

## After 9/11

So far, this has been a strange year. Unemployment is still on the rise, the fiasco created by the involvement of government officials and the Enron Corporation has fueled the idea of corporate dictatorship, which until recently had been held exclusively by a paranoid few. Liberty has given way to fear, and we are seeing a culture of otherwise intelligent individuals obsessed to the point of hysteria give up privacy and what little remains of personal freedoms in exchange for a false sense of security.

We have seen the ban on nuclear testing, a promise to future generations signed between superpowers, lifted in the name of security on the one hand, while our leaders demonize countries for doing precisely the same thing, referring to them as “evil” on the other.

While I believe that The “War on Terrorism” is quite valid and justifiable, I have to question the wisdom of trying to lump it together with the “War on Drugs.” I also question the integrity of individuals who have done just this. Now, in the eyes of the sleepy masses, every pot smoker and every junkie is supporting terrorism, and perhaps no one will blink as the new anti-terrorist squads come looking for them, to be tried in dark, smoke filled rooms.

Frankly, this Thelemite doesn't know what to make of any of this. I do know this, however: security without freedom is slavery. And for what? We act like fear rules our lives. Is there nothing worse than death? Our forefathers thought so. So did many soldiers that gladly gave up their lives for their families, friends and countrymen during WWII. Would they have given up their freedoms for security? Is honor a concept so far removed from our current values that we are happy to live without it? Those who don't possess it don't easily understand honor. It said that men used to die for Truth, but now Truth dies at the hands of men. If you understand this, then perhaps your friends and associates speak of you as idealistic and old-fashioned... perhaps you have been told that the concept of honor or altruism those ideas are “Old Aeon,” the battle cry of the half-committed Thelemite.

In general, most people maintain unhealthy positions toward life, and as such organizations built by sickly individuals cannot be healthy. “Greed,” once considered one of the deadly sins of Christianity has become the norm. It is even encouraged by our own teachers, parents and governments, since without it; most capitalist societies would collapse. What is the current government recommended solution to combating terrorism? Spend money.

Indeed, many people depend on government assistance in one form or another, usually for employment or some form of social assistance. But when we accept this help, we are helping to feed the machine: we provide it with a purpose.

The obvious answer is that we should assist ourselves as individuals, and if enough people did this, there might be less need to tolerate abusive government. This means that we have to rethink our relationship to our “toys” and develop the long neglected relationship with other people of our communities. Initiates have always been tempted: it is nothing new. They have had to purify themselves by eliminating selfishness from their lives, and learned the meaning of “enlightened

self-interest.” Society naturally resists this ideal, but it can be done. It gets easier in larger numbers. In my own life, I have found the study of Karma Yoga invaluable in this area.

Even new “Churches” and cults are learning to use Greed to draw new members, promising great wealth once they have paid for huge and incredibly expensive technologies which add up to being little more than mind tricks and psychological self-deception. “Things” are not in themselves “evil” or “bad.” We would not find ourselves in a material world where we not expected to experience these things. What IS inexcusable is to preach a “religious doctrine” whereby individuals are taught that simple psychological techniques to force others to behave in a manner inconsistent with their wills is permissible or justifiable, and encouraged to put all things second to the pursuit of wealth rather than teaching to use that wealth to heal people or help those less fortunate than themselves. Instead, these adherents have been manipulated themselves, and spend so much time and money on worthless mental irrationalities that they are no longer useful to themselves or society in general.

In our efforts to evolve out of an oppressive Christian doctrine, society (and in particular, many Thelemites) has thrown the baby out with the proverbial bathwater. People behave like badly damaged goods, unable to heal from the damage done to them by an enemy they don’t understand. Religion has been demonized, to the extent of having involuntary knee-jerk reactions against common sense, healthy behavior such as compassion, honor, and integrity, simply because it was practiced in some religion. We CAN have both, wealth and integrity, and perhaps part of acquiring that wealth should include giving something to those that don’t instead of buying more things. So what is the answer? How do we get well? Throughout history, great men and women everywhere have proven that self-realization is the only useful means by which to cause change to occur in conformity with will. It spreads like a disease, effecting people everywhere. And we have tools to accomplish this awakening within us.

We must contemporize the teachings of the last age, by stripping it from its superstitious overcoat, ignoring its political agenda, updating it to meet our current needs. I believe that if we were to do that, each of us individually, and as a group of people dedicated to the liberation of the human spirit, we would be better suited to find that missing thread: that Truth that connects the New Aeon to the last, so that we are able to see a continuation, rather than the false illusion of the ending of one thing and the beginning of another. This is where it all begins: with that glorious realization, that moment of clarity that occurs when we stand at the present staring back into a once foreign past to find a familiar theme repeating itself throughout the ages.

The mind must be taught to think, and the heart to feel. If we do not do this first, any brilliance that may descend upon us through our own individual efforts will be distorted by our own personal prejudices, and in that case, the best that we can hope for is to project just another distortion of the Truth. So how do we reinterpret some of these noble concepts without falling into the trap of the superstitious? We must learn to put things in their proper perspective.

What is “Gnosis?” To know without knowing.

What is “Faith?” The absence of Lust of Result.

What is “Religion?” A set of social rituals created to celebrate the God in Man.

What is “Grace?” The state of knowing ones True Will and relation to the Whole. The conscious refusal to go against ones Will, compromise ones integrity, or engage in activity which overshadows the splendor of ones personal deity.

What is “Honor?” A conscious inclination to engaging in meaningful self sacrifice for a worthwhile principle or ideal, or devotion to the good of an organization which promotes such a principles, and to do so without the anticipation of personal compensation or gain. When you willingly commit to holding your self to a higher standard for the benefit of others, you are being honorable. I am sure you get the picture. It isn’t that difficult if you are the kind of person that sees the application in these concepts today.

We must ask ourselves some very difficult questions, and we must be brutally honest. But the one thing that we must all ask ourselves, about any pursuit that we may be involved in is a question of commitment. “How committed am I to this cause, and how much work am I willing to do to try to make this happen?”

That is the question that I would like you to ask yourself as you read this. If you answered in the affirmative, I hope that you will join us, and help us carry out our mission to improve the world, and ourselves through service.

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March 21, 2002  
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