing whatever to do with how we clothe it once it gets to Malkuth.

Anyone familiar with the history of Christianity will know that it was at one time a vital, powerful religion that involved

intense mystical and magickal practices. It answered social problems which were prevalent at the time of its birth. I would suggest that, had it not lost its connection with its essence, *the* essence, it would continue to answer any problems that might arise, and would still be just as robust a spiritual presence today as it was some two thousand years ago (I recommend the following popular books: *Jesus the Magician*, by Morton Smith, and *The Other Bible*, edited by Willis Barnstone).

I doubt I need explain in Qabalistic terms just what happens to energy as it proceeds from Kether to Malkuth; so many authors have done so by now that it should be common knowledge in magickal circles. But my experience is that magicians tend to get intellectual, perhaps to an unwarranted degree, about spiritual matters. I am certainly prone to this, and have only recently "awakened from the poisoned sleep." I would like to explain, in more mundane terms (and admittedly opinionated ones), just how one can lose sight of the essence of spirituality, and find oneself paying lip service to an illusion.

I find it a common idea in magickal circles today that the "miracles" of Appolonius of Tyana, Emmanuel the Nazirite, Masmuni, Dionysus, and other such masterful purveyors of Thaumaturgy are merely

exaggerations of some more mundane or spiritual event that the miracle story is intended to explain. I think sometimes there has been some embellishment where these stories are concerned. And I certainly think that many magicians of the past built their reputation on trickery and deceit. But I also think that such works as walking on water, projecting oneself to a remote location to kill an emperor, or turning water to wine are literally achievable. Before you, gentle reader, dismiss me as crazy, consider the lifestyle led by many of the great magicians of times past. Where we work at a place of business, they practiced magick. Where we watch television, they practiced magick. Where we go to concerts, they practiced magick. Where we go to movies, they performed ceremonies. This is not to say that these historic figures didn't do any work to support themselves, or didn't socialize. They did work; magick was their work. They performed ceremonies to obtain money, and accepted either fees or donations from those they did magick for. Even Emmanuel of Nazareth told his disciples to go into a town and stay with whoever would house them, and to not turn down offers of food and wine, specifically because the laborer deserves his wages (Matthew 10:5-15). In

return, his disciples should cleanse the sick, raise the dead, and perform whatever miracles were desired. One finds similar parallels in the stories of the other magicians I mentioned (with the exception of Masmuni).

As for socialization, it was usually within their magickal circle of disciples. Appolonius of Tyana disappeared for long periods of time, presumably to meditate or perform powerful magicks. Emmanuel turned his mother and brothers away when they came to see him (I would imagine to save him from the evil gang he had begun to hang out with--a familiar story for most of us). This may be more a consequence of the people these magicians were and the paths they walked. After a few initiations in O.T.O. I simply stopped socializing with many of the people I had known from before my Minerval because they simply didn't understand me anymore, and I just have a better time with other magicians. This is not said out of arrogance, but rather out of respect for the efficacy of the initiations of O.T.O. Many magicians I have spoken with report similar experience. It is part of the effect of initiation to cause the candidate to evolve, and as such they are our most precious possession. If anything can preserve knowledge and protect it from

the effects of war, disaster, and every calamity, it is initiation. But the very practice of magick and mysticism leads to a slow but steady progression of initiation (this is what makes self initiation valid, if rather difficult to do properly).

But I do not suggest that we stop working, destroy televisions and telephones, stop going to movies, concerts, and so on. Some of these things can indeed be undertaken, and so long as the time they took up in our lives is replaced by magickal practice, it will only help. But most of us cannot afford to stop working and destroy our telephones. I like to go to movies and concerts. And my wife loves television; there would be unwelcome consequences in my own life if I destroyed our idiot box.

I would hope that the efforts of hundreds of magicians should have produced some better technology for understanding and implementing magick as a real way of life. And fortunately it has; it takes me only a little effort to bring everything together. We are now in a position, after the tireless labor of such men as John Dee, Eliphas Levi, Aleister Crowley, Grady McMurtry, and others, to know just what it takes to *live* magick, not just do it on occasion.

It is first necessary to understand that one's magick is not precisely a separate entity

from oneself. One does not disappear into a temple to do magick, one either is already or is not already Magick. It is not even entirely accurate to call oneself a magician; the Magickal way is a way of identity, and is very narrow indeed. Only when one cannot see the path as a separate thing is one really on the path; this is the same as saying that the only way to be on the path is to be the path. This is a lesson that is best taught by experience, but is fortunately easily learned by comparison with other endeavors. Anyone who has some experience with drumming, especially for magickal or mystical purposes, knows that one really achieves the right rhythm only when the drummer and the drum become one thing. In driving a car, the last stage of proficiency comes when one learns to integrate the driver's side front fender into one's body consciousness. In a fight, the master becomes the storm of punches and kicks.

Anything less allows our very rigid "analytic" mind to control things. And this really does us no good at all. This is one of the prime differences between Hod and Chessed. They are both sephiroth of organization. But in Hod, the microcosm imposes its models on the universe, whereas in Chessed, the organization literally is the organization already present in the universe.

The question to ask oneself is: Do I oppose the order of the universe, or do I realize that this is an impossible task?

Another way to think about this would be to ask another question: If you pick up a stone and throw it, have you changed the universe? The answer, I think, is both and neither; the question is ill-formed. The specific conditions of the universe have changed, but they changed only because of those conditions "prior" to the event itself, of which you and your motivations were a part. Each person has a way, a path, a True Will. This will is exceedingly strong, so strong, in fact, that no words of strength can be used to describe it. But for the same reason, it is just as fragile. You oppose it by thinking about it; you acquiesce in it by doing it (which actions may include thinking, which may or may not lead one to oppose the will, which may have been part of the will all along---you begin to see the complexities here. For each the unravelling of this is an individual work).

But it's even greater than this. Neither acquiescence nor denial are the proper course, the balanced course. One can go on and on posing pairs of opposites against each other. The point of the magical path is that, once the two opposites are truly understood, they become one. But because

of the seeming endlessness of opposites, this would seem an impossible task, for each new pair must be understood, and they all must be understood before the Great Work is truly accomplished. This would be a task so close to infinite in magnitude as to make no difference; we could never accomplish it in a million lifetimes, let alone one.

Were it not for one factor. That factor, put simply, is the Holy Guardian Angel, the Higher and Divine Genius, etc. It may sound a bit tired to say that we comprehend nature by the virtue of this God within, but the consequence of the reasoning has never, to my knowledge, really been worked out, at least not in the west. Again, to simplify, the path itself is proof of the goal. Because people can achieve states of consciousness in which opposites are united, we can know that there is something higher than ourselves (in a profane sense--one achieves greater understanding when one gets rid of "higher," "lower," etc). This in itself is justification for pursuing the Magickal way, and all the proof of "science" is powerless against this fact. We who are on the path experience it, and this alone convinces us.

With this in mind, we are able to describe a few characteristics that are going to be present for most people

when they have truly found their path. These would be:

1) Passion. One would have the courage of one's convictions. No amount of abstract reasoning is enough to shake the fortress of truth once it is experienced.

2) At the same time, and in seeming contradiction: Peacefulness. Conflict within oneself arises when one tries to oppose the path. The universe is always a more powerful adversary than one can ever hope to be. This peace should not be understood in the mundane sense; one can be at perfect peace while killing millions, but only if that is one's Will.

3) Flexibility. In perfect balance, one is able to adapt quickly. But this is merely a simple way of saying something that would take considerably more language to adequately describe. Balance is not to be understood in the mundane sense (and please forgive the overuse of the word). If one balances in perfect stillness, even Crowley points out in the chapter titled Samson in the Book of Lies that the merest touch is sufficient force to topple he who thought he was secure in his balance. True balance occurs when one understands the forces directed towards one, and one is able to move to manipulate them to accomplish one's will. The

universe requires action; if we are part of it, we move. We can move appropriately, relative to our Wills, or not.

4) Balance implies growth. One on the Magickal path is constantly evolving. If balance were not required, then it would be possible for one to devolve just as easily as evolve. But the universe moves by its own laws (obviously) and so the forces in one's life also move within their laws. To really use a force, one must have more power than the force. To achieve that requires the subjection of yet other forces (one starts with a kind of personal force that is characterized by the Kundalini energy, and is often the primal motivating factor even far along the path). The acquisition of power is the essence of growth. Therefore, as one moves along the path, one experiences growth as an inevitable necessity of that movement.

One should not imagine that by subjection I mean anything like "stamping down" or "trodding underfoot." Brute force is not necessary to subject anything. It is possible to be the master of a force without being apparently so. One would never have imagined that Alexander's hundred thousand would have triumphed over Darius's million--twice!--but they did. And they did so with superior knowledge and a simple lack of respect for the conventions of war, two factors

which to that point in history were not considered to imply the concept of strength in any way. But Alexander showed otherwise.

These are, I think, the essential qualities of one who is on the magickal path. They seem to follow from what it means to be on that path, but these remarks should not be taken as meaningful in any and all particular cases. Everyone will ultimately have to formulate their own terms; I am not one to oppose such an occurrence. But let me end on this note: if one takes the universe itself as a species of truth, and one includes within the universe everything one sees, then no person who does their will is false.

# The Most Mysterious Contact Page:

Contact information is presented in a direct substitution code of order 0. Those wishing to contact the lodge may decipher the code and write to the address listed below. Or, you may write to the e-mail address given.

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Please address all correspondence with the lodge to "The Bodymasters." All correspondence with the editor of Ophiuchus should be addressed to "The Editor," or, should you prefer, to "His Magnificent Lordship," or, should you prefer, to "His Most Pukeheaded Gilkernast." I will answer to all names. Be warned, letters to the editor or one of his aforementioned aliases may be published in Ophiuchus with either sobriety or comic parody, as warranted. Those letters sent with poor grammar will be added to our shrine of American Dipshits, which is growing daily.

Finally, should anyone wish to submit an article, story, poem, comment, allegory, photograph or other visual artwork, novel, encyclopedia, announcement, or other work of any sort which can be printed on paper without anyone going to jail or unraveling the fabric of the universe, please either:

- 1) e-mail in any standard format to the address above,
- 2) Send in manuscript format (double spaced, with your name and return contact info) to the address given above, or
- 3) Submit via diskette in the same manner as 2), above.

Submitting an article is no guarantee that it will be published; but if you care to accompany your submission with money or threats of superior force which you think you can get away with, this may increase your chances tremendously. In the case of threats of superior force, however, I urge you to read the comment by me (the editor) at the beginning of this issue. It should either a) convince you that I am a formidable opponent incapable of being harmed by conventional weapons or b) so insane so as not to be worth your time and effort.