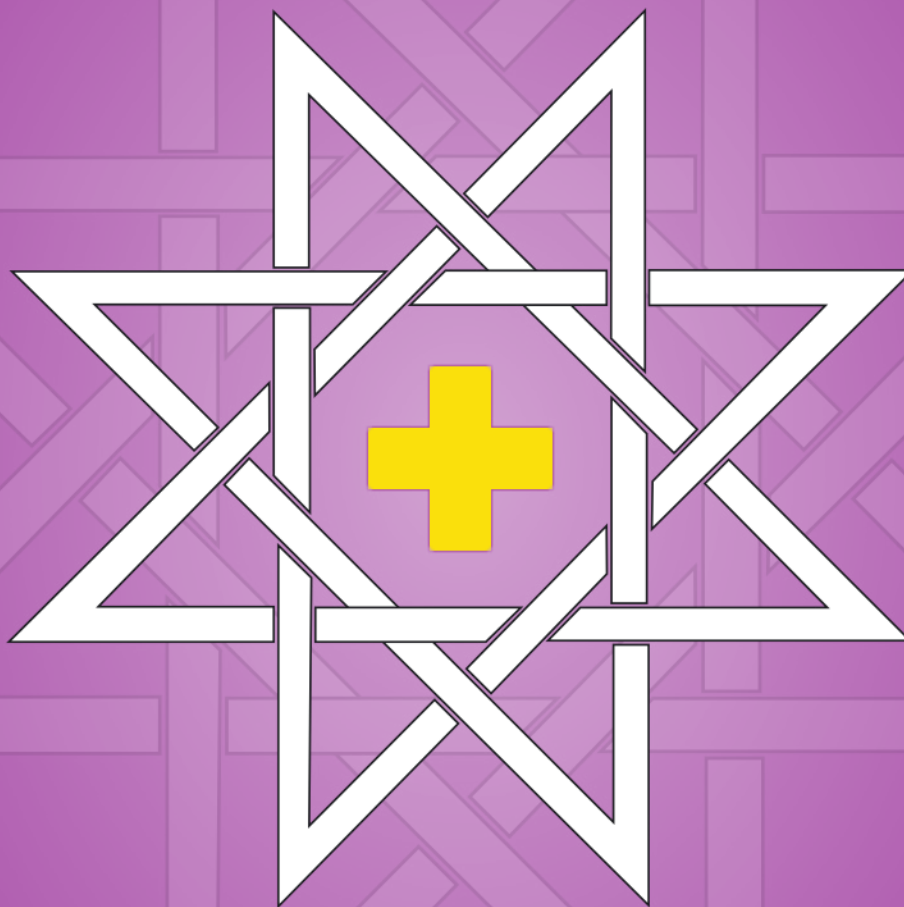


The Ogdoadic Journal

of the Western Mysteries

Vol. 1 No. 3:
*The Holy Guardian Angel:
It's Quest & Fulfillment*



ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIÆ



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*The Holy Guardian Angel:
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Edited by
DERIK RICHARDS & KERRY WISNER

TEMPUS SEMENTIS 2009

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THIS ISSUE OF THE OGDODIC JOURNAL
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF CRYSTAL O'REGAN,
ADEPTUS MAGNI AESTIMATUS SODALIS,
COLLEGII CATHEDRARUM.

*So Light and Life shall be drawn at last to the
radiance of one Star, and that Star shall mount to the
unshadowed height.*

καὶ τότε γυμνωθεὶς ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς ἀρμονίας
ἐνεργημάτων γίνεται ἐπὶ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν,
τὴν ἰδίαν δύνάμιν ἔχων, καὶ ὑμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς
οὖσι τὸν πατέρα· συγκαίρουσι δὲ οἱ παρόντες
τῇ τούτου παρουσίᾳ, καὶ ὁμοιωθεὶς τοῖς συνοῦσιν
ἀκούει καὶ τινῶν δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν
φύσιν φωνῇ τινὶ ἡδέϊα ὑμνουσῶν τὸν θεόν·
καὶ τότε τάξει ἀνέρχονται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα,
καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοῦ παραδιδόασιν,
καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται.
τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γινώσκουσιν ἐσχηκόσι, θεωθῆναι.

*Then, stripped of the activities of the cosmos,
he enters the substance of the eighth plain with his own power,
and he sings praises to the Father with those who are present;
those who are near rejoice at his coming.
Being made like to those who are there together,
he also hears certain powers which are above the eighth sphere,
singing praises to God with sweet voice.
Then in due order, they ascend to the Father
and they surrender themselves to the powers,
and becoming the powers they are merged in God.
This is the end, the Supreme Good,
for those who have had the higher knowledge: to become God.*

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The College of Thrones, on behalf of the Astrum Sophia, would like to express our deepest regard and gratitude to Vivienne O'Regan, wife of the late Crys O'Regan, our friend and magical Companion. Vivienne is a remarkable person who, through the years, has influenced many of us within the Western Tradition. She has always been known for her kind and intelligent guidance, initiatic insight and down to earth wit. We cannot fully express our sorrow for her loss, but can with hope, look forward to years of friendship and possibilities.

In the Light of the Glorious Star,

The College of Thrones
House of the Winged Serpent
Ordo Astrum Sophiae



INTRODUCTION

The Ogdoadic Journal of the Western Mysteries, Sun Lion Publications, will be published biannually by the Ordo Astrum Sophiae. This is a cooperative non-commercial venture of the Order, intended to broaden the scope of Ogdoadic material available to the Western Esoteric Tradition. The journal will present articles and material on topics such as Defining the Ogdoadic Tradition, Historical Influences of the Tradition, The Constellation of the Worshipped, The Regenerative Mysteries, The Holy Guardian Angel: Its Quest and Fulfillment, Ogdoadic Ritual Magic, etc.

The majority of material will be taken from the Order's internal journal, *The Messenger*, but we also welcome other authors wishing to make relevant contributions to future editions.¹

ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIAE

Founded in 2002, the Astrum Sophia is a fully contacted, non-commercial initiatory Order dedicated to continuing and fostering the Ogdoadic Tradition of the Western Mysteries. The Order's mission is to provide a stable vehicle for the advancement of its members in an ambience of living Alchemy and an unwavering devotion to raise its initiates to true Adept hood within the regenerative mysteries of the Ogdoadic Tradition. The Order is also dedicated to the ideal of fraternal cooperation, both within its own body of initiates and in its relations to other Orders within the Western Mystery Tradition. It is a Hermetic and magical Order, based on 19th-20th century Aurum Solis teachings and on evolving esoteric research.

¹ Individuals interested in making submissions can contact astrum.sophia@gmail.com in care of Sun Lion Publications. Articles will be accepted at the discretion of the publication team and may be edited, with permission, to better fit the style or format of the journal.

Ordo Astrum Sophiae derives its Charter of Succession and initiatory lineage from the Aurum Solis, Order of the Sacred Word, which was founded in London in 1897 by George Stanton (pictured right) and Charles Kingold. Though proud as the Order is of its Aurum Solis heritage, it must be emphasized that the Astrum Sophia does not in any way represent or claim to be the Aurum Solis. The Ordo Astrum Sophiae (O.A.S.) is simply the latest manifestation of that great tradition dedicated to the pursuit of Knowledge and Regeneration as well as the advancement of theoretical and practical studies within the greater Ogdoadic Tradition of the Western Mysteries. The O.A.S. is thus devoted, as both servants and guardians, to a living and radiant spiritual tradition that expresses itself through beauty, diversity, and resilience.



Membership and initiation in the Order, without exception, must proceed through the traditional grade structure. Inquiries to the Order should be submitted to the Administrator-General of the Astrum Sophia at astrum.sophia@gmail.com, or to the Master of a Com-mandery.

THE OGDOADIC TRADITION

So what is the Ogdoadic Tradition? Essentially it is Hermetic, embracing the archetype of and literature attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. *The Hermetica* is the root source of inspiration and magic in the Ogdoadic Tradition. It is distinct from its Rosicrucian and Thelemic counterparts because of its unique symbolism, its initiatory structure,

the emphasis on the number eight, and the principal of Regeneration.

To understand the Ogdoadic Tradition it is important to understand the various elements that contributed to its makeup, for it draws upon many traditions and historical influences including Egyptian magic, Greek philosophy, the Mystery religions, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, Alchemy, the Qabalah, and Hermetic literature.

The principal, archetypal symbols of the Ogdoadic Tradition appear in cultures throughout the world. One of the Tradition's main symbols is the House of Sacrifice. You need look no further than the Holy of Holies at Edfu (perhaps the oldest intact remnant of the House of Sacrifice) or the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome to see the ancient and unmistakable design of this House. You can also see the design in certain Mithraic artifacts: these clearly show three steps leading up to the House, wherein dwells a Mithraic youth holding the orb of sovereignty, the Sun. The triangular superstructure above contains symbols of power and initiation evidencing divine presence within the holy dwelling.

The Star of Regeneration, also a central symbol of our Tradition, has held a high place in art as disparate as Islam, the Greek Mediterranean, and Christian iconography. Likewise the Tessera, used in both the Astrum Sophia and the Aurum Solis as a symbol of the Great Work, graces numerous sites of antiquity, including the Orpheus pavement at Gloucestershire, England.



THE GATES OF THE ANGEL

by William Stoltz, MA

The heart of all true magic resides in the quest and the ongoing work to fulfill one's divine purpose. The most familiar terminology in the Western Mystery Tradition (WMT) refers to this phenomenon as the "Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel." As it implies, it is the experience of acquiring Knowledge, or Gnosis, of the Divine Self: an Epiphany or Theophany if you will. This phenomenon, if we are to interpret it literally, connotes a transmission of one's true will (word or Logos) in a revelatory, conscious and comprehensible form to the mystic. However, one must not mistake this event for a simple act of divine insight for, as the term Theophany implies, it is a true manifestation or appearance of the Holy One. The path of magic in this case must incorporate the art of mysticism inasmuch that the revelation of one's Angel is a mystical experience.

In the Order of the Astrum Sophia it is not enough for the initiate to be a trained magician, but s/he must also develop skills in the art of mysticism in pursuit of Adept hood. In that magic is the art of creation and direct expression of one's will, the mystical path involves the complimentary practices of meditation, prayer and the development of the intuitive mind: mysticism is the path of unification; magic is the expression of the unified self. Although some may find mysticism inconsistent with "High Magic," examination will discover its training integrated into all relevant magical schools and orders. This training can usually be found in what are known as "the foundation practices" of an order and include various levels of discipline in concentration, contemplation, visualization, and the development of the light body. More advanced techniques that bridge magic and mysticism may also include skrying, rising on the planes and cultivating the magical personality. In the Western Tradition the latter of these is so integral to the Theophanic process that we will deal with it in some depth through our article on the

"Magical Personality and the Holy Guardian Angel."¹

Comparative Sources and Models

This Journal explores the mysteries of the phenomena of the Knowledge and Conversation with a closer look at its dynamics, structures and various applications effective to its pursuit. Although our main focus is on the framework of the Hermetic and Ogdoadic traditions of the Western Mysteries, one cannot explore this subject without drawing from other sources and traditions. Of these we need to acknowledge the flowering of 12th and 13th century Sufi luminaries and their teachings. Heavily influenced by Hermes and related Hermetic texts, a number of these mystics gave birth to concepts, works and insights that freely explored the profound depths, reality and relationship with the Beloved Angel. Among these figures is the 12th (1165 – 1240) century Sufi mystic known as Ibn 'Arabi, the hermetically inspired work of Najmoddin Kobra (1145 -1221) and Sohrawardi (1154 - 1191). In the latter instance, Hermes and Hermetic philosophy played a central role in Sohrawardi's work and illumination.² Including sources from related traditions are needed due to the lack of comprehensive material in the WMT alone. Where our tradition appears adequate in inference it lacks in sound theory and methodology. So too, regarding the developing relationship with our Angel, the WMT is in need of modernization and clear speech. We have become so used to cryptic, secret and mysterious rules around high magic that students accept this as being necessary to protect the mysteries – or for that matter the student: most of this mystique is founded on utter nonsense! One wonders if the mystical traditions

1 A comprehensive text on "The Holy Guardian Angel: Its Quest and Fulfillment" is planned for future release by the heads of the Order.

2 See *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism* by Henry Corbin.



Annunciation to St. Anne, Giotto

of the Sufis better prepares the seeker for the orientation, hard work and discipline required for the divine alchemy; surely it does not hold quite the glamour or fascination promised in the art magic of the Western Tradition.

On the other hand we should not assume the WMT is without merit on this subject. One example is the Hermetic texts³, which speak quite clearly of these mysteries and how to attain to the Logos or Divine Mind. We must also thank the work of The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage, numerous writings by Aleister Crowley, Israel Regardie, and in particular the writings of Denning and Phillips for bringing this subject into the 21st century and beyond. The latter of these, first printed in *The Magical Philosophy's* "Triumph of Light," is a stunningly eloquent, personal and insightful work on the Divine Guardian and comparative literature.

In regards to the Ogdoadic Tradition, some parallels will be used from its grade system of three degrees, or Halls as they are called, in order to explore the nature of the Quest. We truly hope that objective examination of this model will prove it to be the most organic, if not the most effective, system within the tradition of the Western Mysteries. Ideally we would like to dispel the silly ideas that the Ogdoadic system is a derivative of the Golden

Dawn. As beautiful as the Golden Dawn is, individuals who hold this notion show a clear lack of initiatory insight, and I suspect a failure to understand the basic differences of the two systems.

However, we need also acknowledge groups defined as Wiccan or Pagan, using the three degree system. They, like the Hermetic tradition, have adapted their standard from ancient origins and models for initiation and magical training. Though their workings may vary widely, most have a unique integrity based on three stages or degrees that are historically the oldest and most enduring of initiatory systems. In these it was traditional to dedicate the first two degrees to what are called the "lesser mysteries" while the third degree is reserved for the "greater mysteries." From pre-Christian Egypt, the initiatory triad ruled the mystery schools of ancient Greece and laid the cornerstone of modern Freemasonry.

The Grade System and Its Work

The Astrum Sophia is a Solar Hermetic Order whose primary purpose is organized and directed to assist its members in the attainment and fulfillment of the Knowledge and Conversation of their Holy Guardian.

³ See *The Corpus Hermeticum*, "The Sermon on the Mount"

Furthermore, it is an Order of the Ogdoadic⁴ Tradition, distinguished by the emblems of the eightfold Star of Regeneration and the fivefold House of Sacrifice: symbols rooted in the heart and workings of the higher divine self. This higher self is known by numerous titles which include: the Holy Guardian Angel (HGA), Divine Guardian, the Genius, Daemon, Beloved, the Persona, or sometimes simply “The Angel.”

The system of three halls or degrees used by the Astrum Sophia (O.A.S.), the Aurum Solis, and the Ogdoadic Tradition in general provides a uniquely effective framework to explore the mysteries of the Divine Guardian. Within the three hall system the initiate is, step by step, guided through the process of divine alchemy and thus into the vast heart of the greater mysteries of light.

The First Hall marks the initiate’s passage from the mundane world to the magical realm of the lesser mysteries. Guided to the threshold and, sight being restored, the voice of light addresses the candidate “Child of Earth and Starry Heaven,” thus marking the entrance to the new world and new life of the initiate. Here begins the journey to the mysteries of light and the introduction of the five sacred aspects of the Holy House of Gnosis. This step is also symbolized by the Pillar of Breath supporting the south side of the House of Sacrifice: representing, among other things, the restoration of the candidate’s Rauch. One may ask why the lowest grade is focused on the Ruach and not the Nephesh. This is because the Ruach is the celebrant and recipient of our work and must be initiated first in order to effectively direct and guide the Nephesh in the mysteries. Approaching this dynamic first is essential since the Rauch of the candidate must become a proper mediator and vehicle for the mysteries of the Second and Third Halls.

The Second Hall, and likely the most magical of our Tradition’s degrees, imparts the full scope of the lesser mysteries of light. This includes a comprehensive working of the elements, planetary powers, awakening of the light body, initiation into the archetypal “Constellation of the Worshipped,” and deeper affiliation with the inner plane contacts of our tradition. Additionally, the magician is introduced to ancient formulae to further awaken them to the world of High Magic. The First and Second Halls of the Order then provide the foundation for the quest of the Divine Guardian.

The Third Hall, that of Adeptus, is transmitted through a powerful rite called the Palingenesis - or Rite of



Hildegard's vision, Scivias Codex (1174)

Elevation. This is a profound step that brings the initiate into the full knowledge and grace of the Greater Mysteries, and consequently, into the inner order of the Stella Gloriosa. The work of the new Adept, if attainment has not yet been realized⁵, involves the mystical experience of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. At its fulfillment, by our standards, the initiate becomes an Adeptus Plenus, or full Adept. At the discretion of the Order’s chiefs, the Adept may be ratified as Adeptus Plenus through the “Rite of Ratification.” Additionally, the Adept may be invited into the Stella Gloriosa’s Guild of the Blazing Wheel. The Guild of the Blazing Wheel embodies the functional workings and sodality of an inner and reconstituted body of the Order Astrum Sophiae. The guild therefore expresses itself by and through the Third Hall rites of the Temenos of the Adepti and the rites of the Telesterion of the Adepti. Herein are initiatory rites associated with the formula of the House of Sacrifice, in respect to Third Hall, and considered a vital progression of “sub-initiations” within the Third Hall proper.⁶ These grades are especially attuned to the inner workings of

⁵ The formal elevation of the Adept is not necessarily a prerequisite to his or her attainment. For such an individual, the Palingenesis will serve to further strengthen and consummate the Gnosis.

⁶ These grades, exclusive to the O.A.S., are:

1. The Holy One: Rite of the Temenos of the Adepti – Phase 1
2. The Crown of Flame: Rite of the Telesterion – Phase 1
3. The Firstborn: Rite of the Telesterion – Phase 2
4. The Sun at Night: Rite of the Telesterion – Phase 3
5. The Fire of Naos: Rite of the Telesterion – Phase 4

⁴ Eight being the only number that is continuous and regenerative; the symbol of Hermes and the lemniscate of infinity.

the Stella Gloriosa and the deep internal alchemy of the Adept, and the Tradition as a whole.

The following is a synopsis of the Ogdoadic Tradition's grade system and the principles of the Qabalistic Tree of Life.⁷

0. *Probationer* is not a degree but the status of probationer or pre-initiate. They take on the important work of the Pronaos: one who, being prepared, stands on the threshold of the Ogdoadic Mysteries.

1. *Neophytos* (Neophyte), the proper title of which is Neophyte of the Great Work: Initiation into this grade is given in the First Hall, and is represented on the Tree of Life by Malkuth.

2. *Servitor* (Server), the proper title of which is Servitor of the Secret Flame: Initiation into this grade is given in the Second Hall, and it is represented on the Tree of Life by Yesod.

3. *Adeptus Minor* (Adept), one proper title of which is Priest of the Gnosis: This grade is represented on the Tree of Life by Tiphareth. Being of the Inner Order, or Greater Mysteries, its significance is complete in itself. Complementary to the Third Hall of the Order are the aforementioned degrees of the Blazing Wheel, that of Adeptus Plenus, and mystical degrees corresponding to the inner plane powers of Geburah and Gedulah, respectively.

These grades correspond to the House of Sacrifice in the forms of:

1. The Dyad – The two pillars, with the first being Nomothetes, the male pillar, referring to the Rauch and the First Hall. The second pillar is Machetes, the female principle, referring to the Second Hall and the Nephesh.

2. The Triad – refers to the Supernal Sephiroth, the Third Hall, and to the Neshamah, the HGA.

The Qabalah and Its Concepts

The designs, concepts and symbols in this Journal will be approached in the framework and terminology of several systems that include: The Western Mystery Tradition, Egyptian theory of the soul and transcendence, the Hindu concept of the Guru Gita, and the Mid-Eastern ideas of the Sufis. Whenever possible the Qabalah of the Western Mystery Tradition is used to provide a familiar

and cogent language to explore our subject. The following is a synopsis of the essential principles of the Qabalistic Tree of Life and levels of the soul intrinsic to our current purpose.

The Four Worlds

The Tree of Life is divided into four worlds that, for the purpose of this work, are referred to realms which the levels of the Soul inhabit. These worlds also provide a well-established framework and context to examine the work of the Angel. In descending order, they are called Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah and Assiah.

These four worlds correspond to the divine name Yod Heh Vau Heh (YHVH) and represent the archetypal elements of Fire, Water, Air and Earth respectively. The first three worlds are made up of triads of Sephiroth, which culminate in Malkuth (the fourth world), suspended as a pendent from the Tree. Each world is a reflection of the one above it, representing consciousness manifesting in ever increasing densities.

Atziluth

The first world, Atziluth, is the Archetypal world associated with the Hebrew letter *Yod* and the element of primordial fire. Atziluth embraces the supernal triad on the Tree of Life beginning with *Kether*, the Crown, the archetypal monad or spirit. *Kether* expresses itself first in the second Sephirah *Chokmah* (or Wisdom), the archetypal masculine principle. *Chokmah* is followed by the third Sephirah *Binah* (or Understanding), the archetypal feminine.

Together these three Sephiroth form the Supernal Triad of divinity of which the three emanating worlds are reflections. Thus from the archetypal world of Atziluth, the plane of Briah (the first created world) is reflected like a mirror of water. This separation causes an Abyss to form between the two planes of that which is un-manifest and that which is manifest – or being and becoming. Atziluth then is the pure realm of spirit that emanates the Sephiroth and the three lower worlds.

Briah

The second world, Briah, is the world of creation associated with the Hebrew letter *Heh* and the element of primordial water. The Briatic domain envelops the fourth Sephirah *Chesed* (or Mercy), the fifth Sephirah *Geburah* (or Severity), and the sixth Sephirah *Tiphareth* (or Solar Beauty). Together they form the harmony of creative

⁷ See *Aurum Solis: Initiation Ceremonies and Inner Magical Techniques* by Osborne Phillips.

consciousness within what is known as the time-space continuum. This triad suggests the divine primordial fire of Atziluth expressing itself below the abyss in the clear primordial waters of creation. This world of creation is also called “the Universe of the Thrones.” It is thus the Throne of the power and grace of the Holy Light emanating from above: the very heart of the world system and a primary locus for the Ruach.

Briah is also regarded as the Archangelic realm and the reflective imaginative mind first conceived in

Atziluth.

Yetzirah

The third world, Yetzirah, is the world of Formation assigned to the Hebrew letter *Vau* and the element of primordial air. Yetzirah is formed from the seventh Sephirah *Netzach* (or Victory), the eighth Sephirah *Hod* (or Glory), and the ninth Sephirah *Yesod* (or The Foundation). These three emanations compose the forces of sensation, reason and

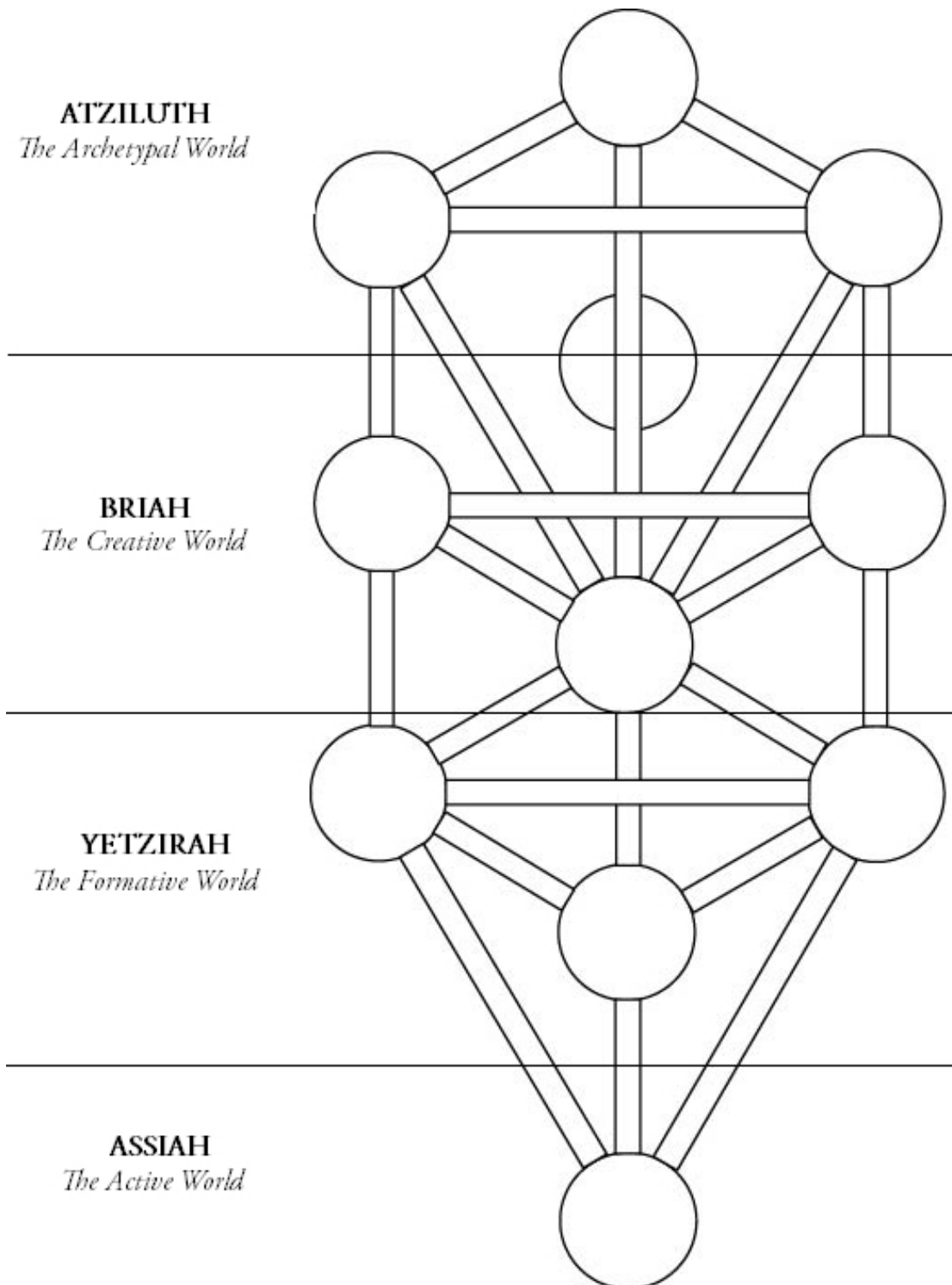


image (the astral light) respectively.

This is also the Angelic plane. As the lowest triad on the Tree, it represents the cohesion of energies and structures descending from the Briatic level above. When the three elements come together in Yesod they constitute a dynamic alchemy, thereby forming the underlying foundation of all manifestation, resulting in the crystalline world of Assiah. Yetzirah is the world of astral light, where ideas, images and patterns begin to take form. This vastness contains all the energies and impressions of the higher planes, and is therefore a vital link between our mundane life in Assiah and the spiritual world of Briah.

Assiah

The fourth and final world is that of Assiah, the world of Action. Assiah is represented by the tenth Sephirah only, that of *Malkuth*, the Kingdom. Assiah corresponds with the Hebrew letter *Heh* final, which symbolically represents the combination of the elements manifesting themselves in primordial earth. This plane makes up the physical universe. It is the created world of physical elements, the manifest universe. Here resides the physical body, the environment in which it operates, and that which we rise from.

The Levels of Soul: The Divine Guardian and Its Functions

There are three major divisions of the psyche in esoteric philosophy. These are:

1. The *Neshamah*, or Higher Soul, corresponding to Atziluth and Briah.
2. The *Ruach*, or Rational Soul, corresponding to Briah and Yetzirah.
3. The *Nephesh*, or Lower Animal Soul, corresponding to Yetzirah and Assiah.

The Neshamah

The Neshamah is the superstructure of the psyche composed of three archetypal principles represented by Kether, Chokmah and Binah. The Kether principle is called Yechidah and is the highest, undifferentiated quality of mind existing as pure un-extended consciousness: that is to say, unity. As the "I AM" the Yechidah extends itself in Chokmah as Chiah. Chiah is the individual Life Force and will of a particular soul and therefore the first

expression of its word or nature - the Logos. Binah is the third and formative power of the Supernals. As the higher Intuitive soul, or Great Mother containing all preceding powers, Binah is the Neshamah proper. The Neshamah begins the process of form and definition of how the self can be distinguished as unique - yet unlimited in possible archetypal expression. Neshamah as Binah, or Understanding, is likewise the understanding of how spirit expresses itself through various archetypal modes and how it can further understand itself in the process of self realization.

In psychological terms the Neshamah corresponds to the Super-conscious intuitive mind. This is confused at times with Freud's superego which is composed of external influences through a process called introjection. In relation to the Ruach, the super-conscious mind, enthroned in Binah, functions as the archetypal mind in the form of the Angel (HGA) or Genius. This "Angel of Light," in Qabalistic literature is in one sense the divine feminine Shekinah or supernal mother identical to the Gnostic Sophia or Soul of Wisdom. However, since the Neshamah nurtures all major forms of archetype, the Adam Kadmon, archetypal male, or Agathadaimon also resides here. I say resides here because the Neshamah of a person is not, in and of itself, defined by the Guardian Angel. Just as many people may reside in a large house or city, a particular Neshamah may house and engender more than one Angel simultaneously. Being above the Abyss, it is necessary to understand that the Angel, as the emissary of the Neshamah, exists as a living and dynamic presence abiding in the immortal realm of spiritual existence. It is also the nature of the Neshamah to contain and transmit the insight, instinct and design for self realization through its heavenly envoy. Because of this, the awareness of how self union can take place is generally said to be disclosed as part of one's Knowledge and Conversation with the Angel.

When the Neshamah, for the sake of experience and self expression, projects itself below the Abyss it forms the second level of psyche in the form of the Ruach. The Ruach is the mirror of the Neshamah reflected in the creative waters of the Briatic world. As a result of this descent, the Ruach loses memory of its divine nature and is theoretically seen as fallen from Grace.

At this point, on the structure of the Tree, a "shadow Sephirah" called *Da'ath* or Knowledge appears within the abyss between the Neshamah and Ruach. However, *Da'ath* is also a bridge (it doesn't "really" exist) whereby the reason of the Ruach can eventually come to understand the Angel by personal alchemy and occult

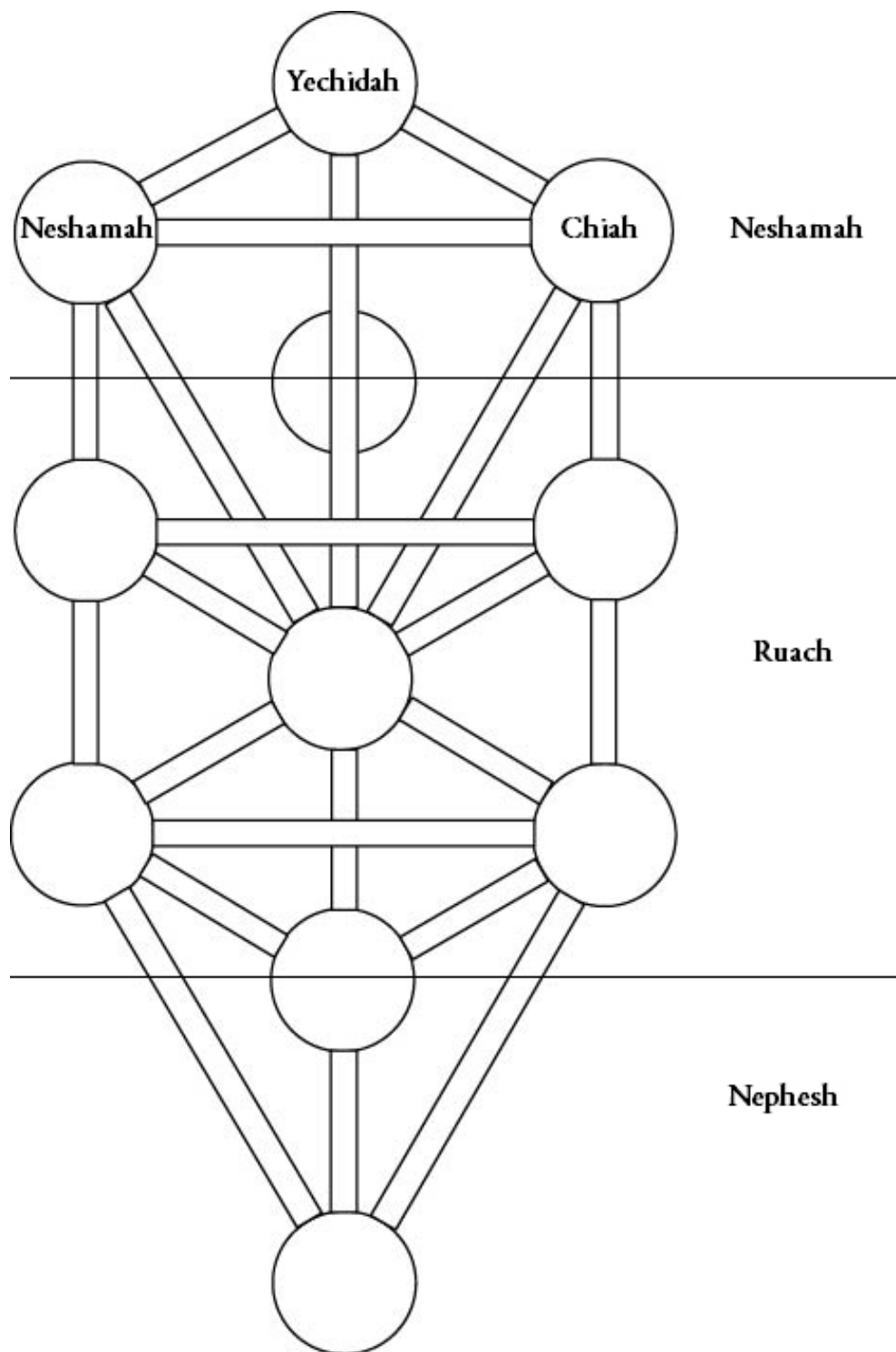
knowledge of the self. At this point the beginning of reconciliation between the Neshamah and Ruach marks an important stage in the Great Work.

The Ruach

The Ruach, or rational soul, is composed of the Sephiroth Chesed, Geburah, Tiphereth, Netzach and Hod. The upper region of the Ruach overlaps with the Neshamah at Da'ath and below with the Nephesh at Yesod. The Ruach is a rational incarnate soul that, appearing to be

exiled from the Neshamah, must integrate itself in the temporal world without losing its cohesion. Once below the Abyss it must also, to the best of its abilities, perform a myriad of mundane and transcendent functions required for ordinary survival and reunification with its divine source.

The Heart of the Ruach is at Tipherath and it is here the personal ego, or seat of identity in the conscious mind, resides. As the soul at the median point of the psyche it becomes the mediator between the divine super-conscious and the lower self. Functioning as the personal



ego, and the core of incarnate identity, it is continually organizing and attempting to make sense out of one's field of experience. It is because of this dynamic that the Ruach is called the soul of reason. In addition to mediating our intuitive super-conscious and instinctual unconscious self, the Ruach then is responsible for making sense of our internal and external realities.

The Nephesh

The Nephesh or animal soul is attributed to Yesod - the sphere of the Moon and reflection. Within the psyche the Nephesh has intimate relationships with the Ruach and the body. This position presents its own set of complications in the Nephesh and consequently the rest of the psyche dwelling below the Abyss.

As personal neuroses are formed in the psyche, denial and repression reinforce a form of dualism, thereby splitting the nature of the Nephesh. Hence the Nephesh, or unconscious mind, may be rejected through ignorance and fear. Any viable form of depth psychotherapy or magical system will seek to know and integrate this shadow side in order to utilize its tremendous inter-psyche energy and rich inner symbolism (thus returning it to its native alignment). In light of this it is wise to remember the Nephesh is the Lesser Shekinah and therefore connected to Binah or Neshamah as an occult gateway to the Angel.⁸

The Nephesh then is the most commonly maligned aspect of the psyche - and most misunderstood. On one hand it has a primitive power and beauty essential to the life of any individual committed to the Great Work. On the other, however, the Nephesh also contains unconscious impulses that frequently oppose the True Will and its work (the "Id" in Freud's theory of personality). One cannot deny the Shadow Self⁹ and grow magically. The repressed material of the unconscious must at some point become conscious fuel for the cauldron of our alchemy instead of some looming shadow of dread. This is one reason we encourage potential magicians to pursue some form of psychotherapy or analysis as part of their magical training.

In some respects the Nephesh is like a faithful dog that would risk its own life to save its master (Anubis is a patron Deity of the Nephesh). As such, its nature is intrinsically well-meaning, faithful and creative; yet even the most well-tempered creature, neglected, starved and

beaten by someone acting as its master is likely to become imbalanced. Most often it is the rational mind that is capable of ignorance and cruelty - not the lower self. The Ruach, or rational self then, should also be considered a contributing factor in the formation of the unrealized shadow complex.

The G'uph

The G'uph is a term used to describe the physical body and its link to the mind. In the Microcosm the Nephesh uses our sense organs and autonomic nervous system as pathways within our body-mind matrix. By this I mean the body and mind operate as functional extensions of each other and cannot be entirely separated while in an earthly vehicle. The G'uph is then an authentic level of Psyche - albeit a manifest one, well deserving the term "Temple of the Spirit."

Summary

It is a common mistake to assume that absolute divisions exist between the Sephiroth, the Worlds and levels of the psyche. Since the Tree of Life reflects an intrinsically harmonious and interactive system of energies, considering where and how these distinctions merge provides a valuable gateway for theoretical and practical application. Examples of this can be found at Da'ath in the Abyss, and Yesod where the lower and intermediate levels of the psyche converge. Although this "bridging" is more commonly attributed to the connecting paths and the placement of the Tarot Trumps, the more solid distinctions such as the worlds, are similar to how elements come together on Earth. Imagine this as a body of water cradled in hard earth. Here you would find hard particles suspended in the water and at the same time ground water below the hard surface. This suggests a more interactive model of the psyche as opposed to one with rigid boundaries.

The Knowledge and Conversation of the HGA

...is the direct conscious contact between the Neshamah and the Ruach, in which the true nature, Logos, or purpose of the individual is revealed. This is the beginning of the work of the Adept, not the end!

⁸ The Second Hall Rite of Integration is brilliantly designed to facilitate these profound dynamics.

⁹ The shadow is a term used by Jung to define the mirror opposite of what we think we are, submerged below the surface of the conscious mind.

THE MAGICAL PERSONALITY & THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

by William Stoltz, MA
& Jennifer Wolfe, MS

An essential tool in magical work is the development and use of the magical personality. As the phrase suggests, the magical personality is a persona set apart from the mundane life and personality of the magician. Over time it becomes a living magical presence that is conceived, refined and developed by the magician and his Holy Guardian. This process takes place through a conscious process of development and individuation,¹ prompted by intuitive impulses of the higher self and resulting in a magical hybrid we call the magical personality. As it becomes more integrated into the magician's work, this new persona also forms a vital bridge between the higher and lower selves. This bridge not only accelerates the process of the Knowledge and Conversation (of the Holy Guardian Angel) but provides a vehicle to better channel the forces of the higher planes. In this fashion it becomes an important vehicle for exploring and channeling both the lesser and greater mysteries of Light.

Once established, the magical personality functions much like the mundane personality, both multifaceted and unique to each individual. Its appearance, or vital astral form sculpted from the Body of Light, is also unique to each aspirant. So is the magical voice, used to communicate intent on both the astral and physical planes. The magician's guiding ideals, operating through the processes of individuation and meditation, create the soul of the magical personality. By association, intention and act, the magical ring harmoniously binds together all these facets, bringing the magical personality into manifest operation as something truly alive and potent.

The Relationship between the Magical Personality and the Holy Guardian

From one standpoint, the magical personality is the creative product of the magician's conscious ingenuity and work, designed as a vehicle or nexus for contacting and manifesting the Holy Guardian (HGA)². Like the HGA, the magical personality acts as *Pontifex*, or bridge-builder, establishing deeper connections between different levels of the self. This function as Pontifex often manifests through impulses and inspirations to seek out the divine. The magical personality acts to draw us ever upward to our rightful place in the Holy Garden and the presence of the HGA. Through its development and use, therefore, we are seeking to create a Theophany: a manifestation of the Divine Angel

This is not to imply, however, that the magical personality and the HGA are in any way one and the same. In *The Magical Philosophy, The Foundations of High Magick*, Denning and Philips state: "let no confusion arise... between the Magical Personality and the higher self."³ The formation of the magic personality results from a co-creative process between the HGA and the magician. The magical personality is clearly placed between the magician and the HGA as a divine mediator; it is a living reflection of the HGA and magician alike.

As long as you keep in mind this caveat, it is useful to explore the role the HGA plays in the conception and development of the magical personality, as well as in other aspects of the Great Work. The influence of the HGA is easily overlooked by the conscious/rational self during the early stages of the magical journey, but becomes more evident with growing experience and awareness of the magical personality.

1 The process of individuation is a part of Carl Jung's theories.

2 See *The Magical Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 61

3 Ibid.

Facets of the Magical Personality

The Magical Name

Traditionally, a magical name is a carefully selected title symbolizing the magician's spiritual ideals and aspirations. Rosicrucian fraternities often use mottos describing an aspiration: an example is Israel Regardie's magical name, *Ad Majorem Adonai Gloriam* – "To the Greater Glory of God." The Renaissance Careggi Circle often used the names of gods, such as *Helios* or *Pan*. Adopting mottos is not prohibited in Ordo Astrum Sophiae, but our custom does favor the tradition of the Careggi circle in using shorter names. More importantly, however, the magical name should not be taken from the magician's native tongue, for it alludes to a persona separate from the mundane self. Some practitioners believe the magical name should be kept entirely secret, whereas others do not; some have a secret name for private use and another name for more "public" use. Although this decision is left to the personal choice of the magician, at the very least it should be used only for magical purposes and uttered only among like-minded individuals.

The magician may acquire various names pertaining to different grades or stages of development. In the Astrum Sophia, for example, the initiate's magical name is changed at the elevation from the outer order to the inner order: the Stella Gloriosa. This step – the Palingenesis – brings such profound transformation that the initiate is "newly made" and thus requires a new name. It is, however, acceptable for the magician to retain a previous name for evoking the magical personality. The magical name, however, is *not* the name of the magical personality, but rather the name of the individual *as a magician*, who assumes the magical personality during ritual work.

The Magical Vestment: The Body of Light

More labor intensive than choosing a magical name is formulating the telematic Body of Light. On the physical plane, the Body of Light and the vesting of the magical personality are symbolized by the ritual vestments: the robe, footwear, cord and lamén used by the magician. In most Western ceremonial traditions, the robe is either white or black, the former symbolizing the Outer Robe

of Concealment and the latter the Inner Robe of Glory.⁴ This outer apparel at best only hints at the eloquence and beauty of the magical personality as it appears on the astral level.

The visual manifestation of the magical personality may be shaped and reshaped by the intuitive mind as a potent expression of the Angel's will. It can manifest as the same or a different gender than the practitioner, or it may be androgynous. The actual practice of conceiving this form is similar to deciding what to wear to a costume party, or better yet selecting a theatrical role. Often, the form of the magical personality simply appears spontaneously to the intuitive mind. You should always be receptively alert to its manifestation in your Imagination, as even its established form will change over time without conscious effort or intent. For instance, you may find your persona suddenly manifesting two pairs of golden wings, wearing different garments or changing its age. More rarely, it may even shift genders in alignment with the personal mythology and the needs of the Angel. These spontaneous changes can be either gradual and abrupt. The catalyst of such metamorphoses includes initiations, grade advancements, the performance of a significant ritual or profound life events. Often, however, it remains a mystery why the magical personality suddenly takes on a distinctly different appearance, feel or action.

One good way to create an image of your magical personality is through the study and meditation of the 22 Major Arcana and the 16 court cards of the Tarot deck. These provide ready-made archetypal forms that are easily adapted for your own use. You can also compare these Tarot images to an existing magical personality, giving you important insight into your psyche, magical personality and HGA.

Another technique the magician can apply to consciously create an image of the magical personality is the formula of theurgic telematic images.⁵ Telematic images are deliberately constructed as a creative act upon the astral light and inner planes using a name as a template.⁶ First you transliterate the name into Hebrew letters. Then, taking each letter in turn, you use the Yetziratic attributions (including colors and astrological associations) to build a composite form. We provide a small set of traditional elemental and planetary attributions in Appendix A and a more comprehensive set in documents C6a and

⁴ See *Book Four*, "The Robe," by Aleister Crowley

⁵ See *The Magical Philosophy*, vol. 3 or Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, Book 4, on telematic figures.

⁶ Mantic images, in contrast, are the result of receptive experiences, such as dreams or scrying.

Alc of the O. A. S. First Hall Manual. Volumes 1 and 2 of Denning and Phillip's *The Magical Philosophy*, Crowley's 777, and Robert Wang's *Qabalistic Tarot* will give you more detailed associations. Pay particular attention to the color scales, mineral symbolism, magical weapons, animals and god forms. It is well worth the effort to study these attributions, as they are useful and adaptable in many facets of magical work. You will find little variance between the various magical systems, whether Ogdoadic, Rosicrucian or Thelemic.

Say you wanted to construct an image of a figure bearing the name "Angel." You would first transliterate the English letters into Hebrew: Aleph, Nun, Gimel, Heh, and Lamed. Then align the letters in a column vertically from top to bottom, with each representing a part of your magical personality's form. Thus the letter A would represent its head, N its chest, G its groin, E its legs, and L its feet. Using this method gives us the following possible figure:

A, Aleph: Angel's head corresponds to the element of air, producing a being with the head of an androgynous young man. His face is active and intelligent, his neck slender and the aura around his head radiant yellow. His eyes are a penetrating golden yellow.

N, Nun: His chest corresponds to the watery sign Scorpio, giving him a resolute bearing. His torso is more feminine than is his face. He has soft blue-green eagle's wings.

G, Gimel: Angel's groin corresponds to the Moon, which is feminine like his torso, but more slender, smooth and changeable. He wears a silver blue reflective tunic cinched by a blue belt with a metallic silver crescent as its buckle.

E, Heh: Angel's legs correspond to the fiery zodiacal sign Aries, so they are masculine and well-muscled. His full-length robe is red, suggesting strength and readiness to action.

L, Lamed: Finally, Angel's ankles and feet correspond to the airy zodiacal sign Libra, which gives them a refined masculine elegance. He is swift-footed, with the ability to traverse both terrestrial and celestial planes. He is wearing yellow winged sandals.

Keep in mind that using theurgic telematic images is a very intuitive process, lending itself to the preferences and esthetics of the individual magician. Two figures with identical names will likely not look the same, despite being based on the same system and sets of correspondences.

In constructing the image of your magical personality, you can use your magical name, a variation of that name, an existing angel, a deity or any other name that suits the nature you wish it to have.

The Magical Voice

Essential to the development of the magical personality and to magical work in general is finding and cultivating your magical voice. When you have done so, it will have a distinctive, other-worldly power and presence. Some magicians have acquired this skill without conscious or formal training while others initially need a structured technique. Regardless of how your magical voice is acquired, it can be used to speak directly from your Body of Light when you are assuming your magical personality, thus enabling you to communicate sound on various levels of the astral plane. If you wish, you can use the following method adapted from *The Magical Philosophy*⁷:

Assume the Wand Posture and establish a slow rhythmic breath. After a deep inhalation, utter a syllable boldly and loudly on the lowest note you can comfortably make. This is called a *vibration*. Draw out the vibration as you would a slow mantra or chant. Next utter the same syllable on a slightly higher note, followed by a slightly higher one still, until you find the top of your range. After some experimentation you will find a note that will produce an evenly distributed vibration throughout your physical body. Continue to vibrate this syllable until you experience it as expansive and self-amplifying: this is your magical voice! Begin using it when performing the Calyx, the Setting of the Wards and the Rousing of the Citadels.

After regular practice, you will find your magical voice organically adjusting to you at a deeper spiritual level. Your magical personality will become a truly living presence and will bring a vibrant power into your magical work.

7 *The Magical Philosophy*, "Guide to Study and Practice: Program 3."

The Magician's Guiding Ideals

The magician's guiding magical ideals shape the spiritual backbone of his or her magical personality and form a vital link between it and the HGA. More than any other aspect of the magical personality, these ideals should be continually strengthened and refined. In *The Magician: His Training and Work* (Chapter XVII), W.E. Butler recommends doing this by methodically meditating on the principles of Power, Wisdom and Love for months even before beginning to employ the magical personality. Although Butler's practice is very effective, it takes considerable time and does not include ideals such as courage, grace, wit, etc. A more Hermetic/Ogdoadic approach would use the principles of Beauty, Goodness and Truth (the true or faithful).

Regardless of how you approach this work, the most important thing is to assume your magical personality only for magical work. You should also maintain the integrity of the magical personality by strictly subordinating the mundane personality during its use and keeping your attention focused on the magical task at hand. This does not mean you must remain conscious of your magical personality during every moment of ritual work: many Ogdoadic rituals, for example, require you to temporarily assume a godform. In this situation, the magical personality is temporarily placed in the background without being formally released. Conversely, you should use periods of inactivity during ritual to enhance the magical personality's capacity for the specific magical ideals reflected in the position or the rite.

The Magical Ring

The magical ring is an important aspect of the magical personality. Ideally it is custom-made for the magician, although it is perfectly acceptable to buy a ready-made one. You may also use a secondhand ring as long as it is properly cleansed, recharged and dedicated exclusively to your magical work.

In all respects, you should regard your magical ring as a sacred object, as the outward symbol of your link with your magical personality. It should be used exclusively in a ceremonial context. You should put on the ring whenever you assume your magical personality and remove it when you resume your mundane personality. Simultaneously with donning your magical ring, you should assert your magical name.



The Rite of Personification

The purpose of the rite of personification, a sanctioned technique within the O.A.S., is to develop the magical personality. Before performing the rite, you should have done the following:

1. Developed basic competence in (a) posture and breath; (b) contemplation; (c) the Calyx; (d) the Setting of the Wards of Power; and (e) the First Formula of the Rousing of the Citadels.
2. Chosen a magical name.
3. Obtained a magical ring.
4. Gained a basic knowledge of the magical personality, including its development and aspects, such as the magical voice and magical ideals.
5. Create a preliminary image for the magical personality.

Put on your robe and cord. The Bomos should be draped in black or white. The lamp should be on the east side of the Bomos and the Tessera on the west. Your magical ring should be to the right of the Tessera.

1. Starting on the West side of the Bomos, facing East, perform the Setting of the Wards of Power.
2. Standing West of the Bomos, facing East, perform the First Formula of the Rousing of the Citadels.
3. Holding your magical ring, begin to see, feel and know yourself enrobed in your magical personality.
4. Simultaneously place the ring on your finger and say your magical name, intoning it vocally or sub-vocally using your magical voice.
5. Standing in the Wand posture or seated in God-Form posture, meditate on a magical ideal you want to establish in your magical personality (Beauty, Goodness, Truth, Love, etc.). During this contemplation, periodically strengthen your awareness of your magical personality. Each session should last about 10 to 20 minutes.
6. Standing West before the Bomos, facing East, perform the First Formula of the Rousing of the Citadels while still maintaining your magical personality: speak, see and feel as your magical personality.
7. Visualize a mirror-like wall of silver light behind you. As you remove your ring, imagine your magical personality stepping behind you and vanishing through the mirror.
8. Allowing the image of the mirror to dissolve, stamp your left foot and transition fully to your normal consciousness and your mundane personality.
9. Close the rite with a battery of 3-5-3. Witness on the Tessera and make the gesture Ave to the East.
10. Conclude with meticulous documentation of your practice in your magical journal.

ATTRIBUTIONS OF THE HEBREW ALPHABET

Name	Script	Transliteration	Value	Meaning	Attribution	Tarot Card
Aleph	א	A	1	Ox	Air	The Fool
Beth	ב	B	2	House	Mercury	The Magician, Magus
Gimel	ג	G	3	Camel	Luna	The Priestess
Daleth	ד	D	4	Door	Venus	The Empress
He	ה	H, E	5	Window	Aries	The Emperor
Vau	ו	V	6	Nail, hook	Taurus	The Hierophant
Zayin	ז	Z	7	Sword, Armor	Gemini	The Lovers
Cheth	ח	Ch	8	Fence, Enclosure	Cancer	The Chariot
Teth	ט	T	9	Snake	Leo	Strength, Lust
Yod	י	I, Y	10	Hand	Virgo	The Hermit
Kaph	כ (ך)	K	20 (500)	Fist	Jupiter	The Wheel of Fortune
Lamed	ל	L	30	Ox goad	Libra	Justice, Adjustment
Mem	מ (ם)	M	40 (600)	Water	Water	The Hanged Man
Nun	נ (ן)	N	50	Fish	Scorpio	Death
Samekh	ס	S	60	Prop	Sagittarius	Temperance, Art
Ayin	ע	Aa	70 (700)	Eye	Capricorn	The Devil
Pe	פ (ף)	P	80 (800)	Mouth	Mars	The Tower
Tzaddi	צ (ץ)	Tz	90 (900)	Fish hook	Aquarius	The Star
Qoph	ק	Q	100	Ear, Back of head	Pisces	The Moon
Resh	ר	R	200	Head	Sol	The Sun
Shin	ש	Sh	300	Tooth	Fire	Judgment, The Aeon
Tau	ת	Th	400	Cross	Saturn	The Universe

VESSELS OF LIGHT

THE SPIRITUAL BODIES OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MAGIC & THE WESTERN ESOTERIC TRADITION

by Kerry Wisner

As a member of the Order who has had a passionate involvement in the study and practice of Ancient Egyptian religion and magic I have long sought to understand the correspondence between the Western Esoteric system of spiritual bodies generally, the Aurum Solis and Ordo Astrum Sophiae teachings specifically and those found within the Egyptian system. In particular I have wanted to find out if in fact the Egyptians had any corresponding form that can be identified with western esoteric teachings on the 'Holy Guardian Angel.' If so, what can these ancient texts reveal about this vital aspect of one's spiritual self?

Ancient Egyptian texts provide extensive teachings regarding their understanding of the various 'bodies' that make up the individual. These extend from the physical body itself to a highly spiritualized state of union with the Neteru/Gods. In this study I would like to begin with the physical body.

While the person was alive, vital and effective the Egyptians referred to the physical body as the *ht* or the *jr*, both terms meaning "form" or "appearance." After death, however, the body was referred to as the *Khat*, as well as the *Sha* or *Shat*, meaning that which is corruptible. Each of these terms, both for the living body and corpse, imply at once that the body is both a receptacle for higher energies, and yet subject to the forces of impending aging and decay (Naydler 1996.188-189).

From the physical body the Egyptian teachings explain that each of us possess a *Swt*, that is, a hidden shadow self. Yet, this is very different from the modern concept applied by contemporary esoteric orders for the 'shadow.' In many of these esoteric orders the shadow is frequently viewed as one's baser or negative self; an aspect of the personality that needs to be understood and overcome in order to progress. While this is a valid teaching in its own right, and very important in one's initial devel-

opment, it is important not to confuse the contemporary use of this term with that of the Ancient Egyptians.

For the Egyptians the shadow was considered to be an essential part of the living person. While one was alive the Egyptians saw their *Swt* as being a protective guardian, an aspect of them self that had the power to preserve them from adversity. Further the *Swt* was able to provide hidden knowledge not normally experienced through the five senses (Lurker 1980.110). After death however the *Swt* of the individual was frequently perceived by the living as being similar to our understanding of the term 'ghost.' That is as an image, or faint but visible form of the deceased. This is not to be confused with the double, or *Ka* (astral body) which will be discussed later in this paper. Rather the *Swt* acted in many respects independent of the person, gathering knowledge that was later communicated through dream and intuition.

Sometimes known as the *Khaibit*, the shadow also acted a bridge uniting the physical needs and desires of the body with the *Ka* (West 1985.65). This is very similar in nature to Victorian era Occultists view of the etheric body, which was seen as a link between the physical body and the astral self. Further the *Swt*'s power was also linked to that of the *Ba*, or as we will see, the mental body. In the nineteenth dynasty tomb of Irynefer an interesting painting depicts two different forms that the *Swt* can take. Along with each of these, two representations of the *Ba* also are present. One of these forms shows the *Swt* as a black silhouette of Irynefer himself as his *Ba* flies nearby with wings spread.



The Ba is clearly facing the Swt as the two appear to gaze at each other. The impression from this is one of preparation for movement into higher realms of being. The two gazing at each other shows a link of consciousness between these.

The other form in the depiction shows the Swt as a large dark circle or ball hovering just above the ground. Just ahead of this Irynefer's Ba walks as if leading the circular shadow forward. This is particularly interesting for the Ba is depicted in the traditional form of having the body of a bird and the human head of Irynefer, yet its wings are folded as it walks on the ground. In this representation the feeling is one of terrestrial movement in the temporal world. From the simple representation found in Irynefer's tomb we see that the Swt can take different forms.

This is exceptionally reminiscent of the order's "Formula of the Watcher", described in detail in Denning and Phillips' "Mysteria Magica." In this the magician mentally projects 'Nephesh-substance' in the form of a sphere and sends this to retrieve information. Clearly this is a use of an etheric or basic astral portion of the individual for practical purposes. Yet, to begin to work

with the "Formula of the Watcher" and one's Swt is an initial step in becoming aware of one's emotional/astral self, thus opening the door for greater exploration into one's Nephesh.

Following the Swt we come to the Egyptian concept of the Ka. The Ka is perhaps one of the most difficult concepts to describe for there is no clear modern translation for this word. Essentially it appears to mean "double" as well as "vital force" and is a clear reference to a part of the individual that transcends the death of the physical body. Egyptologist Richard Wilkinson explains that "in all periods it is used as a term for the creative and sustaining power of life" (Wilkinson 1992.49). The Ka also came to be seen as a symbol of intellectual and spiritual power (Lurker 1980.73). As such, the essential meaning behind this concept is one of vitality and energy inherent in all living things. The hieroglyph for the Ka is two arms raised almost as if mirroring each other. This glyph, used as an amulet, was worn to preserve the life force of the wearer (Lurker 1980.73). Interestingly, while the Swt serves as a link between the body and Ka, the Ka was thought to be able to absorb the energy and essence of the offerings left during ritual and at the tombs.

In mythology it is the ram-headed Neter Khnum who fashions the Ka of each individual. One text from Luxor shows the prince Amenhetep III on a potter's wheel with his Ka as Khnum creates these. The Goddess Hwt-Hrw (Hathor) looks on bestowing life in the form of an Ankh on the young prince (Lurker 1980.74). John Anthony West states that the "Ka is the power that fixes and makes individual the animating spirit" (West 1985.64). In this context we can see that the Ka is very much like the contemporary understanding of the astral body.

Of particular interest to this study is the fact that the Egyptians felt that each person had a series of Ka's; an 'animal Ka', a 'divine Ka', and an 'intermediate Ka'. The animal Ka was seen as closest to the physical body and, in conjunction with the Swt, this part of the person related readily to the basic desires and carnal instincts of the person. The divine Ka was seen as that part of the person which heeded the needs and call of the higher spirit. John Anthony West explains that intermediate Ka "provides the impetus to those on the path for gradually gaining control of the animal Ka and placing it in the service of the divine Ka" (West 1985.64). This is consistent with the order's teachings regarding the various levels of the Nephesh as it moves from the grosser astral to the realms of the Rauch (see chapters II and III of Denning and Phillips' "The Triumph of Light" from the "Magical Philosophy").

From the Ka we move on to the closely related doctrine of the Ba. Most Egyptologists refer to the Ba as being similar in meaning to the modern concept of the soul. However, this is an understatement. In fact, it is best understood as meaning "spiritual manifestation." In the earlier Egyptian texts the term Ba was used to signify the esoteric and hidden essence of the Neteru, the Gods (Lurker 1980.31).

In relation to the human experience Richard Wilkinson explains that "the ba was a spiritual aspect of the human being which survived death, and which was imbued with the fullness of a person's individuality" (Wilkinson 1992.99). In this regard the Ba of an individual is portrayed in Ancient Egyptian religion as having the head of a human and the body of a bird - usually a falcon. In practice it is this form, this spiritual body of the individual/magician, which traveled between the different worlds or spiritual realms (a portrayal of this form can be seen in the image of the Swt shown earlier).

In many ways it would appear that the Ba holds similar characteristics to that of the Ruach, the Noemasome or mental body. The Egyptian representation of the human headed falcon as the Ba would seem to suggest the mind as governing a body fashioned for movement



The symbol of the Ka atop the statue of Awibre Hor.

into higher realms of understanding and existence. This would seem to be an apt image to describe the idea of the mental body of the A.S. system.

In addition a reoccurring theme emerges in many of the Ancient Egyptian texts; the realization that the uniting of one's Ka with one's Ba are essential for the being's effectiveness (West 1985.64). Egyptologist A. Lloyd explains that "essentially, the Ka is the individual's vitality, the Ba the capacity for movement and effectiveness" (Lloyd 1989.117-133).

This union of the Ka with the Ba is extremely reminiscent of the order's teachings regarding the union of the Nephesh and Rauch. Denning and Phillips explain that the "Rauch, then is bounded at its extremity by the Nephesh which it to some degree interpenetrates, and at the other extremity by the domain of the higher faculties to which it should be receptive." They go on to state that the Rauch "must both control the Nephesh, and work with it" (Denning and Phillips 1975, 1988. Vol II, 209).

The order's "Formula of the Magician" along with the work regarding "Helionic Projection" represent practical means for achieving this. In both procedures, particularly the "Formula of the Magician," the initiate seeks to gain the assistance of the Nephesh by building a relationship between this and the Rauch. I can't think of a more eloquent and practical procedure to initiate a union of the astral Ka with the mental Ba.

Thus far, we have been able to see clear correlations between contemporary western esoteric teachings and those of the Ancient Egyptians regarding the spiritual bodies. However, the question remains, did the Ancient Egyptians have any teachings regarding a spiritual aspect of the self that corresponds to that of contemporary esoteric teachings concerning the "Holy Guardian Angel?" I feel the answer to this may lay in an understanding of the Egyptian teachings concerning the next two spiritual aspects of the self: the Akh and the Sahu.

The Akh, sometimes referred to as the Khu, is a term that means "transfigured spirit," the "shining one" or "luminous one." Beyond the Ba this spiritual body is one's higher spiritual self, the immortal spirit or, as the Ancient Egyptians explained, that part of the person that is "imperishable" (West 1985.65). Egyptologist A. Lloyd explains that the Akh "differs in character from all the other entities as it represents the total person in a state of beauty and power beyond the grave, i.e., nothing less than the deceased reconstituted and placed in all respects in a position where he can function according to the Egyptian concept of the blessed dead" (Lloyd 1989.117-133).



The Akh represented as an ibis.

For the Egyptian initiate awareness of one's Akh was exceedingly important. The Akh is that part of us that transcends time, space and incarnation in the temporal world. Renowned Egyptologist Dr. Jann Assmann explains that the root meaning of the word Akh is to "blaze, be radiant" thus the Akh "designates the usefulness and efficacy of those human actions that are able to

reach out into the sphere of heavenly eternity" (Assmann 2002.61).

In both Qabalistic terms and the terms understood in the A.S. system I would venture that the Ancient Egyptian teachings concerning the Akh mirror the contemporary teachings regarding the Neshamah, Chiah and the Yechidah. Beyond the veil of the abyss lays the immortal spirit of the individual composed of the Neshamah - the Higher Formative principle of the feminine force, the Chiah - the Higher Vital principle of the masculine force, and Yechidah - the imageless Divine essence within the self. Combined, these represent the deepest spiritual aspect of the person which is accessible through the "Intuitive Mind" as discussed by Denning and Phillips in Chapter IV of the "Triumph of Light."

The Egyptians understood this concept well. The Akh was seen as functioning largely through 'Sia' - meaning "sign of recognition." Where the Ancient Egyptian word 'Rekh' represented logic and reason, Sia referred to knowledge gained through intuition or perhaps through what would later be termed 'gnosis'. The Old Kingdom pyramid texts speak of Sia:

"I have come to my throne which is over the spirits,
I unite hearts, O you who are in charge of wisdom,
being great.
I become Sia who bears the Neter's book,
Who is at the right hand of Ra." (Faulkner Utt 250)

The imagery of coming to the throne "over the spirits" shows that the initiate (in this case the King) gains power over esoteric forces through the ability of Sia, intuition/gnosis. And Sia comes through the recognition of the Akh, or as the order might term this, the Neshamah.

In Ancient Egyptian symbolism the heart represents the seat of consciousness, thus to "unite hearts" the initiate is merging and traversing different states of consciousness. This brings the wisdom of Sia. As books are reservoirs of stored knowledge, to "bear the Neter's book" is to possess the knowledge of the Gods.

Thus the Akh is the home of spiritual perception functioning largely through the faculty of Sia - intuition and gnosis. Becoming aware of the Akh and learning how to recognize and listen to its input was a critical factor in the development of the Egyptian initiate.

This Egyptian teaching concerning the intuitive mind of Sia as the link between the Akh, Ba and Ka is echoed in the words of Denning and Phillips:

“The descent of the Intuitive Mind is into that level of the Ruach which is named the Briatic Intelligence. The Light and Love of the Angel stirs the Waters of the Pool of the Five Porches: the Briatic intelligence awakens, and the Adept sees his Angel.” (Denning and Phillips 1975, 1988. Vol II, 365)

In this way the perception of the Akh can be seen as possibly corresponding to appearance of one’s Holy Guardian Angel. Yet the Egyptian teachings proceed further. The final stage in Egyptian spiritual transformation can be considered that of the Sahu; thought of as the highest state of spiritual being. The Sahu, in essence, represents a union of the individual with the Neteru, the Gods; thus it was seen as a merging with the divine, and the means through which the divine becomes manifest to the person on an individual and intimate level. This was the ultimate goal of the ritualist following the Ancient Egyptian path. The pyramid texts speak repeatedly of the deceased being welcomed as an equal among the Neteru; living in the same place, i.e. the same state of being as they do.

“O, raise yourself my father, receive these your four pleasant nmst-jars;
Bathe in the Jackal Lake, be cleansed in the Lake of the Netherworld,
Be purified on top of your lotus-flower in the Field of Rushes.
Traverse the sky, make your abode in the Field of Offerings
Among the Neteru who have gone to their Ka’s.”
(Faulkner Utt 512)

In this incantation the deceased (or in the case of the live initiate) awakes, traveling to the other realms. The theme of bathing in lakes is symbolic of two different functions. The first is the shedding of that which is outworn. This is the cleansing aspect of the text. However, immersion into bodies of water, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, etc. has long been representative of renewal and rebirth. Thus we see the themes of initiation contained in this text; death and rebirth, regeneration. It is only when the initiate goes through these that they can then “traverse the sky” journeying through other realms of being. It is there that the individual is able to “make their abode among the Neteru.”

“Ra finds you on the banks of the sky
as a waterway-traveler who is in the sky:

‘Welcome, O you who have arrived’, say the Neteru.
He sets his hand on you at the zenith of the sky;
‘Welcome, O you who knows your place’, says the Ennead.”
(Faulkner Utt 513)

Once the individual is able to make the transition to other states of consciousness - to other states of being - the divine, represented in the text as Ra, reaches out to the person. The Neteru then greet the initiate as one who has ‘arrived.’ Ra, placing his hand on the person at the zenith of the sky, signals a ritual flowing of life and energy in to the individual. It is then that the Neteru recognize the initiate as an equal ‘knowing your place’ among them. Perhaps one of the most telling of the ancient texts regarding this union with Neteru reads:

“I am the essence of a Neter,
The son of a Neter,
The messenger of a Neter;
I have come that I may bathe in the Field of Rushes
And that I may go down to the Field of Kenzet . . .
Every Neter will rejoice at meeting me
Just as they rejoice meeting Ra
When he ascends from the eastern side of the sky
in peace.”
(Faulkner Utt 471)

This passage indicates that once the individual has become ready to enter the company of the Neteru he or she is in every way as the Neteru. As the text states the immortal self, the Akh transformed into the state of a Sahu, is composed of the same essence of the divine. It is born of the divine and becomes a voice for the divine. Being a “messenger of a Neter” literally means that the individual has the ability to manifest the divine in created temporal terms. In other words the individual now has the ability to perform heka or magic:

“The sky quivers,
the earth quakes before me,
for I am a magician,
I possess magic!” (Faulkner Utt 472)

By understanding the true self, we open the doors to communication with the divine, the Neteru. This is identical in nature to contemporary ceremonial magic’s goal of “knowledge and conversation with one’s Holy Guardian

Angel.” In the Ancient Egyptian system, when this connection and the powerful transformation that accompanies this occurred it brought with it the ability to effect changes through the use of the will, i.e. magic. So the first step of the initiate is always one of self discovery leading to a spiritual metamorphosis while learning to move into other realms of being.

The texts that I have been quoting here come from traditional ‘funerary’ sources. However, Egyptologist Walter Federn argues that while these certainly were used in this context they also reflect actual ritual activities among living initiates to bring about spiritual transformation during life! It is likely that these are texts accompanying ritual acts designed to carry the Ba-Ka (mental and astral bodies) of the initiate through different forms connecting the self with various modes of divine expression, rising this to the awareness of the true self in the Akh so that ultimate union with the spiritualized self of the Sahu could occur. In my view it seems likely that these latter two stages, the Akh and Sahu combined possibly correspond to ‘knowledge and conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel’.

Order teachings explain that the Holy Guardian Angel is a combination of the Neshamah, Chiah and the Yechidah, making its presence felt through the sphere of Tiphareth and the Ruach. In essence, the Holy Guardian Angel is the personal form through which the Divine manifests itself to the individual. This description has striking similarities to the Egyptian teaching regarding the Akh and Sahu. In particular the Sahu’s reference to becoming as the Gods and moving into a state of being where one is ‘with the Gods’ would suggest the contemporary concept of the Divine manifesting itself in intimate ways that the individual can relate to, i.e. the Holy Guardian Angel.

In the ancient text of “Becoming an ‘w’-Bird” further teachings regarding this spiritual transformation are presented:

“I have flown up as an ibis,
I have alighted as a ka-ba bird,
I am he who saw the unclothed one, the son of
Hwt-Hrw (Hathor).”
(Faulkner Coffin Text 271)

In this text the initiate’s Ka-Ba (astral and mental bodies combined) ritually transforms into an ibis. The ibis is the bird associated with Thoth, the Neter of magic and wisdom. The imagery of the bird always carries with it the idea of upward movement. As we are dealing with travel in realms beyond the ‘normal’ physical state of being this

“becoming” an ibis suggests movement in and perception of celestial realms. Furthermore, the hieroglyphic symbol of the Ibis also signifies the transformed spirit, the Akh. So this movement is accomplished by merging with the higher self represented as the Akh. In Qabalistic terms we could interpret this text as implying that the Nephesh and the Ruach unite, allowing awareness and movement toward conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel in the form of the Neshamah.

Yet this simple text gives one last important teaching. In this it is significant that the initiate meets the unclothed son of Hathor in this realm. This is none other than Ihy, the Sistrum player. Ihy is a Neter of joy, the zest for life and the ability to abandon oneself to the moment. He is the representation of fresh beginnings who helps to guide both the individual and the Sun toward rebirth into new life. It seems particularly appropriate that Ihy would be one of the beings met during these excursions into the celestial realms.

This ancient text with its reference to the son of the Great Egyptian Mother Goddess reminds me of a passage regarding the Holy Guardian Angel by Denning and Phillips:

“The Holy Guardian Angel is a beam transmitted from the imageless Yechidah, when the Adept has attained a sufficient ripeness, outwards through the Chiah and Neshamah (in a sense the Mother has always been pregnant with this force, and now this fact takes precedence over her impregnation by the Father) and thence projected through the still-concealed Daath-Gate which, however, gives to that beam its own likeness, not visual but exaltedly intellectual, as Child.” (Denning and Phillips 1975, 1988.Vol II, 360-361)

In Ancient Egyptian terms this can be understood as the Child of the Great Mother Goddess Hathor, and the Great Father God Ra. This solar child appears to the initiate guiding him as his own Akh and Sahu, his ‘Holy Guardian Angel’. This is the Egyptian form of the Puer Aeternus – solar child of Tiphareth. For the order teaches that it is in Tiphareth that the Holy Guardian Angel first makes its presence known. Thus, the Akh and the Sahu of the Ancient Egyptian spiritual discipline can, in many ways, be seen to correspond, at least to some degree, to the ‘Holy Guardian Angel’ of the Western Tradition.

As can be seen many correlations between the Ancient Egyptian system and the Western Esoteric Tradition exist. The value of this can’t be over stated. For, while

there is a wonderfully rich system in place containing information gathered over the past two millennia within Western Magical Philosophy, the added data gathered through the thousands of years of Ancient Egyptian studies and practices can only serve to enrich this. The ancient texts add deeper meaning and new dimension to the spiritual heritage that is contained in the mysteries.

The following table, while very simplistic, may serve the reader in helping to understand some of the possible correspondences between these systems.

I would like to finish by mentioning that the Egyptians had additional teachings regarding different aspects of the spiritual self that I have not discussed here. These include teachings surrounding:

- the Ib, or heart, as the seat of consciousness and the home of the divine within each of us;
- the Ren, or name, as the secret essence that sums up the spiritual nature of the individual;
- the Sekhem, a word meaning ‘power’, as the manifestation of one’s personal power and inner mastery.

Each of these are concepts that will take individual papers in their own right to explain in detail. Yet, within each, correlation to practices within the Western Esoteric system can be clearly drawn.

Contemporary Occult & A.S. Terms	Qabalistic Terms	Ancient Egyptian Terms	Popular Terms
Holy Guardian Angel	Yechidah / Chiah / Neshamah	Sahu/Akh	Spirit
Abyss	Daath-Gate	Duat	
Noemasome (Mental Body)	Ruach	Ba	Soul
Astrosome (Astral Body)	Nephesh	Ka	Soul
Astrosome (Gross Astral, or Etheric Body)	Nephesh	Swt/Khaibit	Ghost
Physical Body		Ht	Body

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THE NAME OF THE GENIUS

by Derik Richards

*“The dear name of the Friend, morning to night
Repeat you and repeat, evening to dawn.
And where you shall arrive, Reason is lame
And not Gabriel’s self comes as your peer.”*

— THE TERDJIH BEND

The Epiphany of the Adept is surely the keystone of our work: it both marks the apex of all that has gone before and supports the burgeoning expansion to come. The dedication and persistence of the student who arrives at this juncture will be apparent. His great development in particular of that “artificial” other, the magical personality, will have become integral to the interface between his mundane life and his ever-increasing sense of the Divine. It is in this formulation then, which has been named and nurtured from the first steps, that the magician may find his guide to the Intuitive Mind.

In the first edition of *The Robe and the Ring* there are a few brief paragraphs regarding the Magical Personality that were left out of the subsequent editions. These outline the importance of taking into consideration the magician’s natal chart and determining areas of weakness in order to imbue the magician’s persona with the appropriate ameliorating and balancing qualities. For instance, if one has Venus poorly placed at their birth then a strong sense of affective and joyous vitality assumed with the magical personality will serve to remedy, and this should be carefully balanced by adoption of the unresting and analytical attitude of Mercury so as to prevent any excess of one quality. This is a very effective practice and can be incorporated into not only the general “feeling” of the persona, but even into one’s magical name and “telematic” image. As most important early techniques, these are the beginning steps toward the equilibrium of the magician, the freedom from external circumstance; toward the Mysteries of the Bronze Cross and the Vision of Life

within the Tree.

It has been noted before that this specific emphasis on the Magical Personality is rather unique to our tradition, and yet we should not be surprised to find a parallel concept in our esoteric heritage that can greatly amplify our praxis. In his *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Agrippa describes the “good daemon” of every man as threefold: the holy daemon, the Genius or daemon of the nativity, and the daemon of the profession. The holy daemon is our Holy Guardian Angel who is,

“according to the doctrine of the Egyptians, assigned to the rational soul, not from the stars or planets, but from a supernatural cause, from God himself, the president of demons, being universal, above nature: this doth direct the life of the soul, and doth always put good thoughts into the mind, being always active in illuminating us, although we do not always take notice of it; but when we are purified, and live peaceably, then it is perceived by us, then it doth as it were speak with us, and communicates its voice to us, being before silent, and studieth daily to bring us to a sacred perfection.”
(Agrippa 527)

The daemon of profession represents and reflects our everyday self. It governs our success or failure in earthly endeavors according to their compatibility with the celestial influences on us at the time of birth. This spirit changes as our careers, actions or goals change and its compatibility with the Genius or nativity daemon determine our happiness. When the daemon of the profession is aligned with the daemon of the nativity under the guidance of our Higher Self, then we have found the True Will and are doing it.

The intermediary of these three daemons is the Genius, who

“doth here descend from the disposition of the world, and from the circuits of the stars, which were powerful in his nativity. Hence there be some that think, when the soul is coming down into the body, it doth out of the quire of the demons naturally choose a preserver to itself, nor only choose this guide to itself, but hath that willing to defend it. This being the executor, and keeper of the life, doth help it to the body, and takes care of it, being communicated to the body, and helps a man to that very office, to which the celestials have deputed him, being born. Whosoever therefore have received a fortunate Genius, are made thereby virtuous in their works, efficacious, strong, and prosperous. Wherefore they are called by the philosophers fortunate, or luckily born.” (527)

The Genius thus corresponds to the magical personality. It is the “guide to itself” which will in time lead the magician to find his Will in the regeneration of his self through the dynamism of his Angel.

We may further consider that as we have given a magical name to the persona according to some aspect or interpretation of our nature in preparation for the Way of Return, so the heavens of our nativity have named the Genius on its descent. To derive and employ this name in our workings is a venerable tradition of Art Magick.

*

Regarding the derivation of such a name, Agrippa writes:

“There are also the Arabians, and many others, and some Hebrews, who find out the name of a genius by the places of the five hylegians, and making projection always from the beginning of Aries, and the letters being found out according to the order of the hylegians with the astrologers, being reduced into a known order, and being joined together, make the name of a Good Genius.” (547-8)

The “five hylegians” refers to five important positions in the natal chart: the degrees of the Sun and Moon, the Ascendant, the Part of Fortune and the Prenatal Syzygy. Due to the precision of these calculations it is essential that the student have an accurate chart of the location, date and time of their birth in order to proceed.

With a chart the degrees of the Sun, Moon and Ascendant should be easy to determine; record these. The Pars Fortunae, also known as the Part or Lot of Fortune, is a point in the chart derived from a particular relationship between the Sun, Moon and Ascendant. The calculation of the Part of Fortune depends on whether one was born during the day or the night; it also requires the translation of the standard zodiacal degrees into the full 360° circle (e.g., 0° Aries is 0, 0° Taurus is 30, 29° Pisces is 359). For diurnal charts, add the degrees of the Ascendant and the Moon, then subtract the degree of the Sun to arrive at the Part of Fortune. For nocturnal charts, add the degrees of the Ascendant and the Sun, subtracting the degree of the Moon. For example, if one born at night has the Sun at 2° Capricorn (272), the Moon at 9° Virgo (159) and the Ascendant at 3° Cancer (93), then the Part of Fortune is 26° Libra (206).

The Prenatal Syzygy is the degree of the closest Full or New Moon prior to the time of birth. To calculate this, obtain the exact date and time of the appropriate phase and then construct a chart to obtain the Moon’s position.

Now that we have the five values we must determine their alphabetical correspondences. This is done simply enough by assigning Aleph to 0° Aries, Beth to 1° Aries, and so on, the cycle repeating just over 16 times and ending with Cheth in 29° Pisces.¹ Using the above example values (and taking 27° Gemini as the syzygy) we arrive at a name:

טוות

The order of the letters is assigned according to the astrological importance of the hylegical positions: Sol, Luna, Ascendant, Pars Fortunae, and the syzygy. We may also choose to append the suffixes –iel or –iah to the name. Thus, in our example, Tuvatathiel or Tuvatathiah, depending on the transliteration of the Hebrew.

*

Having derived the name of our nativity Genius we may begin to contemplate the use of it. Meditation on the name and exploration through the active imagination should be undertaken and will open up further avenues of progress. Gematric analysis should of course be conducted for ad-

1 It would appear that this traditional technique was primarily used with Hebrew, but the observant Ogdoadic student will note that the 24 letters of the Greek alphabet evenly divide the zodiac into 15 cycles. The inclusion of the obsolete letters, such as digamma and sampi, is another matter to consider.

ditional insight and a theurgic image constructed along the lines set out in *Mysteria Magica*, Paper XIX, as well as elsewhere in this issue.

We can turn to Agrippa again, though, for a further suggestion. In the third of his *Three Books*, chapter XXVII, there are two tables with which we may transform the name of our Genius according to “the Calculating Art.” Here we have reproduced the relevant information from the planetary table on the following page. The zodiacal table is constructed using the same method, Aries being placed in the top right cell.

The name is taken letter by letter on the right column and transformed to the corresponding letter in each planetary column, yielding seven new names. These names can be seen as representations of the Genius through each of the spheres and thus can also be used in conjunction with the aforementioned qualities imparted to the magical personality to balancing the natal chart. Our magician with the afflicted Venus, for instance, would do well to perform a rite or series of rites in which the complete planetary hierarchy is invoked down through the level of his own Genius’ Venusian name for the purpose of better molding his magical personality and future development. Of course gematria, sigils and theurgic images all complement this sort of work as well.

Further, each of the Genius’ seven “sub-names” can be recursively transformed to yield eight unique names. The transformation of the eighth name in this process regenerates the beginning planetary name. Agrippa states that with each successive name “thou mayst ... draw forth another of a spirit of a superior order of the same,” (549) and so the eighth iteration is of the highest potency.

Surely the revelation of the sacred name of one’s Holy Guardian Angel is not likely to be a matter of formulae and charts when the time does come. And yet in the application of traditional magical techniques such as we have here briefly outlined there is much joy of exploration, much to hone our intellect, will and desire to the sublime goal of self-knowledge that we may prepare ourselves to receive that Name.

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Luna	Mercury	Venus	Sol	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	
ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א	א
ב	מ	ל	כ	י	ט	ח	ב
ש	ר	ק	א	פ	ע	ס	ג
ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א	ת	ד
מ	ל	כ	י	ט	ח	ז	ה
ר	ק	א	פ	ע	ס	נ	ו
ה	ד	ג	ב	א	ת	ש	ז
ל	כ	י	ט	ח	ז	ו	ח
ק	א	פ	ע	ס	נ	מ	ט
ד	ג	ב	א	ת	ש	ר	י
ט	י	ט	ה	ז	ו	ה	כ
א	פ	ע	ס	נ	מ	ל	ל
ג	ב	א	ת	ש	ר	ק	מ
י	ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	נ
פ	ע	ס	נ	מ	ל	כ	ס
ב	א	ת	ש	ר	ק	א	ש
ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	פ
ע	ס	נ	מ	ל	כ	י	א
א	ת	ש	ר	ק	א	פ	ק
ה	ד	ג	ב	א	ת	ש	ר
ס	נ	מ	ל	כ	י	ט	ש
ת	ש	ר	ק	א	פ	ע	ת

THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

A GOLDEN THREAD IN THE TAPESTRY OF BEING AND BECOMING

by Rey De Lupos

“Every human being is led and guided by the Holy Guardian Angel. Yet only a few are aware of this.”

— PAUL FOSTER CASE

The study of the Holy Guardian Angel is multifaceted and has its image in the hearts and minds of many cultures and through the arcane histories of humanity. One of these images is found in Plato’s Myth of Er, wherein Socrates describes how souls are sent into this world, each with a divine guiding spirit or Angel, and how these Angels guide each human being through this incarnation. However, the process, as we read, becomes one of self-discovery as those who return in the next incarnation must cross the Plain of Oblivion where the River of Forgetfulness (River Lethe) flows. Each soul was required to drink some of the water, in varying quantities, and as the new soul drank -- they forgot everything.

So in regards to the Holy Guardian Angel to whom we are granted as our guide in this incarnation, it becomes a task of reawakening from our forgetfulness as to our true nature; that the Angel is not something separate from who and what we are – but is that innate spark of intelligence that is gradually unfolding within each personality from one incarnation to the next, until full realization is clarified and we are finally made whole in the bonds of the One Universal Life.

The Holy Guardian Angel is the essence of our true nature, our higher self’s perfect and whole in that totality which aligns it to us and us to the One Life; the Qabalistic idea known as the Yechidah or the Universal Father–Mother. The Holy Guardian Angel is an archetype to which we can align ourselves in the process of becoming whole as individuated personalities through that which we call, Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

Through the Holy Guardian Angel one discovers

the hidden word of one’s calling [vocation] which leads to the development of a personality through a process C. G. Jung called, individuation.

Through this rectifying process the Holy Guardian Angel guides us through a host of trials and tribulations along our Path of Return, which can be seen as an alchemical process where our seven interior stars or metals (chakras) are refined and aligned to a cleaner and clearer expression of that “still small voice” of our Holy Guardian Angel.

A great part of this process of regeneration is facilitated by a burning of the dross as I call it, which at its heart is a psychotherapeutic process of purification. It is imperative to the process of Knowledge and Conversation that we slowly and wisely remove the mental and emotional obscurations that blind us from the Knowledge of our Angel. And in so doing allow ourselves to listen to that subtle, intuitive communication that has been whispering to us from inception -- and in that new found awareness seeking the inner dialog of true conversation with our Higher Self.

That said, it is on this important note of dross burning that I wish to share an insightful quote from Paul Foster Case regarding the prime importance of this alchemical action:

“Incineration burns to ashes the dross and refuse of the old ways of thinking. It consumes all the residue of our erroneous interpretations of experience. This residue remains in subconsciousness even after putrefaction is complete.

That is to say, even when we consciously attribute all action to the One Reality and deny the personal origination of anything whatever, latent tendencies remain which must be purged out.

We ourselves cannot purge them out because self-consciousness cannot penetrate into the depths of subconsciousness. Hence the work of putrefaction must precede that of incineration because in the process of incineration something has to be brought to bear which cannot be done by the alchemist himself. A higher power has to be invoked. This is one reason that all sages are agreed that they owe their success in the Great Work to the Grace of God.'

In the work of incineration, a higher power takes the place of the alchemist. Recognition of this higher power is given in the Rosicrucian vow connected with Key 14: 'I will look upon every circumstance of my life as a particular dealing of God with my soul.' By 'soul' we are to understand the whole psychic nature of man.

In magical texts this stage of incineration is sometimes called 'The Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.'

Incineration, therefore, is the purging and refinement of the desire nature, which, when it is thoroughly cleansed and purified, having passed through the death of its old forms, becomes the Great Medicine. Our own personal consciousness, as we have said, is inadequate for the performance of this part of the work. Yet the work itself proceeds from the level of self-consciousness into the subconscious field where the actual incineration occurs."

Herein then is the process from which the seven interiors metals are fired by the life breath of the Holy Spirit (the Holy Guardian Angel) and made pure in that self-realization that proffers adepthood, which in turn is synonymous with individuation or that state of wholeness and beauty that comes when we are perfectly aligned with our True Will and the vocation of our life.

That said, the process is not for the faint of heart but solely for those who desire to such a state of wholeness that they are willing to enter into the regenerative flames with their whole being and face – the good, bad and the ugly. To do the Great Work of transmuting their interior lights to resonate with that one Light whose source is the One Life (Yechidah).

How to engender this process as an act of empowerment and not a lifeless expression of intellectual examination and emotional venting? Here is whispered the anecdote to all life's ills and the prime agent of wholeness and healing... Love.

In the words of Paul Foster Case, I share the following wisdom:

"Thus the practice of the Great Work calls for a third endeavor, in addition to the invocation of spiritual power from the level of superconsciousness, in addition to the daily and hourly turning of the mind inward toward the Center. This third endeavor is summed up in one word--LOVE.

For we can seek power from above, and make strenuous efforts to reach the Inner Center, and yet miss the one indispensable thing.

We may know intellectually that power comes from the superconscious, and be persuaded that the treasure of treasures is hidden within man himself. Yet if we seek power in order to wield it over others, or hunt for the treasure in order to give us an advantage over our fellows, we shall fail miserably in our quest for the Stone of the Wise.

The true occultist never forgets that he is in this school of life to gain knowledge and understanding of man, and to perfect himself in the art of LOVE. In all alchemical writings, the red stage is said to be the final completion of the Operation of the Sun. That is, knowledge and understanding though necessary, are but preliminary to LOVE, and without LOVE there is no fulfillment.

It is all summed up in the wise counsel of the best of alchemists:

'LOVE your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that spitefully use you.'

Here we speak without any veils of metaphor. Not for the wise occultist is the meaningless, abstract LOVE for humanity that fools prate about.

In the practice we speak of now, the objects are definite and specific. Not those who are 'our sort,' not those for whom we feel a spontaneous sympathy, but those who 'rub us the wrong way,' and seem to us to be our natural antagonists, provide us daily and hourly with an inexhaustible supply of raw material for this part of the practice of alchemy."

It is through this practice of Love that we heal that which lies between self and other, which is the error that has separated us from the Call of our Angel, from the word which would unite us with our totality. In the process of engendering love for ourselves, first and foremost and then to those near and dear and finally to the whole of humanity we begin to bridge the ocean to that other shore whose solar radiance is our own reflection in the mirror of awakening. Ultimately, that is what has created and driven us from birth to death, the 'calling' is one of Love and

finding our alignment to that principle can only bring us the union we seek in this Great Work.

“According to the [Chaldean] Oracles the Demiurge filled each soul with a ‘deep eros’ (eros bathus) to draw it back to the gods. The deep eros of the Oracles, like the innate gnosis or essential desire (epheis) of the De Mysteriis, was present in the soul but anterior to consciousness.

It was the desire that drew the soul down into a mortal body and led it back to its immortal ochema (soul vehicle).”¹

“That the soul’s embodiment was the ultimate sunthema (receptacle) of its ascent remains an insoluble paradox, but appropriately, for the lover it is a commonplace experience. In the erotic dialectic discussed by Plato in the Symposium (200-202), the separation of the lover from the beloved was the sine qua non of their attraction and unification, ...”²

As is quoted in the Book of the Law: “For I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union.”³

Through the practice of Love we develop spiritual eyes which are granted a truer vision of what has separated us from the divine. When these eyes are opened the enemies and adversaries of our life are recognized as friends wearing terrible masks while they show us how to engage in this game of life.

Through this instruction we learn to transmute the illusory desires of the outer sense impressions, and are enabled to remove the edifice of mistaken assumption that there is a real separation between us and all sentient beings.

In time, we discover the truth that everything in the field of manifestation is inter-related. We begin to see our personal existence as part of the whole cycle of being and becoming. We perceive that the events of today are directly connected with the entire past, and just as rightly united with the future.

This knowledge releases us from the bondage of delusion and suffering by unveiling the Truth of our relations with the One Life, as well as connecting us to the bigger picture of human evolution as a larger process of the Great Work. For those who have arrived at the Gno-

sis of their Holy Guardian Angel and are in conversation with that intelligence there is the definitive realization that the process is one of service to those still with obscurations veiling them from self-discovery. As Paul Foster Case informs us:

“It is conscious identification with Universal Spirit. Perfect peace, perfect bliss, perfect knowledge. All this it is, and more than this (Key 21).

The Administrative Intelligence, which corresponds to the final Tarot Key (21), really means “the serving Intelligence.”

Cosmic consciousness, or the realization of identity with the universal Spirit, finds expression in work for the more complete manifestation of the heavenly order here on earth.

He who knows the truth must live it. He becomes thenceforth a servant of the ALL. He does this, not as a duty hard to carry out, but as a natural expression of his realization of his true place in the cosmic order (Key 21). For such a person, all selfish preoccupation with personal aims is automatically at an end (Key 16).

He looks on his personal existence as being a manifestation of that exquisite adjustment which maintains the cosmic equilibrium.

In his vision, all he does is naught but the manifestation of Karma; and because he has made himself, as a personality, utterly receptive to the influx of the Universal Will, whatever action he engages in is extraordinarily effective (Key 11).”

And what aligns us to this Universal Will and that desire to connect it to our lives and the Great Work?

Upon recapitulation, it would seem that the whole process of life is towards the collective reunion of family whether in Heaven or the recollection of future incarnations of sentient life-- which seems to be reflected in the day-to-day dynamic of our own personal lives: from barbeques to bar mitzvahs, births to deaths, the family is the collective core of our relation on planet Earth. Which, as the Hermetic saying states, ‘as above, so below’ -- So this is not an outlandish association that our Great Work is about the reunion with the Universal Mother-Father, as their children – a return to that Edenic place of our origin.

In the words of Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, “There’s no place like home...” And perhaps on our trek to The Emerald City of Tiphereth from which that alignment to the Knowledge and Conversation of our Holy

1 Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy of the Soul*, p. 124

2 *Ibid.*, p. 125

3 Liber AL vel Legis, I, 29

Guardian Angel is manifested, we realize that we can find the intelligence, fearlessness and love to rectify that fear of the wickedness of world into a return to that primal Eden we call home for all of us, completing our Journey upon this living tree of life.

Pax Profunda!

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AIWAZ IN THE ABYSS

by Thomas D. Worrel

Introduction

The soul's progress toward its ultimate destiny has been the subject of numerous descriptions throughout religious history. Sometimes it is simply thought of as the "soul's journey" or "the Quest." At other times it is seen as a complex process of several stages bringing (some may even say forging) the soul gradually to its highest expression. There is a vast spectrum of opinion as to what the spiritual path entails, how one approaches it and what one encounters along the way. These stages are sometimes considered a broad and general guide for the aspirant but, depending upon the authority, descriptions can be exacting, sequential and highly complex. This particular paper is concerned with that spiritual journey and adventure described by key writers representing the magical branch (theurgy) of what is now referred to as the Western Esoteric Tradition. It falls into the camp of the more structured approaches to the spiritual path. But, this paper will only address a few specific, but momentous, episodes of that multifaceted spiritual adventure.

There are two great spiritual landmarks encountered on the Path of Return in the Western Magical Tradition. In modern magical nomenclature they are usually referred to as: (1) the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel and (2) the Ordeal and Crossing of the Abyss. The mystic's first endeavor is to encounter the "Angel" who eventually will prepare him or her for the second and ultimate goal – that of "Crossing the Abyss". The history, emergence and authenticity of these particular terms would be a fascinating study unto itself. This particular paper has a more humble goal. Being relatively new terminology, these terms may be confusing to some. So what do they really mean? It is helpful to look into the history of mysticism and consider what previous writers of the mystical quest have described as their experi-

ence. There is a vast literature on this subject so we will find common ground here to increase our understanding. That is my first task.

My second task is more speculative. The nature of these two spiritual landmarks are almost opposite in character. One might say they are like day and night. Being so different in character, how the mystic approaches these spiritual gateways may be quite different as well. In the academic study of mysticism, two different approaches of mysticism have been distinguished: the cataphatic and apophatic. These two approaches are even distinguished by the type of meditation/contemplation advised and utilized by the mystical writer. It has long been my contention that these two different and seemingly opposite mystical approaches may be correlated with the two great spiritual landmarks of the Western Esoteric Tradition. It is not a direct correlation to be sure but a possible solution to the appropriate (and necessary) approach at different stages in the spiritual journey. In this preliminary exploration of this theory I will draw upon the work of a few mystical writers including: Pseudo-Dionysius, Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross as well as the work of Western theurgists including Paul Foster Case, Aleister Crowley and the writings of Denning & Phillips.

This paper is divided into three parts. First, I will explain the two mystical approaches to the soul's journey of progressive unification. Second, I will discuss the aspirant's approach and experience of the Holy Guardian Angel (HGA). Third, I will try to provide understanding of that ordeal known as Crossing the Abyss.

Part I

There are two broad categories of mystical approach. In the study of mysticism they are known as the cataphatic and the apophatic traditions. The cataphatic mystic speaks of long apprenticeships and necessary disciplines to attain to what is usually referred to as “acquired contemplation”. These are the normal spiritual disciplines of prayer, concentration, meditation, ritual, ascetic techniques and so on to produce illuminative states of consciousness. Personal effort is intense and sustained to achieve spiritual progress. Quite opposite to this type of program, the apophatic mystic speaks of the passive approach to spirituality in order to open oneself to the state of “infused contemplation.” Here the emphasis is upon cultivating an acceptance of God alone doing the revealing, giving the gift of Himself. The state of consciousness cultivated is that of acceptance, expansion and opening. No personal effort is involved - it is not a product of human desire or action. There are no visualizations, no concentration upon holy words, no rites and so forth. Personal activity and spiritual programs are not emphasized.

My contention is that the cataphatic approach is more appropriate to that part of the spiritual path leading up to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel (HGA). And secondly, the Ordeal and Crossing of the Abyss is best approached and maybe only approached by the apophatic method. In reality, there are very few mystical traditions that can be classified as exclusively one or the other. The criteria for classifying one type of mysticism apophatic and another as cataphatic is not only philosophical but also decided by the approach emphasized in their teachings. Neither am I seeking to exactly correlate them at least as far as the HGA is concerned as some paths (e.g. some Christian mysticism) are apophatic from the beginning. Also, there comes a time in the “conversation” where one must learn to listen.

In many cases the apophatic (negative and basically passive) mystic agrees on the importance of the cataphatic (positive, deductive and affirming) methods of attainment – but only as preparatory spiritual work. In their view the cataphatic approach is imperfect. The spiritual path requires the preliminary discipline of mysticism but there comes a point where human effort is vain. Like the unfinished pyramid, one must wait until the capstone is placed upon it by another.

A contrast of very early Christian approaches serves as an example: “For Origen the three stages of the soul’s ascent ...was a movement of increasing illumination; the soul moves from darkness to light to still

greater light. Gregory of Nyssa takes over Origen’s three stages but for him they are a movement from light to darkness. ...For Gregory of Nyssa the doctrine of God’s unknowability means that the soul’s ascent to God is an ascent into the divine darkness.” (The Study of Spirituality, ed.; Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, p.166.)

The apophatic tradition spans from the Neoplatonists, to Philo, Gregory of Nyssa, and Dionysius up through the centuries to the unknown author of the Cloud of Unknowing, Meister Eckhart of the 14th century, to St. John of the Cross in the 16th century, and even up to our time to the Cistercian abbot Thomas Keating.

The writings of Dionysius the Areopagite from Syria (aka the Pseudo-Dionysius) and his 5th-6th century writings had a profound effect on Western mysticism. It definitely reveals a very strong Neo-Platonic influence. His work *The Mystical Theology* discusses several important aspects of the spiritual path particularly to Christian mysticism but also speaks to the magical ordeal of “crossing the Abyss” although he does not use this terminology. This latter and ultimate ordeal is actually one rarely if ever mentioned (in any great detail) in the Western esoteric traditions -- leaving us mere mortals with Nothing and in Silence. How Dionysius approaches this divine darkness sheds light on this most obscure doctrine. Being the most important stage on the spiritual journey, it is too important just to turn back from because a great gulf looms before all of us eventually on the Path of Return. What method or methods we may use to approach that spiritual crisis is not as important as that which we use to reach



Pseudo-Dionysius

beyond it. It is referred to as something completely unknown and unknowable. It is the ultimate. It is the most intimate. It is complete. About it some prefer to maintain silence, some resort to poetic or symbolic expression and some have actually tried to present the Teachings in some sort of rational way – even though they know they are presenting the irrational or rather non-rational.

It is natural for Dionysius's work to cause speculation of possible connection between his type of mystical theology and that of Aleister Crowley's. There is no doubt that Aleister Crowley advocated the same two-tiered approach: the discipline and practices (cataphatic) are necessary up to a very advanced point, but then there is the apophatic shift at the threshold of the Ultimate. Technically, this is the status of the Exempt Adept in sphere Four on the Tree of Life. In particular, Crowley's articulation of the concept of an Abyss that separates earlier mystical states from the final stages of attainment has strong similarities with the ultimate states described by earlier apophatic mystics.

Unfortunately some of the similarities seemed to have caused a bit of confusion among the occult community. Many of the ideas have become garbled and clear distinctions lost. One reason, I believe, is that Crowley never put forth simple detailed explanations- bless his little soul. Yet because of Crowley's lucid descriptions of those ultimate processes and states of being, it is, in my opinion, possible, with the help of more traditional descriptions, to bring the Magician to a better Understanding.

One of the confusions I have noticed is that mystics tend to correspond their spiritual status with the particular mystical states that they have experienced along the Way. It is an easy thing to mix as the mystical states are intrinsically linked with the quality of the soul. One has to realize that there are several types of trances and mystical experiences – some very profound – but one also has to be very careful about assigning great importance to them, especially assigning great importance to yourself for experiencing them. Here is the distinction then: mystical states are signposts along the Way and they are normally purifications (and healings) of the soul, but they are not the ultimate goal of the mystic. We can hear these sentiments right from the mouth of this towering magician:

“Hindus may maintain that Atmadarshana, or at any rate Shivadarshana, is the equivalent of crossing the Abyss. Beware of any such conclusions! The Trances are simply isolated experiences, sharply cut off from normal thought-life. To cross the Abyss



Aleister Crowley

is a permanent and fundamental revolution in the whole of one's being.” (Crowley, *Magick Without Tears*, p. 112.)

As we limp upon the Path of Return we move symbolically in a vertical as well as horizontal fashion. While we may wish to take highway 37 directly to the summit, there may be by roads and back roads. Still all roads converge at the top. But before we reach the Summit, we must find that sure and trusty Guide and that brings us to the second part of this paper.

Part II

In most cases the spiritual event called the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel opens to the aspirant after long and steady mystical practices. Certainly by the time this occurs one fully understands why the spiritual path has also been referred to as the Great Work. It is certainly an achievement of several lifetimes of endeavor as many upon the mystical journey have been this way before. How does the aspirant achieve this spiritual goal? The new initiate is usually given a series of practices to develop the natural faculties: will, imagination, intellect and memory. Space prohibits any detailed explanation but most are aware of the detailed practices advocated by these schools. These practices, if done seriously and sustained over time, will begin to awaken powers of the soul one probably knew nothing about previ-

ously. Prior to the central experience of the HGA there are several less intense mystical experiences that can occur. Sometimes there are years of episodes where the mystic may not even attribute particular happenings as foreshadowing the coming event. For example there may be times when one is taken up in a string of incredible insights while thinking upon these matters. For example, this could happen while hiking in the mountains or in deep discussions with another spiritual person. Obviously this happens in deep meditations as well. This type of insight comes as completely new and fresh – connections one has never seen before. They come as Aha! flashes. Usually they come in quick succession. And there are many other lesser spiritual happenings where one begins to learn discernment about their origin.

These happenings are the beginning of a new relationship that eventually develops into a long conversation where one questions and answers begin to manifest. The conversation has begun. Yet these are only the glimmers of a much deeper and profound experience. There may come a time after long intelligent training and intense practice that a major breakthrough occurs. It happens as an ecstasy or rapture. It may occur in several ways or take on different forms but usually the Angel appears within one's consciousness or seemingly projected upon some medium as the perfect embodiment of you. Before you is the image of your perfect self, so much that one may not even recognize it as such and some have mistaken the image as that of a god or goddess. This is the Divine Idea of who you really are. This is the embodiment of all that you ever have been and the promise of that which you shall be.

The power of this vision can only last a few moments in the beginning but it feels like a lifetime. The information “downloaded” is so vast and intense that one walks away completely awestruck and in wonder. During the time of this vision, as one beholds this “angel,” every thought is magnified and every question is answered even before it is formulated. Thus the “conversation” goes until the consciousness reels from the intensity as the body itself will do when experiencing too intense stimulation. In time the vision fades but the mystic is never the same again. A true and deep initiation has occurred.

Saint Theresa of Avila called this experience the “spiritual betrothal” as it is not permanent but will come and go without much control by the mystic in any real way. One has to maintain the mystical practices. The marriage feast comes later which brings us to the next part of our journey.



Part III

As in normal life, it is a blessing to be in the presence of our lover and a curse when we are not. At this point we have found the Angel and the blessings of the relationship have poured upon us like a holy oil. Yet there are long times when the Angel is absent from our awareness. This periodic absence produces anguish and longing for a permanent union. As this fluctuation of presence and absence continues we realize that a complete union must be brought about eventually. The initiate's spiritual advancement will come to an ultimate crisis after the series of illuminations and profound insights from the results of the angelic relationship. We begin to intuit that the resolution of that crisis will only come after much suffering in what has been called “the dark night of the soul” wherein there is agony, despair, and the ultimate humbling of the soul.

This coming ordeal brings us to the third part of the paper: the Ordeal and Crossing of the Abyss. Just what are we talking about? – it does sound like some kind of cosmic grand canyon. This is another confusion I find rampant in the occult community. I do not know why

that is, as I mentioned before it is most definitely a part of almost every spiritual and magical system. But for some reason, I cannot count how many times I have heard the statement: "I have taken the Oath of the Abyss" from some wild-eyed magician expecting me to drop my jaw, shriek, and jump on the first camel to Abydos. Hopefully, in this final part we can calm the sand storms and dust devils and keep our herd of 73 camels from running amok.

It is a crucial subject to the large majority of occultists, yet it is rarely mentioned (except when one wishes to act spooky!). It is crucial because it addresses the ultimate spiritual horizon in almost every Western esoteric tradition including for example: the classical lineages (Aurum Solis and Ordo Astrum Sophia), the Rosicrucian lineages (G.D., B.O.T.A., F.L.O.) and the Thelemic lineages (O.T.O., AA).

Lover's leap was always a foolish notion to me. Maybe it is because I never really understood it. As kids we would make our way to cliffs and call it "lover's leap". What the hell does that mean? Is falling in love like falling off a cliff? Or the other way around? And here at the cliff, looking over, is it a visual representation of that irrational impulse? Is it that there is something akin to falling in love and falling into the unknown? Is there some story behind it? It does have an archetypal or primordial feel.

We are all familiar with the magical philosophy behind the Tarot key "The Fool", shown recently in a few decks as a young person about to walk off a cliff – an innocent spirit about to take the plunge. Occultists have designated the card numerically as zero, or nothing. In older decks this card portrayed a dancing fool or a beggar. I don't think they were numbered but it would have made sense. A beggar has nothing, and in a social sense, is nothing. He has no where to go but up. He can always be more than what he is. I think this spirit or impulse is accurately portrayed in both images. The "metaphysical" point of descent from the Supernals and ascent back to them is the furthest planet Saturn, right before the Fixed Sphere of the ancient paradigm.

Whenever I think of "The Fool" I am reminded of that great bard Ian Anderson and his lyrics: "And each step that he takes is one half of a life-time: No word he would say could you understand. So he bundles his regrets into a gesture of sorrow, bringing you love, cap in hand." (Jethro Tull, Songs From the Wood, "Pibroch")

The magical philosophy has adopted the Neoplatonic view that the forces of life emanate from a central but omnipresent unified source reaching deeply into the world, at some point reaching its limit and then turns around to make its way back. This nadir is the point of

true initiation. One has reached the western limit of the lodge and is now reoriented to the East. One has been in darkness because his back has been turned away from the light. Now he turns around and faces the rising sun. This is the conscious beginning of the Path of Return. And to me the Masonic question to the candidate has always summed it up the best: "Where were you first made a mason?" The answer: "In my heart."

The ordeal of the Abyss is the second of the two major spiritual stages on the Path of Return. It is said that the true obligation of every occult order is to guide the candidate to the first one – the HGA. From that point on, your spiritual work is directed by a higher influence. Thus, some mystical Orders do not work rites for any Sphere above the one representing that central spiritual experience. Other Orders may bid their initiates farewell. Some may recognize that their Angel may take them to other routes for reasons only It may know.

"It should never be forgotten for a single moment that the central and essential work of the Magician is the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Once he has achieved this he must of course be left entirely in the hands of that Angel, who can be invariably and inevitably relied upon to lead him to the further great step – crossing of the abyss and the attainment of the grade of Master of the Temple." (Crowley, *Magick Without Tears*, p. 502.)

The first and most important task is to make this personal link. All rites and practices are only there to assist your personal quest. Once that inner link is forged in your soul, the Holy Genius is your sole guide from that point on. It always was the case, but now it is consciously so. The temple of your soul has been built incarnation by incarnation as you "sailed over the sky of Nu in the car called Millions-of-Years" and now all of that experience, knowledge, and wisdom is becoming accessible to you consciously. The ongoing relationship and fusion accelerates the adept's rate of ascent and prepares him or her to the second major spiritual crossroad.

"His Angel shall lead him anon to the summit of the Order of the R.C. and make him ready to face the unspeakable terror of the Abyss which lies between Manhood and Godhead; teach him to Know that agony, to Dare that destiny, to Will that catastrophe, and to Keep Silence forever as he accomplishes the act of annihilation. (Liber ABA, p. 496)

We must not forget where the Adept is, technically, on the Tree of Life when we say the above. The summit of the Order of the R.C. is the metaphysical grade of Exempt Adept relating to Sphere Four - Chesed. He or she has climbed the Tree step by step up the paths to each Sphere. Now for the first time, there is no direct path to the next Sphere as there was before. The diagram of the Tree of Life depicts this phenomenon as there is no path between Sphere 4 and 3:

“One of the remarkable features in the development of Western religions and philosophies, has been the gradual realization of the existence, at an advanced point in individual evolution, of a gap or chasm across which the advancing consciousness cannot pass unaided: a point at which its hitherto repetitive methods of overcoming obstacles will not suffice.” (Denning & Phillips, *The Magical Philosophy*, vol 2, p. 362)

Yes, the Adept stands at the brink of the Abyss, but we might just as correctly call it “the Wall”. What is also interesting is that one of the meanings of the Hebrew name of the Fourth Path is the “Arresting Intelligence”. (I am aware that there are other more common interpretations of this adjective.) Now that the Adept is “within this sphere” it is important to consider its attributes. In modern Qabalistic and Tarot correspondences, the sphere of Jupiter is blue as is the High Priestess. One of the powers of the Soul she represents is the personal memory; and the Jupiter Sphere represents the cosmic aspect of memory. The Platonic view that Truth is actually remembered can be applied here along with the view that the Path of the High Priestess is the link between Tiphareth and the indivisible One. As the wayward spirit returns, he remembers his homeland.

The Adept stands at a very unique situation on the Path of Return. He or she stands upon a peak but can go no higher. He also realizes that this is not the ultimate of spiritual life. How does one break through this impasse? One of the chief tasks then of the Exempt Adept is to fortify his position by understanding his past. He can only do as much as he can to prepare.

“Until he has thoroughly mastered the reason for every incident in his past, and found a purpose for every item of his present equipment, he cannot truly answer even those Three Questions that were first put to him, even the Three Questions of the

Ritual of the Pyramid; he is not ready to swear the Oath of the Abyss.” (Liber vel Thisharb sub Figura CMXIII:37)

I am confident that the Three Questions can be extracted from the statements: “I know not who I am; I know not whence I came; I know not whither I go.” See Liber DCLXXI vel Pyramidos or Crowley’s comments on it in “John St. John”, *The Equinox*, Volume 1, Number 1. An Exempt Adept is given several aids in order to prepare for this last great ordeal depending upon the magical system. One of the practices is Liber Thisharb, vel Viae Memoriae which concentrates upon the faculty of memory and its stimulation by several advanced methods. Another task is to compose a thesis containing, as completely as possible, your knowledge of the universe. This is explained: “For in the Abyss no effort is anywise possible. The Abyss is passed by virtue of the mass of the Adept and his karma. Two forces impel him: (1) the attraction of Binah, (2) the impulse of his karma ...” (Crowley, Liber Thisharb) Obviously there is nothing you can do about number one above, so the Adept is to align oneself as much as possible with the second.

Knowing and understanding every facet of your past is to become ever closer to that underlying “True Will” and allows you to break free from the excess baggage you may still harbor. In Paul Case’s words defining this grade: “...they cannot enter into the consciousness of a Master of the Temple until they have become truly exempt from the delusions of personal volition and personal action.” (Case, “The Master Pattern”, 8:1) Or in the words of Aleister Crowley: “It is the purity of the Exempt Adept which destroys for him the illusion or drunkenness of existence, and therefore enables him to take the great leap into the Abyss.” (Crowley, 777, pp. 102-103)

The adept does not ascend from this point, one only receives the influences from Above. The adept only needs to get out of the way – permanently. Here you do not just transcend your individual life, but all the millions of lives you lived. It all has to be offered up. Once again that bard sums it up: “Stir the cup that’s ever filling with the blood of all that’s born.” (Jethro Tull, “Cup of Wonder”)

In the final sections, an attempt will be made to produce an inkling of the Ordeal of the Abyss, the sphere of Da’ath, and the Dark Night of the Soul. These concepts are beyond our ability to accurately describe.

The Abyss:

“Myself flung down the precipice of being
Even to the abyss, annihilation.
An end of loneliness, as to all.”
(Liber Liberi vel Lapidis Lazuli sub figura VII, Prologue)

Part IV

In the last section we were preparing for the big night out on the town. We were about to gird up our loins and head out into the wilderness for a good 40 years or more. Or actually, it might be more accurate to say that they got us all healthy and strong so we could be moved to death row!

“It is done quickly; yea, the seal is set upon the vault.

There is one that shall avail to open it.

Nor by memory, nor by imagination, nor by prayer, nor by fasting, nor by scourging, nor by drugs, nor by ritual, nor by meditation; only by passive love shall he avail.

He shall await the sword of the Beloved and bare his throat for the stroke.

Then shall his blood leap out and write me runes in the sky; yea, write me runes in the sky.” (Liber Liberi vel Lapidis Lazuli, V: 44-48)

All action is now void. One’s forward progress has turned into spinning wheels in the sand. “Then there was silence. Speech had done with us awhile.” (Liber LXV:1:12) The adept’s karma has propelled him to this crossroad. And like all crossroads, the goddess Hecate rules here for She is the ruling spirit of boundaries and thresholds, of life and death. It may have been several lifetimes since the adept had the epiphany of the Angel, but now he must face the crisis of the Abyss. And, like death, he or she must face it alone.

This phenomenon is actually a natural outcome of the contact with the Angel. As one had established the “entheist conviction, the realization of the inmost light of divinity illumining the psyche” as Denning and Phillips have written, it is clear that the adept must be brutally honest with himself or herself. You may tell others all kinds of wonderful things about yourself and claim great titles, but one cannot hide from oneself. Therein lies the danger that is read about in regards to this particular spiritual crisis:

“To search for the God Within before that deity is ready to be found, is to unsettle one’s external focus and to find nothing within which is worthy of worship. It is also to incur the possible horror to which some temperaments are liable, of finding within an unintelligible and inhuman Chaos of gibbering and amorphous solitude, of turbulent and life-swallowing obscurity: the Abyss.” (Denning & Phillips, *The Magical Philosophy*, vol 2, p. 432.)

The authors above also inform us that the word Abyss comes from the word “Abzu” from Sumerian myth meaning the Water-Deep. The fear caused from the great expanses of water, of great floods, and river inundation with their occasional propensity to wreak havoc and chaos in the affairs of men and destroy everything that man has labored to build is a very real primordial response. This is an apt description of the greatest ordeal of the spiritual path.

There is not only a psychological reality to the abyss; there is a philosophical notion that mirrors it as well.

“The Abyss is empty of being; it is filled with all possible forms, each equally inane, each therefore evil in the only true sense of the word – that is, meaningless but malignant, insofar as it craves to become real. These forms swirl senselessly into haphazard heaps like dust devils, and each such chance aggregation asserts itself to be an individual, and shrieks, “I am I!” though aware all the time that its elements have no true bond; so that the slightest disturbance dissipates the delusion just as a horseman, meeting a dust devil, brings it in showers of sand to the earth.” (Crowley, *The Vision & the Voice with Commentary*, p. 24.)

Now that we have painted such a lovely picture of our task and ordeal, I am sure everyone will want to pack up and go home. Those who choose to face this grand demon do so through the “gate of Da’ath”. This is the last of the four great gates between the Qabalistic worlds. Da’ath is the gate between Briah and Atziluth – the world of divinity.

The Hidden Gate of Da’ath:

Da’ath means “knowledge” but it is usually used in the special sense that I heard so many times growing up in Tennessee: “He knew her, you know son, in the Biblical

sense.” It is considered by some as the invisible sphere on the Tree of Life. It is found on the Tree if you draw a line between Sphere 4 and Sphere 3 where it crosses the path of Gimel – the path from the Solar Sphere to the Crown. Recall that the “Abyss” lies between the Supernal Triad (the first 3 Spheres of the Tree of Life) and the lower seven. Keeping this in mind, one can see the hidden Sphere as the Sphere right at this crossroad

“Da’ath is the Gate by which the triune light of the Neshamah shines out, and Da’ath is situated in the Abyss: but as yet the Adept does not see the Gate itself, nor shall he see it until to him it is a Gate indeed and his matured consciousness may enter thereby.” (D&P, TMP, vol 2, p. 353)

Remember that the Neshamah is sometimes thought of as the entire Supernal Triad. How does one enter? Looking at the Tree with this new line drawn between Sphere 4 and Sphere 3, one can get an inkling. The invisible path between sphere 4 and the gate of Da’ath mirrors that visible Path between Netzach and Tiphareth – that of Nun or Death. To take this Path is to take the path of total renunciation. It is the higher arc of the Mystical Death encountered in Tiphareth.

There are two paths one can go from that hidden gate:

“He may ascend directly by the Thirteenth Path to Kether, to merge gloriously into Divinity, as Ipsissimus. Such a choice does not result in a loss of individuality, but rather a fulfillment of it, as the word Ipsissimus signifies: for who could be more truly himself than he who completely and deliberately plunges all that he is into the Yechidah, that pure Idea of himself, which through all the vicissitudes of his existence has awaited him, a living and perfect flame of unutterable brilliance in the Divine Mind of which it is a part? (Denning & Philips, TMP vol 2, p. 366)

Or, and more common (if common can be used here) is to pass on to Sphere Three – Binah. And by reference to the Tree of Life one can see that this path is the higher arc of Lamed. Recall that the sign of Libra is attributed to Lamed, the sign in which Saturn is exalted. “Furthermore, the highest manifestation of the restrictive, concrete, definitive power of Saturn is brought about through the operation of the law symbolized by Key 11 (Justice).” (Paul Case, *The Tarot*, p. 126) And being the higher arc of such

we can only imagine the restrictive power brought to bear upon the adept. As Libra is associated with the kidneys and the elimination of waste, one can get a good idea of what kind of process is now happening. This brings us to the true ordeal of this path: the dark night of the soul.

The Dark Night of the Soul:

The Dark Night of the Soul is a state, a purgative state that the soul suffers at this point on the Path of Return. It does not occur below the Abyss. Let me repeat that: it does not occur below the abyss. It is true, there are reflections of Saturn down through the Tree, but only one’s ego believes they are going through such an exalted state. “...the Sphere of Binah has many reflections and minor manifestations which one may from time to time encounter upon the Way of Return, and not the least of these darkens the thirty-second Path. The despondency and inertia which can sometimes assail even the beginner are therefore not groundless.” (D&P, TMP vol 2, p. 228) This is common after initiation. As soon as the honeymoon is over, the reality of work sets in and one balks. One of the most distressing phenomenon is to witness the neophyte experiencing this Saturnine reflection after the initiation, quit the group, and seek out another. A temporary alleviation occurs and he or she then feels justified in their decision. After their next initiation in the next group, the same pattern is repeated.

Another trap below the abyss is the suffering encountered from disillusionment. Many times is this thought of as the Dark Night. It is not. Sometimes this disillusionment is caused from putting too much faith in a particular religion, organization or person; the breaking up of an idealized image can be traumatic. In the same fashion, a death of a loved one is one of the hardest and darkest of times. It can cause one to question everything upon which they based their whole life. Thus, one can withdraw from the outer elements, confusion reigns, towers fall, and so on that may drive the sufferer within to an abyss of emptiness and meaninglessness. Many have lost their faith completely. Although still, this is not the dark night of the soul.

“Foreshadowings there are, but the veritable Dark Night does not come in its fullness below the Abyss. ... One sees, therefore, the pitiful absurdity of those who know about these things without understanding them, and who openly refer their every moment of gloom to the Dark Night of the Soul. ... it is

clear, therefore, that the origin of the Dark Night is not to be found in the material world.” (Denning & Phillips, *The Magical Philosophy*, pp. 228-229)

No, this is the darkness, anguish and agony of personal and conscious death of everything one considered about oneself. It is also caused by the withdrawal of the person’s faculties from the attachments and engagements in the material world – the sensory world and the derived abstractions that are the foundation of one’s knowledge of the universe.

“The preliminary darkness refers to an experience wherein your personal identity utterly disappears. All you have believed yourself to be becomes non-existent! this is a necessary preliminary to union with the One Existence, for there is nothing connected with individuality related to it. There is no sense of being a person at all. ... To enter that that Holy Place you must cross the abyss of total renunciation, wherein the image of selfhood you have for long ages identified with, is exposed as nothing at all.” (Ann Davies, *BOTA lessons*)

Speaking of these refined aspects of spirituality-- it is reported-- becomes increasingly difficult. Not many have been successful in conveying or transmitting a clear notion of everything that is involved. One of the first and best articulations came from St. John of the Cross – the “mystical doctor” of the Roman Catholic Church. He explores several nuances and phases of the Dark Night in great detail. Speaking of St. John, Denning & Phillips write:

“...they were all ... treating of some of the highest discernable levels of human consciousness, wherein a writer may still use the vocabulary of this or that school of thought, but the ideas expressed will transcend all boundaries. The Carmelite made in particular a detailed study of the experience of utter desolation which overwhelms the soul on entering those heights, and he called it the Dark Night. ... for the Dark Night has its ecstatic as well as its sorrowful aspect and in coming to utterance the ecstatic veils the other. Nevertheless, it contains the desolation of utter loneliness and the vast bitterness of the ocean, for it is the experience of Binah. (Denning & Phillips, *The Magical Philosophy*, vol 2, p. 227)

It is good to let the Master’s speak. Following is a series of quotes from St. John’s work “The Dark Night” which represents the words of a Catholic mystical genius. But as the authors of *The Magical Philosophy* write above, it transcends all boundaries:

“Since not only the understanding is deprived of its light ... and the will of its attachments, but likewise the memory is deprived of its cogitation and its contents, the soul might as well have ceased to exist as regards those faculties.” (St. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night*, E. Allison Peers trans.; Book II, Ch. 8.2)

“This is precisely what the divine ray of contemplation does. In striking the soul with its divine light, it surpasses the natural light and thereby darkens and deprives a soul of all the natural affections and apprehensions it perceived by means of its natural light. It leaves a person’s spiritual and natural faculties not only in darkness, but in emptiness too. Leaving the soul thus empty and dark, the ray purges and illumines it with divine spiritual light, while the soul thinks that it has no light and is in darkness, ...” (*The Dark Night*, K. Kavanaugh trans.; Book II, Chap. 8.4.)

“It is fitting that this darkness last as long as is necessary for the expulsion and annihilation of the intellect’s habitual way of understanding, which was a long time in use, and that divine light and illumination take its place. Since that strength of understanding was natural to the intellect, the darkness it here suffers is profound, frightful, and extremely painful. This darkness seems to be substantial darkness, since it is felt in the deep substance of the spirit.” (*The Dark Night*, Book II, Ch. 9.3.)

“The soul is purged and prepared for union with the divine light just as the wood is prepared for transformation into the fire. Fire, when applied to wood, first dehumidifies it, dispelling all moisture and making it give off any water it contains. then it gradually turns the wood black, makes it dark and ugly, and even causes it to emit a bad odor. By drying out the wood, the fire brings to light and expels all those ugly and dark accidents that are contrary to fire. Finally, by heating and enkindling it from without, the fire transforms the wood into itself and makes it as beautiful as it is itself. Once trans-

formed, the wood no longer has any activity or passivity of its own, ..." (St. John, The Dark Night, Bk II, ch. 10.1)

And in the words of a modern mystic, this process is like spilling every last drop of your life's blood into the cup of the goddess:

"In this Cup, therefore, though all things are placed, by virtue of this dew all lose their identity. And therefore this Cup is in the hand of Babalon the Lady of the City of the Pyramids, wherein none can be distinguished from any other, wherein no one may sit until he has lost his name." (Crowley, Liber ABA, p. 79)

"O ye who dwell in the city of the Pyramids beneath the Night of PAN, remember that ye shall see no more light but That of the great fire that shall consume your dust to ashes!" (Crowley, Book of Lies, chapter 67.)

Concluding Remarks

I doubt it sane to continue beyond this point. But I feel I have left you with little, and maybe nothing, here at the end. Yet it seems that something more needs to be communicated, at least from one point of view. The question is, I suppose, what has become of this adept who has been destroyed, consumed and transformed. He or she is still sitting there across the room; even looks remarkably the same. Paradoxically, this adept crossed the abyss but yet is in some sense still present, isn't he? Obviously, he or she now belongs to a whole other order of being:

"The Order of the S.S. is composed of those who have crossed the Abyss; ... Every active Member of the Order has destroyed all that He is and all that He has on crossing the Abyss; but a star is cast forth in the Heavens to enlighten the Earth, so that He may possess a vehicle wherein He may communicate with mankind. The quality and position of this star, and its functions, are determined by the nature of the incarnations transcended by Him." (Crowley, Liber ABA, p. 79)

So, in conclusion then:

"From the Abyss comes No Man forth, but a Star startles the Earth, and our Order rejoices above the

Abyss ... " (Crowley, Liber ABA, p. 496)

"Thus, that dust which is all that remains of the Exempt Adept after he has crossed the Abyss, is gradually surrounded by sphere after sphere of shining splendour, so that he becomes a fitting ornament for the bosom of the Great Mother." (Crowley, 777, p. 102)

So in the light of the star that unites us all, I hope and trust that one day we may all proclaim: I was in the Abyss.



CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN THE SUFISM OF IBN 'ARABI AN ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

by Jennifer Wolfe, MS

Although *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* by Henry Corbin is ostensibly about the ideas of Ibn 'Arabi, this brilliant book pertains strongly to the Holy Guardian Angel as we understand it in the Ogdoadic Tradition and is especially pertinent to the Third Hall. Originally written in French in 1958, it was translated into English in 1969 by R. Mannheim and published as part of the Bollingen series by Princeton University Press. It was reissued in 1997 under the title *Alone with the Alone*, with a new introduction by Harold Bloom.

Creative Imagination makes intensely dense reading, demanding study, rereading, contemplation and more rereading if the newcomer is to grasp even a rudimentary sense of its intricate and paradoxical concepts. Having given it that kind of attention, I wanted to share my interpretation (amateur that I am, both in the sense of non-professional and of lover) with others in our tradition. The following is my commentary on and summary of the first chapter of this book. A commentary on the second chapter will appear in the next *Ogdoadic Journal*.

Ibn Arabi (Arabic: إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ) was an Arab Sufi Muslim mystic, philosopher and teacher. His full name was Abū abd-Allah Muhammad ibn-Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-'Arabi al-Hatimi al-T'aa'i. He was born in 1165 in present-day Murcia (appropriately nicknamed the City of the Sun), which is in southwestern Spain. At the age of 35 he made the hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca, where he lived for three years and began writing *The Meccan Illuminations*. In 1223, he settled in Damascus, the capital of Syria and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. He died at the age of 76 and his tomb in Damascus is still an important place of pilgrimage. A vastly prolific writer, Ibn Arabi is generally known as the prime exponent of the idea later known as *Wahdat-*

ul-Wujood, though he did not use this term in his writings. This term literally means "the unity of creation." As originally developed by Ibn Arabi, it does not imply that God is present in everything, but rather that God's likeness can be observed in created things. His emphasis was on the true potential of the human being and the path to realizing that potential and becoming the perfect or complete man. Some 800 works are attributed to Ibn Arabi, although only some have been authenticated.

Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi is as revealing of its author Henry Corbin as it is of Ibn Arabi. Corbin (14 April 1903 - 7 October, 1978) was a philosopher, theologian and professor of Islamic Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. Although born in Paris in 1903 to a Protestant family, he was educated in the Catholic tradition and at the age of 19 received a certificate in Scholastic philosophy from the Catholic Institute of Paris. In 1928 Louis Massignon, director of Islamic studies at the Sorbonne, introduced Corbin to the writings of Suhrawardi, the 12th century Persian mystic and philosopher. Years later Corbin said "through my meeting with Suhrawardi, my spiritual destiny for the passage through this world was sealed. Platonism, expressed in terms of the Zoroastrian angelology of ancient Persia, illuminated the path that I was seeking." In his other writings, he describes some of his own visions and spiritual experiences.

Corbin's spiritual quest extended well beyond the vast landscapes of western scholasticism and Islamic mysticism. During the 1920s and the early 1930s he simultaneously pursued studies that in themselves would have marked him as an eclectic Protestant theologian. In his maturity Corbin presented himself as a Protestant Christian. He became deeply engaged with the German theo-

logical tradition and lectured on Luther, Kierkegaard and Hamann. He was the first to translate the early works of Karl Barth into French. In 1930 a second defining encounter in Corbin's spiritual odyssey took place. This was his reading of Martin Heidegger's foundational work of phenomenology, *Being and Time*. It gives us some sense of the unique perspective of this truly catholic philosopher to note that his copy of the notoriously difficult and very German work was marked throughout by glosses in Arabic.

In 1939 Henry and his wife Stella (which means star) moved to Istanbul for seven years to collect manuscripts for a critical edition of Suhrawardi. In 1949 he first attended the annual Eranos Conferences in Ascona, Switzerland, where he was to become a major figure along with Carl Jung, and many others. In 1954 he succeeded Louis Massignon in the Chair of Islam and the Religions of Arabia. From the 1950s on he spent autumn in Tehran, winter in Paris and spring in Ascona. He spent his time teaching, writing, lecturing, and editing critical editions of Persian and Arabic manuscripts. His published work includes over 200 critical editions, translations, books and articles. He presented his last paper in June 1978, entitled "Eyes of Flesh, Eyes of Fire: the Science of Gnosis," a few months before he died at the age of 75.

The following passage from Wikipedia summarizes the main themes of Corbin's beliefs and work:

"The Imagination plays a crucial role in the human and divine orders. It is the primary means by which we engage with Creation and provides the link 'without which the worlds are put out of joint.' Prayer is the supreme form of the creative imagination, and as such is the ultimate exercise of human freedom. Opposing the imagination is rigid literalism in its myriad forms. Corbin presents a vehement triple critique of idolatry, dogma and the institutionalization of religion, coupled with a radical assessment of the doctrine of the Incarnation. He considered himself a Protestant Christian but he abandoned a Christocentric view of history. The grand sweep of his theology of the Holy Spirit embraces Judaism, Christianity and Islam as manifestations of a single coherent story of the ongoing relationship between the individual and God. He pleaded for recognition of the over-arching unity of the religions of Abraham. He was a passionate defender of the central role of the individual as the finite image of the Unique Divine. It is the bond between the human soul and the face of the Heavenly Twin, the An-



Henry Corbin

gel Holy Spirit, who appears uniquely to each of us, which is the ethical bond par excellence. This mystical spirituality depends upon the capacity of the human soul to travel a path towards the Angel, and towards perfection. The status of Person is not simply bestowed upon us at birth – it is a goal to be achieved. The true journey of our lives is measured on a vertical scale. Our progress on this path is gauged by our capacity for love and, linked to this, our ability to perceive beauty. His mysticism is no world-denying asceticism but regards all of Creation as a theophany of the divine. Beauty is the supreme theophany, and human love for a being of beauty is not a hindrance to our union with the Divine, but a threshold to Divine Passion.”¹

I Divine Passion and Compassion

1. *The Prayer of the Heliotrope*

Certain flowers are heliotropes: that is they continually turn to face the sun (*helio-*). This *tropism* (the response to the sun) is the “prayer” of the flower, based on the sympathy between the flower and the sun, called *heliopathy* (*helio-pathos*). The sun is the flower's *Angel*, its celestial prince and Lord. Corbin argues that this sympathy does not originate only in the flower, but is a reciprocal aspiration between the flower and the sun. Nor is it simply an action of the flower, but arises from the flower's very nature. In itself, therefore, the flower is a prayer to the sun.

Some of this vocabulary is critical to understanding Corbin and does not mean quite what we may be used to:

Tropism: The conversion (turning) of one being to-

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri_Corbin

wards another, based on sympathy.

Sympathy: Sym-Pathos. A reciprocal and simultaneous attraction between two beings, based on an affinity between them: a “community” of essence and the ability to see in the other what one knows in oneself.

Community: The capacity for and act of communion, a connection based on sharing the same essence.

Pathos: A deep personal passion and suffering² in response to another being.

Corbin uses the heliotrope as an analogy for the relationship between the individual human and God. The individual is *theo*-tropic, inherently turning towards God. God is not simply a passive recipient of prayer, but is *anthropo*-tropic, inherently turning towards the individual (*anthro* = “man”). There is a sympathy between God and the individual because they share a community of essence³, and because God is *pathetic* (experiences pathos), being “affected by human events and feelings and reacting to them in a very personal way.” A prayer⁴ is equally an act of the worshipper and of God, for God has drawn the worshipper to him.

Corbin contrasts this conception of a *sympathetic religion* (based on a relationship with a pathetic God) to two other theological models:

1. *Prophetic religion:* This seems to be the generally accepted, dogmatic model offered by mainstream Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The God of revelation (*Deus revelatus*, the God of revelation) sends down revelation to his chosen few, who then reveal it to the people and enforce it on earth

2. *Mystical religion:* The worshipper reaches up to an unknowable God (*Theos agnostos*), aspiring to plunge himself into the super-essence and dissolve in the infinite divine Unity.

Sympathetic religion, he says, can unite and transcend these two models by offering a *reciprocal* model of a re-

lationship between a fully personal God and a fully individual person.

Sympathetic religion is the model used by Islamic Sufis (especially Ibn ‘Arabi⁵ and the mystical poet Rumi), who Corbin calls *Fedeli d’amore*⁶ after Dante and his followers, for he says the two groups share a common teaching, as follows:

“If there is any fact in experience which justifies us (if justification is needed) in speaking of a divine pathos, of a divine passion for man (a divine ‘*anthropopathy*’) motivating the ‘conversion’ of the divine being toward man (his ‘*anthropotropism*’), this fact of experience can only be a corresponding, complementary, and as it were sym-pathetic, state in man, a state in which the divine *pathos* is revealed. In other words, the divine *pathos* is accessible, it has existential reality, only in a state experienced by man as a theopathy and theotropism. Man cannot directly grasp a question asked him from outside (that would be pure speculation); he grasps it through his response and this response is his being, his very own mode of being, as he wills it and assumes⁷ it (just as the tropism of the heliotrope expresses that flower’s very own being).

“This response depends then on the degree to which man renders himself “capable of God,” for it is this capacity which defines and measures sympathy as the necessary medium of all religious experience.”

Thus there is a constant reciprocity between God’s passion for the individual and the individual’s passion for God. This sympathy between them “unites the divine lord and his *fedele d’amore* in their very being.” Yet the individual’s capacity to experience (and in a sense to create) this passion of God towards her depends on the extent to which she is “capable of God,” which is only possible by means of a sympathetic relation.

The Great Work, certainly the “Knowledge and Conversation,” is just this: the initiate making herself ever more capable of God. This is the core purpose of the Astrum Sophia, especially in the Third Hall.

5 According to other scholars (such as Chittick), Ibn Arabi actually stressed the centrality of the Koran and of the Law.

6 The *Aurum Solis* considers itself to be part of the same current as the *Fedeli d’amore*, as explained in the History Lecture in the Rite of Integration.

7 In this context, “assumes” means to take on something offered to you, as in assuming an office. Man assumes his being because it comes to him directly from God.

2 “Suffering” in this context is not necessarily unpleasant. It means to undergo or experience, to feel keenly.

3 Corbin explains the basis for this shared essence in later sections.

4 Here is meant a prayer of devotion and communion, not of asking for favors, the latter being abhorrent to ‘Arabi and the other “*Fedeli d’amore*.”

In a 3½ page footnote (#10), Corbin actually prefigures the main ideas of the book, discussing the relationship between the individual and her Angel, her “divine suzeain⁸.” Because this is such a vital concept in our magical work, I will explore it in some detail.

Each individual has the responsibility for making the Divine actual or non-actual by her own mode of being. “Accomplishing His presence” is the only proof of God’s existence available to humanity. This responsibility comes from “the secret of divine suzerainty”: the secret which is your *self* (i.e., your essential nature, which is an aspect of the Being of the Unknowable God, which is your Angel, your Lord and *your* God). The process of actualizing this Angel involves *ta’wil*: an exploration and analysis that carries back and sublimates yourself to its original secret and significance.

Corbin hasn’t yet really explained what the Angel is, and to be fair this explanation comprises the entire book. The short (and simplistic) answer is that the Angel is one of the infinite number of Names of God through which the Unknowable God (*Theos agnostos*) reveals one of His infinite aspects, thus *potentially* becoming known (and thus knowing Himself). The Angel then manifests as a human individual, who in coming to know herself potentially *knows* the Angel. Our knowing of our secret selves and our actualization of our Angel enables the One Unknowable God (who longs to break from His solitude and be known) to know Himself through His creatures.

To return to the footnote, Corbin explores the nature of the Angel as the spiritual form or *virtuality*⁹ that transcends the physically manifest. The Angel is

the invisible Beloved (still virtual) in the visible Beloved [the individual] who alone can manifest Him, an invisible whose actuality depends on an Active Imagination which makes physical love and spiritual love “conspire” in a single mystic love.

The “Angelic function” of a being is the “mediation”¹⁰ of her Angel, a intermediary between the individual and her Angel which acts to reconcile or transmit between them¹¹. This angelic function is what “precisely liberates us for undiscovered, unforeseeable, unsuspected transcendences and prevents us from becoming immobilized in definite,

8 Suzerain: A superior feudal lord to whom fealty is due; Overlord.

9 Virtuality: Essence, or potential existence.

10 Mediation: A middle position between two parties, acting to reconcile or transmit between them.

11 It would be interesting to explore the idea that the Magical Personality is our “Angelic function.”

definitive happening.”

Corbin says in conclusion (quoting the writer Etienne Souriau),

It is not in my power to elicit an answer from Him [the Angel], but I can answer Him, I can experience in my being a modification “of which He is the reason... and that perhaps is the only way in which we can bear witness for Him, in which we can be in a relation of action and passion with Him.

2. *The “Pathetic God”*

The idea of the pathetic God (i.e., a God who feels pathos for man) includes two aspects:

1. *Theos agnostos*: The Supreme Godhead, “God who is not,” who is absolute being without differentiation or qualification – unknowable, unnamable and indescribable¹².

2. *Deus revelatus*: The Angel, the revealed God, the Nous¹³ of *Theos agnostos*, who thinks and acts, has attributes and is capable of relation.

Theos agnostos created *Deus revelatus* in order to reveal Himself to man, and through man to reveal Himself to Himself. This process, the very creation of the cosmos, happens through theophany.

The divine Essence reveals Himself first as an infinite number of divine Names (of which each Angel is one). These Names are attributes of Godhead itself and are called “Lords.” They are also called “Presences,” for they are the form in which God reveals Himself.

God’s motive in thus revealing himself is His anguish in being unknown and hidden and His yearning to be known: “I was a hidden Treasure and I yearned to be known. Then I created creatures in order to be known by them [in order to know myself in them].” This “Sadness”

12 Using the Qabalistic model, the *Theos agnostos* is the Ain, Ain Soph and Ain Soph Aur planes of “reality” above Kether. In another sense, it is Kether itself, which we are careful not to represent with images or names that imply limitation or particularity.

13 The word nous (pronounced “noose”) has been used by different philosophers to refer to very different concepts, making the term ambiguous. As a Neoplatonist and given the context, Corbin is using the word as an emanation from the Divine, as the Logos, to Cosmic Intelligence or Mind, as an intermediary level of reality between the Unknowable One and the physical world.

is an “inscrutable intra-divine mystery.”¹⁴

The divine Names also feel a deep sadness at their virtuality (i.e., potential rather than actual existence) and a yearning to be fully realized and manifested. Feeling pathos for His creatures, God releases a Sigh of Compassion and through this exhalation actively manifests the divine Names as concrete individuals. “Thus in its hidden being, every existent is a Breath of the existentiating¹⁵ divine Compassion.”

Thus, in an act of Compassion, God releases the Divine Names from their virtuality and the Divine Names release God from the solitude of His unknowableness. This Compassion¹⁶ forms the mutual sympathetic pact and dialog between Worshipped and Worshipper. “We have enabled Him to Manifest Himself in us, while He gave us being.” This concept has profound implications: God is not unknowable, or distant, or judging. Rather He is inherently linked to us in active, ongoing and passionate love, in pathos. We are not simply His emanations or His creations, but theophanies of His very being¹⁷: the Compassionate God manifested in physical form. As the *fedeli d’amore*, actively participating in and actualizing this bond of pathos, we are the Compassionate Ones. “To become a Compassionate One is to become the likeness of the Compassionate God, experiencing infinite sadness over undisclosed virtualities.”

This puts on each of us a profound responsibility for self-knowledge. We know God (and thus God knows Himself) “only by our knowledge of ourselves.” “In pre-eternity, before He brought us into existence, we were beings in His Essence, that is, our own essences were individuations of essential states or conditions of the god-

14 Another aspect of this deep anguished sadness is that of the divine Name to return to its Source beyond being. Corbin discusses this in a later section.

A Divine Sadness motivating and emerging from the act of creation is a prevalent idea. Consider the sadness of the mourning Isis, who gather the pieces of her dead consort Osiris in order to conceive Horus. Or the sadness of Sophia, which motivates the implanting of the Divine Spark in Man. Or the deep sea of sadness associated with Binah, the first Qabalistic level of manifestation.

15 If *existentiate* is an actual word, it is a very obscure one: an active verb meaning to *give being to or to bring into existence*. The vagueness of this word makes it a good choice, for it is not really something that God *does* or *gives*, but rather something that “happens” even before there is the duality of an “actor” and an “acted upon.”

16 *Compassion* here does not involve pity, mercy or any kind of moral judgment, but is rather a pact of *Pathos*, a com-passion, a phenomenon of primordial Love.

17 Ponder the profound difference between being a creation of God and being a theophany of God. We are not separate or separable, but rather intrinsically *of* God, loved and lovable. Any sense of shame or of being intrinsically unworthy comes entirely from our own fear and misconception.

head.” From all eternity, the divine Names have been *latent* individualities aspiring to concrete being. They discover and experience themselves in “the mode of being” of the creature in whom and to whom they manifest. “Thus the divine Names have meaning and full reality only *through* and *for* beings who are their epiphanic forms, that is to say, the forms in which they are manifested.”

Our *very mode of being* is of God. In so far as we are “capable of God,”¹⁸ as we express and realize (make real) our true and essential being, we are, by our very natures, a prayer to God and a manifestation of God. We must be who we are, and part of this is being actively and consciously in communion with the Angel of Whom we are a manifestation, our Lord and the Presence of the divine Essence.

We discover our divine Names, our individual Angels, “only insofar as they occur and are made within us, according to what they make of us, insofar as they are our *passion*.”¹⁹:

“Those to whom God remains veiled pray the God who in their belief is their Lord to have compassion with them. But the intuitive mystics ask that divine Compassion be fulfilled [come into being, exist] through them.” In other words, the Gnostic’s prayer does not tend to provoke a change in a being outside him who would subsequently take pity on him. No, his prayer tends to actualize the divine Being as He aspires to be through and for him who is praying and who “in his very prayer” is the organ of His passion. The Gnostic’s prayer means: Make of us, let us be, Compassionate ones, that is to say, “become through us what thou hast eternally desired to be.”

Because the nature of the relationship between the initiate and his Angel is so vital to our spiritual practice, I will continue quoting at length:

“... sympathy alone renders a being accessible to

18 One prevalent criticism of Corbin’s ideas is that they are “elitist,” a criticism I have also heard of Gnosticism as a whole. I wonder sometimes about the extent to which this is true and, if it is, about its significance. Being *capable of God* seems to mean being capable of being our true selves – is this a capacity available only to an elite, or to anyone with ears to listen? Do attributes that define an “elite” (such as power, or intelligence, or material goods) hinder or help in this task? Surrender, impassioned devotion – surely those qualities are available to everyone, although the inclination may differ. It is likely that in this context the word *capacity* does not mean “ability to perform, produce or understand”, but “the room to hold something,” “the amount that can be contained.”

19 “Enflame thyself with prayer.”

the light of theophanies. Mankind discloses the refusal of the divine Names in many forms, ranging from atheism pure and simple to fanaticism with all its variants. All come from the same ignorance of the infinite divine Sadness, yearning to find a compassionate servant for His divine Names. The Gnostic's apprenticeship consists in learning to practice fidelity to his own Lord, that is, to the divine Name with which he, in his essential being, is invested, but at the same time to hear the precept of Ibn 'Arabi: "Let thy soul be as matter for all forms of beliefs." One who has risen to that capacity is ... an initiate, "one who through God sees in God with the eye of God." Those who accept and those who decline are subject to the same authority: the God in function of whom you live is He for whom you bear witness, and your testimony is also the judgment you pronounce on yourself."²⁰

And finally,

... prayer activates a response, an active passion in one of the two components of the total being of him who prays, namely in the dimension of his manifest being. The prayer in turn is activated by his invisible being, that is, his transcendent dimension, the celestial counterpart of his being, his eternal individuality, hence in essence the very breath of that divine Compassion which through it has summoned one of the divine Names to active being. Such indeed are the two existences which constitute a being's total existence; Ibn 'Arabi calls them *lahut* and *nasut*, the divine nature or condition and the human or created condition. This ... conjunction is conceived not as a hypostatic union of two natures ..., but as a theophanic union, that is, as the union of a divine Name and of the sensible form, or appearance, in which this Name becomes visible. The two together, not the one without the other or mistaken for the other, compose the totality of a divine Name, the one as this Name's lord, the other as its servant; the one is attached to the other by a pact of suzerainty and vassaldom or love service, which makes the two "co-respondents" – and this pact is born with the initial act of divine Love, with the Sign of Sadness, com-passionate with the nostalgia of the divine Names crying out for the being who

would will them."

The initiate does not have to do anything but "will" the divine Name that is eternally and passionately crying out to him.

3. *Unio Mystica as Unio Sympathetica*

Corbin starts this section with a summary:

"Each being is an epiphanic²¹ form of the Divine Being, who in it is manifested as invested in one or more of His Names. The universe is the totality of the Names by which He is named Each divine Name manifested is the lord of the being who manifests it. Each being is the epiphanic form of his own Lord, that is he manifests only that aspect of the divine Essence which in each case is particularized and individualized in that Name."²²

Corbin goes on to explain that one being cannot manifest the whole of God. However, God is not fragmented into an infinite number of particular Names, but is wholly present in each²³:

"No determinate and individualized being can be the epiphanic form of the Divine in its totality, that is to say, of all the Names or 'Lords.' 'Each being,' says Ibn 'Arabi, 'has as his God only his particular Lord, he cannot possibly have the Whole. ... the Divine Being is not fragmented, but wholly present in *each* instance, individualized in *each* theophany of His Names, and it is invested in *each* instance with one of these Names that He appears as Lord."

21 The root of epiphanic is "epiphany": a manifestation of a divine being, a knowing of the essential nature of something, an intuitive grasp of deeper reality through something simple, an illuminating realization [which literally means a "making real" that gives light].

22 One being can be invested in more than one Name, and thus have more than one Lord. Conversely, one Name can manifest in more than one being.

23 Although this concept seems impossibly paradoxical, it is quite similar to the ideas of chaos theory or of holographs, where each detail gives complete information on the whole. It also recalls the image of the circle whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere.

20 Conversely, our pronouncement on ourselves is our pronouncement on our Angel.

A individual being (a Fedele²⁴) and his Angel²⁵ have no reality except in each other. Arabi writes, “The divinity yearns for a being whose God it is; suzerainty seeks a being whose lord it is; without these both are deprived of actual or even virtual reality.” The Angel (a particular Name and manifestation of God) is only an Angel by virtue of being worshipped by His Fedele²⁶. The “secret of the Lord’s suzerainty” is that it is given reality by you, as His worshipper. (The super-essence, *Theos agnostos*, is not “existentiated” by Man, since It transcends all naming and knowledge.)

This does not mean that the Angel does not exist until you create it: we are dealing “not with an *a posteriori* fabrication but with a *a priori* fact of experience.” The Angel and the Fedele both existed together through eternity, and are intrinsically bound. In fact, the relationship did not originate in time at all, but “in pre-eternity in the virtual essences of these two beings.” Thus the Angel is not a psychological creation or projection.

Arabi is saying something more profound here than that the Angel is only an Angel by virtue of having a Fedele in the same way that a mother is only a mother by virtue of having a child, or that a boss is only a boss because he’s obeyed – these latter instances are simply a matter of function. A “mother” without a child is still a woman; a boss who isn’t obeyed may be ineffective but still exists. In contrast, the Angel is an Attribute of God seeking realization via the Fedele. It cannot truly be an Attribute until it is expressed in the *being* of the Fedele. The Angel is *inherently* made real by being responded to (known, seen, expressed) by a particular being.

Yet there is an *inner* secret, the “secret of the secret of suzerainty”: your autonomy is a fiction. Your seeming action in positing Him is actually His active passion in you. *He* is the actor; you are the acted upon. You can think of the Angel as an active verb and the Fedele as a passive verb. The terms “Worshipper” (active) and “Wor-

shipped” (passive) are misnomers: more accurate would be to say “Worshipped” (Angel, active) and “the being through whom the Worshipped is actualized” (Fedele, passive). The Fedele is the Angel’s action, its intention and will in the visible universe. This is how the Fedele manifests the Angel – by *being* its Will in the manifest world.

Corbin explains further about this “secret of love”:

“[The theopathic maxim of Ibn ‘Arabi] was not ‘I am God’, but ‘I am the secret of God,’ that is to say, the secret of love that makes His divinity dependent on me, because the hidden Treasure ‘yearned to be known’ and it was necessary that beings exist in order that He might be known and know Himself. Thus this secret is nothing other than the Sigh which appeases His Sadness by giving existence to beings and *which, by investing the primordial Image, the Name that each of them bears as his secret nostalgia, with their image, leaves to each one the task of recognizing Him in that Image, and of making Him recognize Himself in it* [my italics].²⁷ This is not the movement of a dialectical pendulum, oscillating between two terms. It is rather a movement describing the area of His Compassion in an ellipse, one focus of which is the being of God for and through me, while the other is my being for and through Him, in other words, the area enclosing the two of us, the area in which He is for me in proportion to my capacity for Him and in which my knowledge of Him is His knowledge of me.”

The profound mutuality of this ellipsoidal relationship, with God through the individual at one end and the individual through God at the other, is what Corbin means by *unio sympathetica*, which is expressed through devotio sympathetica. Its “most perfect image” is an icon of a “mystic banquet” at which Abraham serves food to three Angels:

[This icon] represents the service incumbent on the *Fedele d’ amore* in the person of Abraham ... to feed God or His Angel on His creatures, and that service

²⁴ Corbin uses many different terms to refer to the individual being in relationship to his (or her) Angel, including Fedele d’amore, soul, man, thee, worshipper, vassal, Compassionate One. I will generally use the term Fedele, “faithful one,” a term with which our tradition identifies. Although presumably every souled being is the manifestation of a Name, this relationship is only “real” when it is, to some extent, realized or at least sought after – if one is actively seeking to know his Angel, as is the Fedele.

²⁵ Corbin also uses many terms to refer to the *Deus revelatus*: God of Compassion, Pathetic God, Attribute of God, Name of God and (more intimately) Worshipped, suzerainty (Lordliness), Lord, Beloved or Angel. I will generally use the term Angel, as it is unambiguous and familiar to our tradition.

²⁶ The Lord is *inherently* made real by being responded to by a particular being. It’s like two sides of a coin, one active and one passive: each is possible only by virtue of the other.

²⁷ Note the importance here of investing and recognizing images, both divine and human. This is the stuff of Creative Imagination, which Corbin explores at greater depth later in the book. Here he gives a foreshadow of this process: God invested the primordial divine Image with the image of the Fedele, and the Fedele’s task is to recognize God in that Image and to make God recognize Himself in it.

is at the same time to feed the creatures on God.²⁸

For to feed on our being is to feed on *His* being, with which precisely He has invested us. It is to ‘substantiate’ with our own passion the passion of the ‘pathetic God.’ It is for His *Fidele* to ‘make himself capable of God,’ who though Beloved is nevertheless the first Lover, who though adored has summoned Himself to adoration in the adoration of His creatures and in them has brought to flowering the Image of primordial beauty which in them is the secret of suzerainty of love and at the same time the pledge of this secret. But to feed God’s creatures on Him is to reinvest them with God, is therefore to make their theophanic radiance flower within them; it is, one might say, to make oneself capable of apprehending the ‘angelic function’ of beings, to invest them with, and perhaps awaken them to, the angelic dimension of their being. And this is itself an angelic service. As such, [the icon] is for the mystic a plastic symbol signifying the degree of spiritual realization that he must attain in order to become God’s intimate.”

Out of pity (compassion?) for our understanding, Corbin give us a synopsis of where he has brought us so far:

“This vision presupposes and actualizes the eternal co-dependence of this Lord with the being who is also His being, for whom and by whom He is the Lord, since the totality of a divine Name comprises the Name and the Namer, the one supplying being, the other revealing it, those two who put each other mutually ‘in the passive,’ each being the action of the other, and that action is compassion, *sympathesis*. It is this interdependence, this unity of their bi-unity, of the dialogue in which each obtains his role from the other, ... which is in the fullest sense an *unio sympathetica*. This union holds the ‘secret of the divinity’ of the Lord who is your God, this secret which is “thou,” and which it is incumbent on you to sustain and to nourish with your own being; union union in this sympathy, in this passion common to the Lord and to him who makes



Abraham and the three angels

him (and in whom He makes Himself) his Lord – this union depends on the devotion of your love, of your *devotio sympathetica*, which was prefigured by Abraham’s hospitality to the Angels.” (Ch. II, pt 3)

I will end this section with some quotes that shed light on the relationship between the Angel and the Fedele. Even though there are an infinite number of ties between specific Names and specific beings, each is “singular” and of great preciousness. Corbin writes:

“We have already explored the significance of this mutual pleasure: the Lord to which the soul is enjoined to return is its Lord, the Lord whose Name it bears and whom it has invoked, having distinguished Him among all others, because it [the soul] recognized itself in the image it bore of Him, while He recognized Himself in it. As our texts [of ‘Arabi] observe, the soul is not enjoined to return to God in general, ... but to its own Lord, ... the Lord to whom it replied: “Here I am! Enter my Paradise,” that Paradise which is none other than yourself, that is to say, the divine form hidden in your being, the secret primordial Image in which He knows himself in you and by you, the image you must contemplate in order to become aware that “he who knows himself knows his Lord.” And to the Gnostic who in this “himself” attains the coalescence of the Creator and the creature, this is the supreme joy. The authentic mystic wisdom is that of the soul which knows itself as a theophany, an individual form in which are epiphanized the divine Attributes which it would be unable to know if it did not discover and apprehend them in itself. “When you have en-

28 This is reminiscent of Christian communion, feeding on the body and blood of Christ and, in doing so, offering ourselves to Him. It is also, of course, the profound heart of the Ogdoadic communion with Agathodaimon through the ceremonial drinking of wine: we are simultaneously consuming Him and being consumed by Him, bringing us into *communion*, “a connection based on sharing the same essence.”

tered into my Paradise, you have entered into yourself (into your “soul”), and you know yourself with another knowledge, different from that which you had when you knew your Lord by the knowledge you had of yourself,” for now you know Him, and it is through Him that you know yourself.

The “Paradise” of God is the secret Image of the divine, which is the hidden core of yourself. It is through coming to know this image, this hidden core, that you know your Angel. It is here that the Fedele knows himself as a theophany, comes to experience the “supreme joy” of the “coalescence” of Creator and created, of Worshipped and worshipper. It is here that you know God and know yourself through God, with “another” knowledge. This coalescence at the divine image at the center of yourself is the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel – it is gnosis.

As fundamental as it is, this relationship can go very wrong. In fact, ‘Arabi implies that most beings reject the Names with which they are invested. One way in which humans often fail to know their Angels and their own theophany is through what Corbin calls “metaphysical idolatry,”

“which consists in either loving an object without transcendence, or in misunderstanding that transcendence by separating it from the loved object, through which alone it is manifested. These two aspects spring from the same cause: in both cases a man *becomes incapable of the sympathy which gives beings and forms their transcendent dimension*. The cause may be will to power, dogmatic or otherwise, which wishes to immobilize beings and forms at the point where the man has immobilized himself – perhaps out of secret fear of the infinite successions of perpetual transcendences which we must accept if we profess that the revealed Lord can never be anything other than the Angel of the *Theos agnostos*, and that to be faithful to the Angel is precisely to let ourselves be guided by him toward the transcendences he announces. Or the cause may be an asceticism or puritanism which, isolating the sensible or imaginable from the spiritual, divests beings of their *aura*. And it is precisely by investing the beloved being with this *aura*, this dimension of transcendence, that the dialectic of love of Ibn ‘Arabi ... preserves itself from the idolatry which its ascetic critics, precisely because they were blind to this transcendent dimension, were so ready to find

in it. And this no doubt is the most fecund paradox of the religion of the *Fedeli d’amore*, which in every Beloved recognizes the one Beloved and in every divine Name the totality of Names, because between the divine Names there is an *unio sympathetica*.”

Thus, recognizing the transcendent dimension in *created* beings is a vital aspect of knowing one’s Angel.²⁹ Not to do so closes the Fedele to the “perpetual transcendences” through which the Pathetic (personal) God reveals Himself. It also strips other beings of their “auras”; in this devaluation, it becomes impossible to experience the Beloved in the beloved, the Angel expressing itself in a bodily form.³⁰ For it is in an Image, via Creative Imagination, that we enter into the intensity of the *devotion sympathetica* with God. It is the flame of the Fedele’s love that both recognizes the divine in the image and creates the image in which the divine can reveal itself.

29 This has profound implications for the importance of *human* relationships in spiritual life. We can know and experience the Angel in each other, and we can serve the Angel by serving each other. Thus, if we hold the transcendent dimension, the angelic function, the capacity for God, we can know the Beloved in the beloved, our Angel in the people we love.

30 For example, ‘Arabi experienced his Angel in a young woman he met in Mecca, and Dante experienced his in the form of Beatrice. The actual beloved as the path to the Divine Beloved is the essence of the Sufi poet Rumi’s work.

THE GURU AND THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GITA

by Robert Hathaway

In the “Thelemapedia” online there is the following definition of the Holy Guardian Angel:

“The Holy Guardian Angel is representative of one’s truest divine nature. The term is equivalent with the Genius of the Golden Dawn, the Augoeides of Iamblichus, the Atman of Hinduism, and the Daemon of the gnostics.”¹

This reference to the “Atman of Hinduism” got me to thinking of the “Guru principle” which is an elaboration within Hinduism of the doctrines of the Atman or “Self”. There is an interesting, though perhaps not widely known text called the *Guru Gita* (literally, the “Song of the Guru”) that deals with this principle. I’d like to briefly introduce this work to you here. The following quotes are all taken from “The Nectar of Chanting” which contains both the English translation and the original Sanskrit text.

In the introductory prologue we find:

“[The Guru, who dwells in] the lotus surrounded by the divine petals ham and sah, which reside in all beings and are the cause of the world, manifested the world in his own way and of his own free will. Meditate on the Guru, who reveals That, who is the expression of the shambhava state [Shiva-hood], who illumines like the flame of a lamp, who is eternal and all-prevasive, and who is a visible form of all letters.”

To elucidate the symbolism a bit, the “divine petals ham and sah” are the sounds made by the in-breath and out-breath. They compose the “natural mantra”, so called be-

cause we naturally repeat this mantra merely by breathing in and out. They are “the cause of the world” because, macrocosmically, it is the out-breath of the Absolute which creates the world, and Its in-breath which re-absorbs yet again. There is also an interesting play on words here, with “hamsah” in Sanskrit meaning “what am I?” and “soham” meaning “I am that.” Clearly we are in the presence of that Divine Nature which is as close as our own breath.

The main text of the Guru Gita is in the form of a dialog between the god Shiva and the goddess Parvati with Parvati questioning and Shiva answering. In most tantric texts it is the god who questions and the goddess who answers, so here we are not, strictly speaking, in tantric territory. Nonetheless, the text is definitely of the Advaita Vedanta school, that is, of the Non-Dual understanding of Absolute Reality. Much more deserves to be said about Non-Dualism, but that deserves an essay to itself.

At the very start of the text proper, Parvati comes right to the point:

“On the beautiful summit of Mount Kailasa, Parvati, having bowed with reverence to Lord Shiva, who is the master of uniting one with devotion, asked... O Lord, by which path can an embodied soul become one with Brahman [absolute reality]?”²

Shiva, in turn, gets right to the crux of his answer:

“Those people are fools who engage in sacrificial rites, vows, penance, japa [mantra repetition], charity, and also pilgrimage without knowing the Guru principle... The Guru is not different from the conscious Self... Therefore, wise men should make an effort to seek him. Maya - the creator of the world,

¹ http://www.thelemapedia.org/index.php/Holy_Guardian_Angel

² Verses 1-3

the veiled knowledge born of ignorance - resides in the body. He by whose light [true knowledge] arises is known by the word 'Guru'.³

The equivalence of the Holy Guardian Angel and the Inner Guru or Guru principle should be obvious—both are the teachers and initiators leading the embodied soul back to oneness with the Absolute... and they are much more. The rest of the Guru Gita goes on to explain the nature of the Guru, what that “more” consists of. Much of the second part (verses 87 through 128) also gives glimpses of techniques for helping the process of reunification along.

As for the nature of the Guru, the following verse is representative:

“I bow to the Sadguru, who is the bliss of Brahman and the bestower of the highest joy. He is absolute. He is knowledge personified. He is beyond duality, [all-pervasive] like the sky, and the object of [the great Upanishadic statement] ‘Thou art That.’ He is one. He is eternal. He is pure. He is steady. He is the witness of all thoughts. He is beyond all modifications [of mind and body] and free from the three gunas.”⁴

The “gunas” are, of course, the three principles of the manifested world or of Nature, somewhat akin to Mercury, Sulphur and Salt. They are Sattva (purity, knowledge), Rajas (desire, action) and Tamas (darkness, indolence). The Upanishads are those great philosophic-religious writings of India with which most of you are probably familiar.

In the “Guru Gita” there are also some passages which are very like “visualizations” and “affirmations.” Though they are not presented in this way in the text, if one is so inclined, their use as such could prove fruitful. Here is an example of a “visualization”:

“Meditate on the divine form of the Guru seated on the throne situated in the center of the pericarp of the heart lotus, shining like the crescent of the moon, holding the book of knowledge and (the mudra that) bestows the desired boon. He has two eyes. He is clad in white garments. He is besmeared with white paste and is adorned with [garlands of] white flowers and pearls. He is joyous. He has a gentle smile. He is a treasure house of abundant

grace. The divine Shakti is seated on the left side of his lap.”⁵

And of an “affirmation”:

“It [the Guru principle] moves and moves not. It is far as well as near. It is inside everything as well as outside everything. [Thus the Guru knows]: “I am unborn; I am free from old age. My being is without beginning or end. I am unchangeable. I am consciousness and bliss, smaller [than the smallest], greater than the greatest. I am beyond all primeval things. I am everlasting, self-luminous, taintless, and completely pure. I am the supreme ether. I am immovable, blissful, and imperishable.”⁶

The Guru Gita concludes (verses 129 through 182) with a catalog of things which can be accomplished by its recitation, a sort of magical menagerie of effects both mundane and spiritual. But before I close, I would like to share with you a pair of verses which I find strangely beautiful and which hold the key to a powerful meditative technique. Contemplate them and I think you will understand what I mean:

“The Guru, who is higher than the highest, who always bestows bliss, and who is seated in the center of the space of the heart, [shining] like a pure crystal, should be meditated upon. Just as the image of a crystal is seen in a mirror, so the bliss, which is consciousness, [is reflected] in the Self and [the realization comes], ‘Indeed, I am That.’”⁷

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3 Verses 8-10

4 Verse 89

5 Verses 91-92

6 Verses 62-64

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