

Stealing

the

Fire

from

Heaven

by Stephen Mace



Stealing the Fire from Heaven

**A TECHNIQUE FOR CREATING
INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS OF
SORCERY**

Based on the writings of
AUSTIN OSMAN SPARE,
ALEISTER CROWLEY,
and the Great Mage
ABRAMELIN,
these blended together and
augmented by the personal
researches of the author:

STEPHEN MACE

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Stealing the Fire from Heaven

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Sixth Edition, Enlarged

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Introduction to the Fifth Edition

On the occasion of the reissue of tried and true texts, the author may find himself torn in two directions. On the one hand, a considerable span of time is likely to have passed since the original printing. The author may think that he or she knows better now, and so will be motivated to revise. On the other hand, the author might realize that only because the original had something inspired about it is it worth reissuing at all, and this spark could easily be snuffed out through misguided attempts at “improvement.” So the more humble course would be to treat the original text as an artifact, and do nothing.

And yet it remains the case that in some ways one does know better. At least one knows what one left out the first time, and how helpful it would have been if one had known about it at that point in one’s own progress. And so there is a desire to include it in the new edition, if this can be accomplished without destroying the original mood.

Finally there is the consideration that one’s publisher wants the reissue to contain new material so that people who already own the old edition will want to buy the new one as well.

So I have followed a middle way. I have not attempted to rewrite anything. What was printed in the Fourth Edition is reprinted here without revision, thus keeping the perspective of one who had *just then* figured out how to do magick without tying himself to somebody else’s symbolism, but who had no idea at that moment where his new insight would lead him. I was full of pragmatic innocence and bound by an economic imperative to be brief, and neither the innocence nor the brevity are quite what they once were. Besides, that innocence by its very nature left the entire technique of magick wide open, its application restricted only by the occult equivalents of Newton’s Third Law and the laws of thermodynamics. To attempt to revise it from my present “sophisticated” perspective would do it no

service, and could easily close off access to possibilities that I am no longer even capable of recognizing, simply because options that were open to me then are now, for me, entirely closed.

So nothing changes.

On the other hand, there is being innocent, and then there is being oblivious. Which is to say, I wrote very little about the subtle body in the Fourth Edition, and nothing at all about power spots. Both are essential to gathering and using power, and both are perfectly suited for work by one who is just beginning to create his or her own system of sorcery. And so I add two chapters, I hope in a style not too alien to the rest of the book.

I would remark that of these two lapses, the neglect of power spots is the more serious, simply because this neglect is pervasive throughout Western magick. Every occult system offers some approach to the pillar of Light that encompasses the spine and the energy centers strung along it, and all have at least a skeletal technique for manipulating them—techniques that a little psychic engineering should be able to flesh out as needed. But within Western magick, power spots and the elementals of locations in the landscape have been wholly neglected. This barrenness is the direct result of the philosophical direction taken by those religions based on the Bible—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—and has nothing to do with Europe or the Middle East as regions in themselves. In the Europe and Middle East of the Classical period there were shrines and sacred groves and springs scattered all over the countryside, as there are throughout Africa, India and Southeast Asia today. But if any of these are recognized in their old roles today, it is because churches or mosques have been built atop them, or else shrines to the patriarchs and saints. This is in accord with the transcendental bias of these religions, which holds that the only valid power comes down from heaven on high, rather than being immanent throughout earth and nature, as must be apparent to any who can look with any sort of open eye. Thus if a spot is still perceived by the laity as having power, the clergy insists that this must be because an angel showed itself there, or some saint worked a miracle, never because the location itself is a source of it.

The origin of this transcendental bias is in Platonism and Neoplatonism, which held that the world is only a formless murk that somehow reflects the Pure Forms that radiate down from Above. The way to spiritual advancement was thus to turn away from the world lest it ensnare us, disengaging from all material and bodily concerns to rise up to the Absolute. This delusion permeated Hermeticism as well as Christianity, and thus the whole of the Rosicrucian movement and the magicks based upon it. Even if the modern innovations of psychology have brought many of the traditional spirits down into our own unconscious minds, the web of power that is living nature has still been left out entirely, and this is an omission that must not go uncorrected.



1. Sorcery

Sorcery is the art of capturing spirits and training them to work in harness, of sorting out the powers in our minds so we might manipulate them and make them cause changes both within our minds and beyond them.



II. Spirits and their Domain

Spirits are powers, powers of mind, and their domain is the unconscious. For the average person they thus remain inaccessible, and so our encounters with them can be vague and unconvincing. Spirits can appear as knacks, as talents, and as emotions. Spirits can hide in complexes that trigger automatic responses to the situations we encounter. Spirits show themselves in dreams and dare us to understand them. But a sorcerer uses techniques that make the unconscious accessible, and so may he (or she) may meet his spirits face-to-face. If he has the strength, he can ascertain their true forms and bind them so they'll do his will. If he does not, there is a very real risk of obsession. All powers carry risks. Whether wheels spun by falling water or electricity from split atoms, the energy has to be kept in its place or it can hurt someone. We cannot expect the power in sorcery to be any different, but you may be assured there are methods for keeping spirits under control, and exercises to give you the strength to use them.

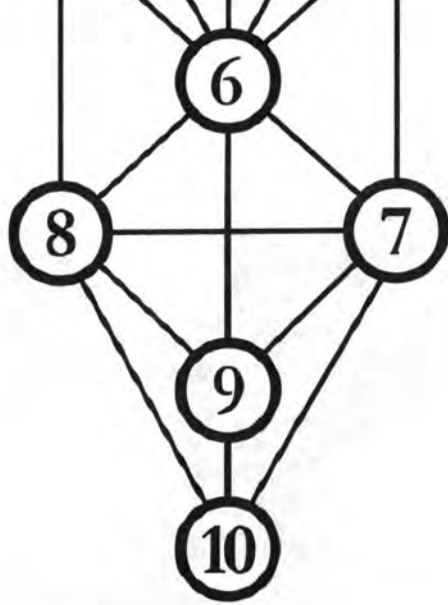
The unconscious mind, being the domain of spirits, is also their medium, and so its nature determines their nature. The unconscious is the image pool beneath our waking minds; all our conscious thoughts come out of it, all our experiences of the external world sink into it. Passing events, those of little power, disintegrate after a time, but repetitive experiences and those of great power or emotion build up psychic structures—spirits—which have lives of their own. Hence a woodsman will find that he carries within his psyche the spirit of the forest, an adolescent will germinate (through the emotions generated by his rush of hormones) a spirit of lust, and a sexually repressed neurotic will create a demon to keep his lust 'in check'.

So we see that we may create spirits on our own, and when we all do it together as one, they can become as gods. The neurotic's desire to appease (say) his possessive mother creates his demon, a being that roosts in his mind alone. But the aspirations of a group of people can produce a common power that will affect the thought

and action of everyone in it. The Phoenicians' desire for safety in a risky world created their awful god Moloch. The Jews' desire to keep their tribe united brought forth the jealous Yahweh. And the human desire to keep 'I' intact beyond the gates of death generated the redeeming spirits variously known as Osiris, Orpheus, Mithras, and Christ.

Now I must stress that in saying this I do not denigrate these gods, neither child-eating Moloch nor the Jesus whose Body and Blood the Christians consume. These gods have the power their worshippers give them—whether through devotion, ritual, or the spilling of blood. If this energy is given with sincerity and directed with competence, it will cause change. This happens most obviously within the unconscious mind of the worshipper, but also—since the unconscious has its root in the Mind of the Absolute—in the external world. This is the mechanism behind the power of prayer.

But there's a problem with using preexistent spirits. They invariably come equipped with enormous amounts of moral and theological baggage, bundles of belief and righteousness that you must carry with you as you make your way through the world. If you believe in Moloch, you know he can be satisfied with neither prayer nor incense nor honest living—only your first-born son will do. If you believe in Christ, your sacrifice will be more subtle; you must forsake your 'human' will and submit yourself to his divine one if you are to be saved from Eternal Damnation. And even many sorcerers have to give up some freedom to practice their art. In the West the most common school of magic is that of the Rosicrucians. Rosicrucian magicians structure their powers of mind according to a map of power called the Tree of Life, a geometric arrangement first drawn centuries ago by Jewish mystics devoted to the tradition known as Qabalah. Before you can work Rosicrucian magic you must brand this scheme onto your unconscious mind, defining all your perception and powers of mind in its terms. So whether you pray to bloody Moloch or strive to be a mystic wizard, you're still stuck with the ancient formula, and if you should find things are truly different, your problem may be unsolvable.



The Qabalists' Tree of Life

III. Stealing the Fire from Heaven

In this essay we offer a technique that individuals can use to create systems of sorcery precisely tailored to their own unconscious realities. By following our instructions, the reader can cause his (or her) subliminal self to design its own symbols to represent the powers he finds within it. His result will be what is, essentially, a personal language of power, one that has meaning only for himself, but full of potency because it is his own soul's way of expressing itself.



From Form 1 (II), 2 — November, December, 1921

IV. The Magical Record

Our sorcery is thus a psychotechnology—we identify components within our psyches, discover the mechanisms behind their movement, and use various techniques to manipulate them. But the best way to approach any effort at technology is scientifically, and the essence of science is keeping accurate records. You need to record what you do so you'll know what methods work for you, what methods don't, and what methods work after you practice them for a while. You need to record what happens when you do succeed so you can gain insight into the nature of the power you've encountered, and how you may further examine it. You need to record the major events in your mental and emotional life so you'll know what problems tend to recur and so may have a demon at their source. You need to describe your powers as you find them—their names, symbols, and apparent natures. You need a record of the effect your sorcery has on your life as a whole.

A spiral notebook will do.



V. Going the Distance

By this point the careful reader will have concluded that sorcery is not an overnight operation, and he'll be right. Actually it's a lifetime sort of thing. A good analogy might be music. To become adept at a musical instrument takes a couple of years, and after that come ever-rising plateaus of mastery. Of course masters don't do anything much except music, and sorcery can be pretty all-enveloping, too. But since sorcery touches on every possible aspect of existence (including playing the flute), it's not at all confining. Honest.

So it takes years. When that's the case, pacing is important—you have to know what to do when, and how long to take at it. Some things you can do right away, like the banishing ritual in the next chapter and the conjuring with a sigil and free belief, given in Chapter VIII. If these are easy to do and you get good results, well, Mozart was a pretty quick study on the piano, too, and he went on to the harder stuff right away. But if you find you don't really have the concentration to visualize glowing rings, or your passions are too strong to dismember, or you don't have the willpower to forget anything, then you should spend a year or two on the methods recommended in Chapter XXI. I've put them back there because they're more mind control than sorcery, though that doesn't make them any less important. To master them is to train a good horse which you may ride to round up all the wild beasts in your psyche.

VI. A Banishing Ritual

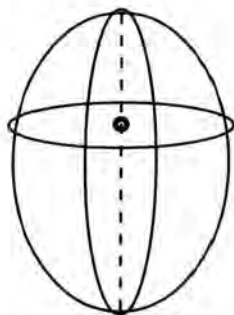
Sorcery is the art of capturing spirits and training them to work in harness. The arena wherein this ensnarement and instruction take place is within the imagination of the sorcerer, the field whereon conscious intention meets unconscious tendency. But before the wizard can use this field, he needs some way to clear it, both before he begins any operation and after he finishes it. Before he begins he must cut down the stray thoughts, popular songs, and chronic resentments that may intrude upon his work. When he's finished he must send his spirits back to their own dwellings, for otherwise they might hang around his consciousness and meddle about out of control, eventually bringing about an obsession.

Traditionally sorcerers have cleared their imaginations with banishing rituals, brief ceremonies of encirclement designed to flush out one's aura with light and guard it from subsequent contamination, at least for a little while. Rosicrucian-type magicians have generally adopted the Pentagram ritual for this, but though it is very effective, it is symbolically dependent upon the Qabalistic system and hence unsuitable for anyone who wants to avoid hanging that Albatross around his neck. In its stead I offer a rite that was given to me by a teacher of my own, Frater O.T.L., who told me it was the invention of the English wizard Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956). During all my subsequent study of Spare, I've never seen it in print, but it works and I've used it for years with good effect. It also has the advantage of simplicity. Once you know it, you can do it in a few seconds right in your imagination, and there isn't a single mystic symbol in it.

To begin, close your eyes and imagine a vertical line of white light, one passing from the nadir to the zenith right through the point of view behind your eyes.

Next imagine a spot of light about two feet in front of this point of view. With this spot trace a horizontal circle around your head. Then trace an ellipse by running this spot up to the top of your head, down your back, under your feet, and up again to the

top of your head. Then trace another ellipse from the top of your head down one side, under your feet, and up the other side to the top of your head. When you're finished your point of view should be in the middle of a cage that looks like this:



With your fortifications now in place, you may clean out your imagination. To do this turn the line you first visualized into a pillar of fire and cause it to expand outward through your three rings. As it does, cast images of any persistent thoughts or fantasies into the flames and watch them burn until there is nothing left but three glowing white rings.

And that's all there is to it.

Aside from serving to flush out your mind before and after magical operations, banishing is your first defense against obsessive thoughts from within and any kind of psychic attack from the outside. Banishing rituals also have the side benefit of hardening the wizard's aura, forming a psychic shell that will keep his consciousness together and deflect the piercing intrusions of the external world. By frequent (four or five times a day for the rest of your life) banishing, the wizard will develop an aura so hard that he will be able to drop many of the defensive habits that might have attached themselves to his personal attitude. Banishing is thus an essential tool for the aspiring wizard, and it is vital to make it a habit.

VII. Conjuring

We will define conjuring as any attempt to use ‘psychic’ or ‘spiritual’ power to cause a deliberate change, either in the wizard’s self or in his circumstances. Hence prayer to a Deity in whom one has ‘Faith’ is a variety of conjuring, though one we will ignore here, in that only devotion is required, and no skill. In sorcery skill is everything, faith very little, and perseverance takes the place of devotion.

But then perseverance toward what? That is, why conjure at all? To help you do your will, of course, whatever your will might be. Some examples:

If you have a talent for selling, but hate to drive, conjure up the demon at the root of your aversion and force it to be still. And while you’re at it, you might energize your spirit of memory—the better to recall your customers’ names, their phone numbers, and the virtues of your stock in trade.

If you’re a consummate politician, but a nothing orator, call up your spirit of eloquence, energize it, and use it to charge talismans to wear when you speak and write. And perhaps you might also invoke powers of perspective so you might see through the eyes of the factions you must reconcile, discovering the positions they feel they must hold and ways you can persuade them to compromise on the non-essentials.

If you’re an athlete, conjure the spirit that will relax your strained muscles so they will stretch instead of tear. And you might also search within yourself for powers that will give you the agility, awareness of body function, and bursts of sudden energy you need to compete effectively.

If you’re a sexually repressed neurotic, call up your mother-instilled (or whatever) demon and slap it in irons, then conjure your shriveled sexuality so it might be nurtured, healed, and otherwise encouraged to bloom.

In short, call up the powers that will help your natural genius take flight, and imprison the demons that work to pull it down into their mire.

But when looked at in this way, sorcery seems like no way to make miracles at all, but only (as we have said) a psychotechnology. This is a good way to look at it, but even a psychotechnology can offer ‘miracles’ if you can extend the limits of “psyche” far enough. In theory our unconscious minds ultimately merge with the Mind of God, so if we can work that deeply, All Things will be subject to Our Wills. But then the morality of this sort of work is dubious. On the most innocent level are powers like precognition, wherein one reads the cosmic trends so that one can put one’s life (or even one’s portfolio) into harmony with them. On the most corrupt level are powers that pin down recalcitrant sex objects and give heart attacks to rich uncles.

Two points need to be made here:

1.) Sorcery is only a tool; what you do with it, for good or ill, is your own responsibility. A paring knife is only a tool, too. You can peel potatoes with it, or you can peel your sister. The only difference between sorcery and knives is that you may think it safer to curse your sister with five dozen devils than to slice and dice her, in that the cops can’t catch you for a curse. Perhaps not, but then your karma might, or another magician, or all those devils on their way home from work after your sister slams her car into a bridge abutment. If you use magic to “get” (whether “get rich,” “get laid,” or “get even”) instead of to “see” or “trade,” “meet” or “make,” you will put a wall between yourself and the rest of the universe—between the getter and the gotten—and so bar yourself from the source of your power.

2.) It is safer to conjure to improve your ability to do your will than it is to conjure to make the world conform to your will. When you change yourself, you send no waves of power out into the world, and so you need not fear a splashback. But when you try to make external events respond to your bidding, such repercussions are a constant threat. We will examine a few of these dangers when we get to Chapter IX.

Of course however you use power in sorcery, you have to call it up first, which is what conjuring is for. If you follow conventional magical practice, you will do your conjuring by mimicking the power

you want until it responds from the depths of your psyche and so becomes available to do your will. The way you can mimic a power is by dressing in a costume of symbolism, “putting on” images that call it to mind. Then you energize your mental state through the techniques of ritual—dancing and chanting, sex and sacrifice, wine and incense and strange drugs. When your emotion becomes strong enough to overwhelm all inhibition, the simulation becomes reality and you know yourself for the god, ready to work your will on the world.

Of course this means that the aspiring wizard must know in advance what powers are available to be mimicked, and what sort of act is required for each. In conventional magical practice this knowledge is provided by an occult tradition. The wizard subscribes to one of these at the outset of his career, brands its symbolism onto his memory, and organizes all his powers in its terms. In the West the principle tradition is that of the Rosicrucians, which grew out of the study by freethinking Christians of the Hebrew Qabalah. Sorcerers who subscribe to it arrange their powers according to the ten “spheres” of the Qabalistic “Tree of Life” and the twenty-two “paths” that connect them. Each spot on the Tree is home to a power and has its own set of relevant symbols: colors, numbers, plants, drugs, metals, names of god, images of god. A neophyte in a Rosicrucian order will be indoctrinated with this symbolism until he is fluent in it, able to dress up his rituals so they are specific to whatever powers he wishes to invoke.

A less intellectualized tradition in sorcery is that of Haitian Voodoo. In Voodoo the various powers are called “loa” and they are evoked through dance, whereupon they ‘ride’ the sorcerer in a dramatic possession. During this time they can confer knowledge and power and execute magical spells. But before a Haitian man receives his initiation as houngan (or woman as mambo), he must first spend a long period as a servitor—an apprentice in a houngan’s temple. In this time he will see first hand the postures and attitudes his teacher’s body assumes when the different loa displace his soul. In the dance that follows his own initiation, the new houngan will

begin to mimic the movements of the various loa, until the loa themselves are attracted out of his unconscious and take over in a genuine possession. Like the Rosicrucians, the Voodoo priest simulates the nature of the unconscious power even as the drums pound his conscious mind into oblivion. When the willed mimicry meets the true power, the power flows into the priest's soul and he has a chance to turn it to his own ends.

Depending on culture, each school of sorcery has its own typical costumes for the powers it defines. A Rosicrucian must learn that destructive change is attributed to the fifth sphere of the Tree of Life—Geburah, meaning severity. Its god-names are Mars, Ares, Horus, and Elohim Gibor. Its archangel is Kamael; its angel is Zamael; its spirit is Bartzabel. Its color is red; its herb is nettle; its drug is tobacco; its metal is iron. On the other hand, the apprenticed houngan knows that the warrior loa is Ogoun. Ogoun is severe; he's a blacksmith; he drinks rum; he smokes tobacco. And since Voodoo is West African sorcery under a veneer of Roman Catholicism, he is attributed to St. George. When Ogoun rides a houngan, the man wildly waves his machete as he dances, and uses it to push and strike the members of his société. Regardless of his normal demeanor, when Ogoun rides him the houngan assumes an attitude of imperial arrogance.

So whether he's European or Caribbean, the sorcerer who relies on a tradition willingly binds himself to it, right from the very beginning. This is obviously at variance with the purpose stated in Chapter III, and so we must adopt a non-traditional approach.

The one we offer was first formulated by Austin Osman Spare, the Englishman who gave us (allegedly) the non-traditional banishing ritual described in the last chapter. For Spare, the formula of mimicry was ridiculous. "Is it by symbolizing that we become the symbolized?" he asked in *The Book of Pleasure* (1913). "Were I to crown myself King, should I be King? Rather should I be an object of disgust or pity." He felt that there is no need to use elaborate ritual to emulate divinity, for all life is already divine and a creature can realize this in practice if only it is able to loose itself from the confines of instinct,

passion, and belief. Nor is there any point in assimilating a traditional symbolism, both because anything traditional is inevitably out of date and also because the most potent symbols for any given wizard can be found within that wizard's own unconscious, his actual connection to the power at the source of us all.

But if one does not ape the behavior of the powers in one's dark pool, how does one get them to respond? Spare found the answer to this in the behavior of the unconscious itself, in its reflexive reaction to repression and denial.

To work Spare's technique, the sorcerer does not use ritual to call up the power he needs to accomplish his desire. Instead he obtains his desire by stifling the thought of it. He does not permit himself to consider it, and if it should sneak into his thought-stream, he suppresses it as soon as he notices its presence.

Spare called this deliberate repression "making the desire organic." When we dwell on a desire in our conscious minds, we involve ourselves in rational attempts to satisfy it, attempts that bind our energy into structured schemes that defy the fluid essence of power. We waste our energy weaving dreams—tapestries of method and motivation, expectation and fear of failure—veils that keep us from seeing ourselves as nodes of power linked directly to Infinity. But when we repress our desires, they shrink away from consciousness to turn in on themselves—becoming discrete entities—and if we can pour enough energy into them (even as we keep the thought of them out of our waking minds), they will sink down into the well-springs of Fate, where the energy will be able to adjust Fate's flow according to our wills.

To my knowledge, Spare was unique in his use of this mechanism of repression. All the other systems of sorcery—from Voodoo and Tantra to Wicca and the Rosicrucians—use some variation of a ritual identification to call up the power. Of course repression is better known as a pathological function than a creative one. It is considered a primary cause of neurosis, particularly hysterical neurosis, and even poltergeist phenomena have been attributed to it. But that's sickness, not sorcery, and the only powers

brought forth are demonic—of no use to anyone. With Spare’s method the repression is only a ruse. The wizard is fully conscious of his purpose and plan before he begins; for his operation to succeed, the whole of his will, desire, and belief must be behind it. It is only when he has everything in order and begins his work that he must purge his thought of his purpose.



VIII. A. O. Spare's Technique for Elementary Conjuring

To conjure successfully, then, the sorcerer who uses repression must stifle his desire so it splits off from his ego, and then energize it so it can carry out his mission. And it must be energized; simple forgetting is not enough. A sexually repressed neurotic, for instance, has his demon energized every time his mother asks him to take her to the movies on a Friday night. Our heartfelt desires deserve as much, so we need a way to charge them with true emotion. For this Spare recommended the use of the “Neither-Neither principle” to produce a type of energy he called “free belief.”

The Neither-Neither principle asserts that there is no truth anywhere that is not balanced by an equally true opposite somewhere, and there is only perspective and circumstance to determine which seems more true at any given time. To apply this principle to conjuring, wait until you are absolutely positive something is true, then search for its opposite.¹ When you find it, oppose it to your ‘truth’ and let them annihilate one another as well as they may. Any residue you should oppose to its opposite, and so on until your truth has been dismembered and the passion behind it converted into undirected energy—free belief. By applying the Neither-Neither we can gut the meaningless convictions that obsess us every day and use the power released to cause the changes we desire.

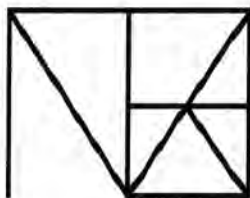
Once free belief has been generated, the sorcerer must focus it into his desire without allowing the desire itself to contaminate his thought. To accomplish this, Spare made use of sigils—linear figures the sorcerer designs to represent his wishes. Sigils serve as ways for him to focus free belief into his desires without disturbing

1. The Neither-Neither works against all limitation, material objects as well as political opinions and emotions of the heart. If your ‘truth’ is, for instance, the fact that your house exists, simply look ahead through the years, imagining its slow decay until it finally returns to the soil, even if it takes a glacier to grind it into it.

their unconscious sleep. By using free belief to burn a sigil into his imagination, the sorcerer pushes the power through his deep psyche into the Mind of God, where it can spawn whatever inspiration or happenstance he might require.

But his sigil must be special; not just any design will do. It must be psychically meaningful even as it gives no indication of the desire it represents, and so we may not use traditional symbolism. If, for example, a wizard used the astrological symbol of the sun to designate his desire for higher wages, it would be easy for his mind to follow a logical chain leading to thoughts of energy and gold, the substance and symbol of wealth. In a flash he'd be dwelling on his lack of it, defeating his effort at repression. So we need a way to design sigils that look like nothing at all.

Spare offers us a method so simple it may even be perfect. The wizard simply writes his desire down in a concise sentence, eliminates the duplicate letters, and then uses those remaining to make a linear design. If, for example, he wanted to bring home a fatter paycheck, his sentence could read: "Let me earn more from Morten," Morten being the name of his employer. His sigil could look like this:



Once the wizard has designed his sigil, he must commit it to memory. It must be so firmly in place there that he can call it into his imagination whenever he has free belief available to charge it.

As soon as he is sure of his sigil's shape, the wizard must begin to keep both it and his desire out of his thought. He will simply not permit himself to consider them. In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare wrote that when a sigil pops into the sorcerer's normal

thought-stream, he must deliberately push it out, forgetting it by an act of will. This activates it so it “dominates at the unconscious period, its form nourishes, allows it to become attached to the subconsciousness and become Organic.” In this way his sigil is planted, ready to be watered with whatever free belief he can pour into it.

To perform this watering in actual practice, the wizard must enter a state of vacuity, generate free belief, and focus it into concentrating on his sigil.

Vacuity is a state of no thought, a cleared space much like what a banishing gives. Though he doesn't mention banishing in *The Book of Pleasure*, Spare does suggest that vacuity may be produced through long walks, tennis, alcohol, yoga mantras and postures, even playing solitaire—anything to keep the magician's conscious mind on hold so it won't foul his sigil. Also, I might add that strong passion turned to free belief often results in vacuity, simply because the free belief is so intense that it doesn't permit any coherent thoughts to remain in one's mind. In such cases it is imperative for the energy to be focused into a sigil, for otherwise it will decay, becoming food for the worst sort of mental beastie.

Once vacuity has been attained, the sorcerer will muster whatever free belief he can and use it to visualize his design.

In the case of our wizard's job magic, he might find himself able to charge his sigil after his wife asks, “So when are you going to paint the house already?” for the fifteenth time. Full of resentment over her shrewish tone, he would switch off the baseball game and head for the garage, then recognize that his irritation was fit power to change to free belief. So as his ego was deadened by the rasp of his scraper, he would consider his wife's abrasive manner. Once his irritation was fully developed, he would counter it by recalling that he had promised to paint the house, that he'd been putting it off since last fall, and that the work would only get sweatier as the summer got hotter. These contrary perspectives would largely cancel each other out, but there would be a residue: an annoyance toward the house for needing painting at all. To this he would oppose the fact that everything decays, and if he wished to arrest the decay he had to

provide effective protection. But this would leave him with the inevitability of decay itself, which is the basis for the Buddha's First Noble Truth—that All is Sorrow. He would destroy this mood by looking for spots of pleasure close at hand, gazing down at a fire-red tulip or up to the deep blue sky, perhaps even glimpsing a tiny seagull scudding by on the high breezes.

By this time our wizard's annoyance will have no rational basis and the energy he had generated by resenting his wife will exist only as an undifferentiated potency—free belief. He can focus this into his will for higher wages by closing his eyes, visualizing his sigil, and using his imagination to fill it with power. The sigil should burn bright under this stimulus, white-hot against the hazy background, until the free belief is gone and the original irritation nearly forgotten. Then the design will fade away and the wizard will turn it out of mind until a new source of free belief presents itself and he calls it up for recharging. He will continue to soak his free belief into his sigil until Morten gives him more overtime, increased responsibilities, or a chance to learn a higher paying job. Or perhaps the wizard will realize that the working must fail, in which case he will abandon the sigil and choose a different tack against his problem.

IX. The Saving Grace of Failure; the Perils of Success

Thus do we have the technique Austin Spare gave for the beginning student of wizardry. Before we go on to sorcery for those more advanced, we should look a little at what happens in the case of success or failure when one conjures, and ways we can avoid certain pitfalls before we drop into them.

Actually, failure is often no real problem. Nothing happens, of course, but one can usually live with that. Upon reflection the wizard will often realize that his desire was a bit beyond him anyway, like the desire of a man with no money who conjures to win the love of a rich man's beautiful daughter. Even if he could win her heart, her long-term happiness would come harder, and they would likely be miserable before the year was out. But then he would know this from the beginning, at least subliminally, and so his belief would be at variance with his will and his desire. Spare tells us that will, desire, and belief must be united for magic to succeed, and from this example, anyway, the magician can be better off failing when they are not.

It's when we succeed that our very skins can be in jeopardy.

The danger in success comes when the wizard has a mistaken notion of the dynamics of Fate. Magical actions have reactions just like actions in the physical world, and a spiritual springback can be just as crippling as a snapped cable whipping around to slice off your leg.

The nature of this play of action and reaction can be nicely described in terms of conventional physics. For this essay, anyway, we will confine ourselves to three broad principles: 1.) resistance in the circuit, 2.) inertia, and 3.) energy discharge. There may be others as important, but these three give a good picture of things that can go wrong after a successful conjuration, and how such misfortune can be avoided.

1.) Resistance. No electrical circuit is perfect. Except at temperatures near absolute zero, the movement of electrons gener-

ates heat, power lost to the air. This sort of internal resistance also applies to sorcery. Any time you try to influence the outside world, even if you expect to pay for whatever you expect to get, you will lose a little something. You'll get what you want, but it won't be entirely painless.

For example, a wizard of my acquaintance owns a retail store. In order to accelerate his trade, he made a window display with a ceremonially charged talisman hidden in the midst of it. The traffic through his store increased dramatically, but so did his level of theft. He made a lot more money than he would have without the talisman, but not as much as he might have.

2.) Inertia. Inertia in sorcery isn't quite the same as inertia in physics, but it's close enough to use the word, especially since I don't know of any others that fit. For our purposes here, inertia means that what magic binds together stays bound until magic loosens it, and its effect is most noticeable in affairs of the heart. If you conjure John Doe into an undying love forever, you will find yourself bound by John's undying love forever, even if it only takes you a week to realize you detest the bastard. The energy that brought him to you will keep him on you—unless, of course, you return to your deep psyche to call up the energy of unbinding and direct it against your relationship. The trouble with that is that once the unbinding starts it can be hard to stop, and we ourselves are really only knots and tangles of Light, easy enough to unravel. If you curse your union, you will curse a part of yourself, and you may end up losing your figure, your face, or even your mind before you are rid of him.

An equally sticky alternative is to just conjure for sex. The trouble here is that all you'll get is sex. Even if the magic brings you your soul mate, your one-and-only, Mr./Ms. Right, all you'll get is sex, and you'll never hear from him/her again after that one blissful night.

The solution here is not to send out energy to bring another person in, but to use your power to make yourself attractive to others in general. In this way you will not be trying to compel anyone, but to make yourself compelling, and so you will retain

the right to pick and choose, to follow love wherever your will might lead.

3.) Energy discharge. The dynamics of energy discharge are relevant when a sorcerer curses another person, and also when a wizard conjures to make himself rich.

When a sorcerer calls up power for a curse, the energy is intended to split apart all the contradictory components within an enemy's personality. The curse is a packet of fear, anger, and confusion designed to fester in the target's psyche until he sickens or turns mad. The danger comes when the 'victim' is in more of a balance with his life than the wizard is with his. Then the force will find no evils to feed upon, return to the poor twit who conjured it, and feast on his. When the victim is essentially innocent and the wizard essentially corrupt, the power flows where the work is easiest and the wizard tastes his own poison.

The best alternative here is simply not to curse at all. You can use magical power for self-protection or for defense in case of an attack, but it is never wise to initiate hostilities. Even the blackest wizard has his purpose in the flow of Fate, and if he violates it Fate will deal with him in its own way. Unless someone actually attacks you, you will do best to mind your own business and leave the psychic peacekeeping to God.

The concept of power discharging along the path of least resistance also applies to sorcery done to produce material wealth. The resistance here is not the internal resistance mentioned earlier, but instead is a product of that universal law of nature: You Can't Get Something For Nothing. It's not waste heat; it's the Cosmic Accounts Department, and it works like this:

If you use magic to suck wealth out of the world, it will flow from the nearest available source—you and your loved ones. If you have nothing of value to willingly contribute (say a skill or a stock-in-trade), then the cash will come out of whatever is at hand, regardless of your hopes and dreams. The two classic forms of 'success' here are those that result in insurance settlements and legacies. The legacies will involve the death of a loved one; the insurance settle-

ments either a death or an injury to one's own person.

I was once acquainted with a wizard, an adept at the very least, who performed magic to get money and received large amounts on two separate occasions. The first time he was on his motorcycle and had to brake in traffic on an oil slick. His insurance company was quite generous. On the second occasion he picked up a hernia while lifting a crate of lettuce and got to have a nice operation and months of workman's compensation. He seemed satisfied with the exchange, though, which I suppose was his privilege.

But this is not to say we should not use magic to make ourselves rich. The problem comes when you try to get wealth without producing it, so what you should do is use the sorcery to obtain the knowledge and skill you need to earn it for yourself. Whether you conjure up a knack for computers or a farseeing eye on the stock market, you will be using your power to better yourself rather than borrow wealth from God. Then when you finally succeed, your adjustment to your new situation will be your only worry, instead of a surprise visit by the cosmic collection man, the spiritual muscle who will bust into your life and break your emotional legs.

X. A Brief Look at Advanced Conjuring

With the technique of sigils energized by free belief, we complete the first level of our magic, though it is a rather elementary one. There's a lot more, much of it (but not all) the invention of our friend Spare. Though he never published all the details, he hints at a whole higher level of working, and when we combine these hints with the writings of his biographer, Kenneth Grant, we can synthesize a system of great power. But it also entails considerable risk. While the competent operator may take it as far as he dares, the incompetent one can blunder right into the nuthouse, jail, or his grave. The key word here is *blunder*, meaning one should not push on into the advanced stage until one is thoroughly acquainted with the beginners'. And even after you have some magical experience, you must still take care to take your time, because if you rush you might trip over something unpleasant. Our unconscious minds are full of snakes—fears and rages we hardly know we have—and until you stir them up and make them move, you will never know their true characters and powers. This path works. There is power here, and when there is power, the chance of destruction is as good as that of creation. If, that is, you leave it to chance. If you take the trouble to do it right, you can weave your way between your black pits and ultimately emerge at the source of all creation, your every serpent waiting to do your bidding. If you are careless, you can destroy your soul.

Our advanced technique for conjuring resembles traditional magic in that the wizard distinguishes many different types of available power, dresses each with its own symbol and name, and then calls them up when he needs them through the means of meditation, chanting (mantra), dance, and even sexual activity. Our method differs from traditional magic in that the wizard does not consciously formulate his purpose during the operation, but instead works to bring the power up in a raw, inarticulate form and uses it to energize a sigil—all the while doing his best to keep from

thinking about what he really wants. And unlike the traditional schools of sorcery, we here make no attempt to structure the powers 'down there' into any universal arrangement. A wizard using this system will symbolize the powers as he meets them, both in himself and in the world around him, and when he finds patterns and structures in their arrangement, that will be a discovery for himself alone, an inside tip on how his soul connects to the Mind of God.

Finally, our system differs from conventional sorcery in that the actual images the wizard uses to symbolize the power have no traditional origin, but are products of his own unconscious mind. He does not take his symbols from mythology, folklore, or philosophical speculation, but instead turns the task of design and nomenclature over to his own deep psyche. Austin Spare perfected a technique for encouraging the unconscious to express itself in this way, and he called it "automatic drawing."



XI. Automatic Drawing

Automatic drawing is a method for bringing unconscious contents up from the depths and solidifying them with paper and ink, thus allowing the artist to subject them to the scrutiny of his reason and will. Spare gave his clearest explanation of this method in an essay called "Automatic Drawing" which he wrote with his protégé Frederick Carter and included in the first number of *Form Magazine* (London, 1916). Spare and Carter summarized the technique like so:

An "automatic" scribble of twisting and interlacing lines permits the germ of idea in the subconscious mind to express, or at least suggest itself to the consciousness. From this mass of procreative shapes, full of fallacy, a feeble embryo of idea may be selected and trained by the artist to full growth and power. By these means may the profoundest depths of memory be drawn upon, and the springs of instinct tapped.

For Spare, the "profoundest depths of memory" have their bottom in the belly of the Absolute, thus reaching the root of all existence, and from the "springs of instinct" come all the powers we might need to do our wills. With automatic drawing the sorcerer gives his deep psyche a chance to describe itself in its own terms, and without the interference of his ego. Once the sorcerer recognizes its hints, he can consciously draw in the details necessary to put its powers on full visual display, specifying their nature and function for the purposes of sorcery even as they are spared the rigidity of a verbal definition.

Automatic drawing is one of the easiest of all psychic practices, and relatively¹ safe so long as the operator has no fear of his own self. "The dangers of this form of expression come from prejudice and personal bias of such nature as fixed intellectual conviction or personal religion (intolerance). These produce ideas of threat,

1. Relative to evocation, or even astral projection.



*Two automatic drawings by Spare,
from Automatic Drawing.*



displeasure or fear, and become obsessions.” So the Christian who finds he draws devils will begin to dread himself; the pagan will be merely amused—or warned, anyway. But then devil-dread and dogma are the Neither-Neither’s main meat, and should mostly have been devoured by the time the wizard begins working on this level.

Before the wizard can begin drawing, he must first free his hand from the control of his conscious critical awareness. He must start by teaching it to draw by itself, filling page after page with twisting lines and simple shapes (trees, faces, etc.) made from them. “The Hand must be trained to work freely and without control, by practice in making simple forms with a continuous involved line without afterthought, i.e. its intention should just escape consciousness.” The wizard’s lines should dance along in a scribble, always seeking out new space, never turning into self-enclosed whorls.

Once his hand can work on its own, the sorcerer is ready to begin. He should decide which karma or power he wants to depict, then design an alphabetic sigil expressing this wish. This he will



From Automatic Drawing.

repress in the usual way, making the desire to draw the power organic. He will then attain a state of vacuity, concentrate on the sigil, and let his hand begin to draw. His desire to know the power, split off into the sigil, searches out the power and causes it to express itself through his independent hand. "Drawings should be made by allowing the hand to run freely with the least possible deliberation. In time shapes will be found to evolve, suggesting conceptions, forms, and ultimately having a personal style." Once these shapes are obvious, the sorcerer can enhance them through purposeful sketching, but he must always be true to the original suggestion, never letting any dogmatic preconceptions distort his drawings. "The Mind in a state of oblivion, without desire toward reflection or pursuit of materialistic intellectual suggestions, is in a condition to produce successful drawings of one's *personal* ideas, symbolic in meaning and wisdom. By this means may sensation be visualized."



From Automatic Drawing.

XII. The Alphabet of Desire

Automatic drawing was one of Spare's main magical tools, but this is only natural since he was first and foremost an artist, both by profession and predilection. A person with less artistic talent might not think automatic drawing so attractive that he would want to take it up in earnest. A more verbal sorcerer might be happier if he specialized in automatic writing, teaching his unconscious to send him pertinent syllables through his freely typing fingers, expressing his deep powers through the names, spells and mantras resulting. And a musical sorcerer might discover potent rhythms, melodies, and phrasings by fooling around on his instrument while visualizing his sigil. The important thing is for the ego to stay out of it, giving the unconscious free rein so it might make its meaning perfectly clear.

Automatic drawing, however, has another purpose, one important even for those of us whose artistic limitations preclude anything more sophisticated than doodling. Simply put, automatic drawing is the best tool we can use to begin to design our alphabets of desire.

The "alphabet of desire" is Spare's name for the collection of symbols or "sacred letters" that every sorcerer who persists in this method must eventually design. Each "letter" (actually an ideograph) represents a power or, as Spare called it, a "Sex principle"¹, an unconscious structure or a variety of energy that the sorcerer recognizes or wishes to recognize within his deep psyche. The letter acts as a way of designating the nature of this force even while one's rational mind is left in the dark. By encouraging his deep psyche to design this alphabet, the wizard creates his own personal system of symbols, compact images he can use to call up the power to change his consciousness or charge his sigils. And since these glyphs come directly out of the wizard's own unconscious, they are much more intimately connected to it than symbols in traditional systems, making it easier for him to bring the powers up to do their work.



1. One of Spare's aphorisms was that "All things fornicate all the time."


In the beginning, the wizard will find his letters almost by



accident. Let us say, for instance, that he wishes to symbolize the individual's relationship to the Absolute. To this end he will write his wish in a compact sentence, turn it into an alphabetic sigil, charge it, and then begin to create automatic drawings while dwelling on this shape. As he makes drawing after drawing he will see various beings and scenes within the lines, some pregnant with appropriate meanings, others rather banal. Ultimately, however, he will see a figure that typifies the play of power he wishes to signify, and this will be the basis of his letter. This figure will likely be linear, like a character in an alphabet, and he may find it anywhere within the web of lines that is the foundation of his drawing. It may be in a woman's headdress, in the meeting of two faces, or as part of a tangle of otherwise meaningless lines. The thing that it must do is stand out as perfectly apropos, and so does the wizard extract it from the drawing as a whole and refine it into a usable letter.

In this, however, there is some danger. The unconscious is very sensitive to symbols it designs itself, and so the sorcerer must be sure that any character he uses means the same thing to his unconscious that it does to his ego.

For example, I remember once when I was attempting to symbolize a particular power and my attention was grabbed by this arrangement of lines: . It seemed appropriate, but not

quite unified, so I redrew it  like this and also like this . Thus I had a choice. 

At first I chose . Perhaps it appealed to my innate  sense

of aggression. Unfortunately, within a few hours aggression inflated into arrogance, then collapsed into embarrassment. A consultation with the *I Ching* set me straight.  was fine;  was pure hubris.

So you will find it helpful to be well practiced with the *I Ching*, Tarot, or some similar art, just to be able to get an independent evaluation of what your letters really stand for. Of course competence



An automatic drawing with sacred letters, from Automatic Drawing.

in divination only comes to those who work at it for a few years, but then it should take someone just beginning with magic a few years to reach the sacred letter stage anyway. Let any neophytes, then, be sure that they devote a portion of their free belief to gaining skill with oracles. They won't regret it.



Another point of caution: always be sure to complement whatever powers you symbolize with their necessary opposites, this to keep your personal language from growing too lopsided. If I discovered my letter for the power of 'Victory in Conflict' and went ahead to use it in sorcery without first finding letters for 'Equilibrium' and 'Perspective', the preponderance of Martial energy could destroy me. My strong interest in it could cause it to seep up out of my unconscious and manifest in my experience. Without the others to balance it, I would be in danger of an obsession followed by personal disaster.

By the same token, if a person is psychically biased in some way, say by preferring 'intellect' to 'emotion' or 'intuition' (or whatever—the words fail), then he should be sure this bias does not distort his alphabet of desire. Even if he hardly ever uses them in this incarnation, the letters for emotion and intuition should be there, just in case, and also to remind him that he is a specialist and it isn't all a matter of logic.

Of course traditional systems address the problem of bias by insisting that their students assimilate a broad spectrum of symbols, these balanced in a geometric scheme like the Tree of Life or the Wheel of the Heavens. That the technique we offer in *Stealing the Fire from Heaven* cannot ensure such a balance, I admit is its big weak spot, for the danger of psychic one-sidedness is very real when you work a lonely magic like this one. The only solution I can offer is that you learn a system like Qabalah in an intellectual sense, understand the bases it is trying to cover, and then be sure to cover them all yourself (in one way or another) as you evolve your alphabet of desire.

Qabalah also serves as a sort of lingua franca among occultists, and as the symbolic basis for Tarot, a worthy tool for divination, so even if you don't intend to brand the Tree of Life onto your aura, it's still a worthwhile study.

XIII. The Varieties of the Sacred Letters

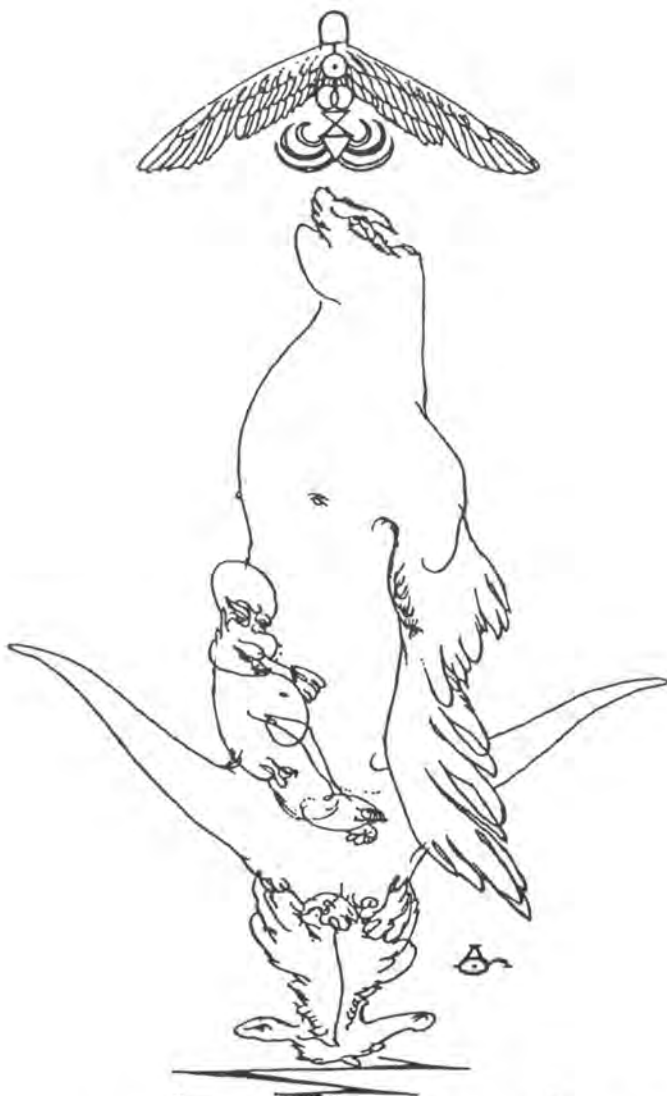
All these details of Spare's alphabet of desire might be better described if only I would give a few vivid examples from my own alphabet, but I will not. The only sorcerers who reveal the secrets of their sacred letters are foolish ones. Spare, for instance, only wrote that  was his symbol for duality and ego, while the reverse of it——was his letter for dissolution and death. But though he often adorned his drawings with lines of sacred letters, he never revealed their sounds or meanings. His alphabet was his own creation, and he meant it only for himself.

So you must take the trouble to develop your own, but that will come easily enough once you are sure you are ready to begin. And after you have a dozen letters or so, the logic of their design will help you determine the necessary shapes of others unknown. The first few are the ones that take the most effort at drawing.

But even if I won't tell you about my letters, I will tell you what *types* of power I've found it necessary to symbolize, just so you can get some idea of the ground you should cover. These might not include all the categories you'll eventually fill, or me either, but they will serve to indicate the scope of the inquiry you must make.

So I give the varieties of power as I saw them on August 31, 1984.

- 1.) Locations and structures that make up your psyche. These will include things that people call "the ego," "the unconscious," "the physical body," "the chakras," "the Kundalini," and so on. They're all there, and it's up to the sorcerer to figure out their relations one to another.
- 2.) Ways or powers to take you from one location in your unconscious to another. These are vital for astral projection, which is the subject of the next chapter.
- 3.) Powers to manipulate locations and structures that make up your psyche.



၂ နှစ်ပတ်လည်အထိ
 နေရာအရပ်ရပ်
 နေထိုင်ခဲ့ရပါသည်။

An automatic drawing with sacred letters, from Automatic Drawing.

- 4.) Conditioned reflexes, acquired as a response to your environment. These include things like driving a car, eating with a knife and fork, and looking both ways when you cross the street. Reflexes are there for a reason and very dangerous to disturb, unless, of course, the environment that conditioned the reflex no longer applies.
- 5.) Forces you discover as being available to do your will. These could be anything from sexual attractiveness to a droll wit, from the ability to draw schematics in one's imagination to the ability to detect insincerity in business transactions. Any power you can define, you can conjure, and so will it require a sacred letter.
- 6.) Demons: reflexes that generate uncontrollable moods, fantasies, and even actions. Demons are often acquired as a response to a twisted environment that had to be endured during the weakness and dependence of childhood. The adult, empowered wizard will realize they are inappropriate to his current situation, and make every effort to bind them so they will no longer bother him.
- 7.) Independent beings you meet upon the astral, whether representatives of other people (dead or living); plants, animals, elementals; or discarnate intelligences.
- 8.) Connecting links to other, 'external' entities.
- 9.) Your Holy Guardian Angel.

Now it may be that this list spawns as many questions as it answers. How, for instance, are we to know what locations we have in our unconscious minds, in that they are unconscious and all? How can we tell our Angels from our demons? What is astral projection? What is a Holy Guardian Angel?

We will discuss all but one of these questions in the next chapter, entitled "Astral Projection." The Holy Guardian Angel deserves a chapter to itself.

XIV. Astral Projection

As we said in Chapter II, the domain of the sorcerer's powers of mind is the unconscious. It is called the unconscious because we are not normally aware of it; it is the automatic pilot that walks us through doors, drives us down the street, makes us resent our Aunt Mary, or whatever else we do automatically whether our intellects bother about it or not. But in spite of this undercover role, it is possible for us to examine our unconscious minds, at least from an oblique angle. We can engage in introspection ("What is it about Aunt Mary that gives me stomach cramps?"), record and decode our dreams, take drugs, or invest in free association on the psychiatrist's couch. These methods all have their place, but a sorcerer needs something more direct. One technique, of course, is automatism. Another is astral projection, the deliberate exploration of a region halfway between dreams and fantasy, one that wizards call the astral plane.

It is a place where you can meet your powers face-to-face and then wrestle with them until they agree to serve your will.

The astral plane is the realm where clairvoyance is carried out, and it may also be used for travel to distant places, meetings with other astral travelers, and as a region where one may perceive the inner, 'spiritual' nature of material objects and external events. These are all worthy goals, and the sorcerer may find he uses the astral to carry them out, but his main interest in it will be as the arena wherein he meets the components of his unconscious mind.

By traveling on the astral the sorcerer can inspect his psyche first hand. He can map its salient features and interview the powers that inhabit them, getting acquainted so he can call upon their energy to charge his sigils. And if he can go deep enough, he will enter into what might be called the collective unconscious. There he can meet the astral forms of any other entity in existence—from the tree in his front yard or his Aunt Mary all the way to Aiwass, herald of the new aeon, who gave voice but showed no form to Aleister Crowley on April 8, 9, and 10 of 1904. But more on that later.

Which is not to say we're going to leave Crowley just now. An English magician (1875-1947) of the Rosicrucian school, Crowley more than any other is responsible for the rebirth of magic that has taken hold in this century. Though his symbolism was traditionally¹ Qabalistic, his approach to both the theory and technique of magic was distinguished by an intellectual integrity that is the closest thing to a scientific method that any religion can hope to attain to. It is true that his astral realm was a Rosicrucian one, full of Qabalistic symbols put in place during his indoctrination by the Golden Dawn, the English order that gave him his first training. But this is a matter of decoration only. Even if his view of the astral was radically different from what a non-Qabalistic magician might see, the techniques he used to approach and manage it are so sound that we would be negligent indeed if we ignored them.

The aspects of Crowley's approach that we will stress are:

- 1.) His view on the relative realities of normal and astral awareness.
- 2.) His procedure for getting from normal to astral awareness.
- 3.) His procedure for verifying the true nature of the astral beings.
- 4.) His procedure for returning to normal awareness.
- 5.) Rising on the planes.

1.) Crowley based his approach on the assumption that all human beings possess an astral body whose function it is to perceive on the astral plane. "Within the human body is another body of approximately the same size and shape; but made of subtler and less illusory material. It is of course not 'real'; but then no more is the other body!...There is no such thing as truth in the perceptible universe; every idea when analyzed is found to contain a contradiction. It is quite useless (except as a temporary expedient) to set up one class of ideas against another as being 'more real.'" So, as an expedient for traveling about in his unconscious, Crowley adopted the astral body (or "Body of Light"), as should everyone who is beginning

1. Occult tradition, not Hebrew tradition. The two are centuries apart.

this practice, for it is essential to have a solid foundation for your work here. The best way to lay one is to build up a body as much like your fleshy one as possible, and then educate it by moving it around in its realm. No matter if you inscribe Qabalistic pentagrams with your wand and sword or assume the shape of sacred letters of your own design, you still must have a shape that's 'really' you. It's easiest if it's similar to what you see in your mirror, and ease of use is what makes a shape a 'true' one.

2.) With Crowley's technique for projection, the wizard begins by performing the ritual ablutions, the robing, the banishing, and a general invocation. He lights the incense; he sits himself down in a comfortable position and closes his eyes. Then he imagines a duplicate of himself "as enveloping his physical body, or standing near to and in front of him. Let him then transfer the seat of his consciousness to that imagined figure; so that it may seem to him that he is seeing with its eyes, and hearing with its ears." Once this transfer has been made (and it will likely be the only real difficulty in the process), the traveler should rise until he encounters a landscape, where he may wander about, meet spirits, and generally become accustomed to his astral form. His experience here will be more vivid than what his normal imagination would offer, yet less real than a dream, and it will be this mind-stuff that he will deal with when he does his astral work.

Once the wizard feels at home, he will find he is able to create whatever magical paraphernalia (altars, wands, swords, etc.) he needs to perform any ceremonies on the astral, though these will be of more use to a traditional magician than one using our bare-bones procedure. What tools he does create, however, he should be careful to reabsorb when he's through, so as not to waste his light littering the planes.

I might add that after one becomes familiar with the astral, the 'jump' one makes to begin the trip may not be necessary. I personally use a sacred letter to cause my astral form to somersault out of my seated body and stand up on the astral plane. And when I wish to resume normal consciousness, I have another that makes me reverse the motion so I sit again in my corpus.

3.) The big danger on the astral comes when the traveler meets and deals with the other entities he finds there. "Probably he will see figures approaching him...let him speak to such figures, and insist on being answered, using the proper pentagrams and signs, as previously taught. Let him travel at will, with or without the guidance of such figure or figures....Let him beware of the thousand subtle attacks that he will experience, carefully testing the truth of all with whom he speaks. Thus a hostile being may appear clothed with glory; the appropriate pentagram will in such a case cause him to shrivel or decay."

Of course we aren't using pentagrams here, so we need to replace them with something else. What you choose to replace them with is entirely your affair, but I will suggest that the imposition of a spirit's sacred letter over the form of the entity claiming to be that spirit seems to be effective. If it speaks true, it will grow stronger. If it is an imposter, it will melt away.

Once you get the spirits you want to speak with talking, you can ask them their names. This is essential, since once you have their names to chant while you visualize their sacred letters, you can cause them to come more easily than if you use the letters alone.

Another way to get a spirit to come is to transform your own shape into that of the god (in Rosicrucian use) or sacred letter that has authority over it. This is not to say, however, that you should ever let a being on the astral enter into your Body of Light. The god or sacred letter is the ideal form, while what comes in response is only your own psyche's approximation of it. To invite it in is to ask it to obsess you. Instead, you should keep it a good distance away, maintain a cordial but firm demeanor, make no bargains, and always keep the upper hand.² If it ever appears you might lose it, banish and end the projection at once.

You should not go too far on your journey, or stay after you begin to grow tired, for if you fall asleep, faint, or otherwise neglect

2. It is also prudent to immediately bind any spirit with a ritual charge. The use of the "Hear Me: and make all spirits subject unto Me..." charge, explained on page 106, is extremely effective.

what you're doing, you open yourself to obsession. But then it's easy enough to come back. Crowley suggests that you might imagine a flaming chariot to take you earthwards, or you can simply will yourself to descend. One caution: if you ever invent a specific sacred letter that causes you to rise, you should also define one to come down with, for otherwise you might find yourself up your creek without a paddle.

4.) Once you're back, you need only reunite your bodies and wake up, but this is the most important step, and must definitely be done right. "Let the student cause his imagined body in which he supposes himself to have been traveling to coincide with the physical, tightening his muscles, drawing in his breath, and putting his forefinger to his lips. Then let him 'awake' by a definite act of will, and soberly and accurately record his experiences." The putting of the forefinger to the lips shows that what Crowley advises is the assumption of the god-form of Harpocrates—the Babe in the Egg, the Egg girdled with the serpent of your will. You can reinforce this by using the three-ring banishing ritual we gave in Chapter VI.

Crowley stresses that the traveler must not neglect this reunification, *even a novice who's sure that he never got himself separated to begin with!* "If you fail to [reunify] properly you may find yourself in serious trouble. Your Body of Light may wander away uncontrolled, and be attacked and obsessed. You will become aware of this through the occurrence of headache, bad dreams, or even more serious signs such as hysteria, fainting fits, possibly madness or paralysis. Even the worst of these attacks will probably wear off, but it may leave you permanently damaged to a greater or less extent."

5.) The practice of rising on the planes is important as a way of discovering just how the powers in your unconscious are arranged one to another. What it involves is choosing a starting point and then rising, passing all the barriers you are able to pass and taking note of changing conditions when you do pass them. In this way you will meet aspects of your unconscious you had no idea existed, the structures that connect your mind to the Mind at the source of

it all. It is as different from calling up preplanned spots and just going to them as a walking tour of Manhattan is different from just taking the subway and popping up at 42nd Street, the World Trade Center, and the Battery.

This summary of astral travel must remain that, a summary. We've given enough to work with, but there's a lot more, most of it in Aleister Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Dover, 1976), from which have come all of the above quotations. It is a wonderful book whether you choose to use his Qabalistic system or not, and it's almost worth learning Qabalah to be able to understand all the references he makes. Buy it.



XV. The Holy Guardian Angel

But whether you choose to learn it or no, Qabalah doesn't have much to do with the magic we're talking about, which both helps us and hurts us. It helps us because the symbols we design ourselves are inevitably more powerful than those we take second-hand, and it hurts us because we deprive ourselves of the framework those second-hand symbols are hung on. In fact, we have to feel out our own frameworks and discover just how they're put together, since if that's different from what we believe it to be, we can tear ourselves apart. We'd be just like a car whose driver doesn't know a clutch from a brake.

What we obviously need in all this is some help, which is hard to get when you're working inside your own mind. You can't invite an expert along to show you the sights; the expert has to be in there already. But the expert is there, and you can find him/her if you look—what we wizards call your Holy Guardian Angel.

The Holy Guardian Angel is an astral being, an independent intelligence from whom the sorcerer can obtain knowledge, inspiration, and reinforcement of purpose. In modern occult practice the theory of the Holy Guardian Angel derives largely from *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (Dover, 1975) by S. L. MacGregor Mathers¹, first published in 1898. Mathers' work is a translation of an 18th century French manuscript that claims to be a translation of a Hebrew original, written by Abraham the son of Simon for his son Lamech in 1458. It is divided into three parts. The first is Abraham's story of how he spent his early years searching for occult truth, finally obtaining it after meeting the hermit Abramelin.

1. Aside from translating medieval grimoires, Samuel Liddell "MacGregor" Mathers (1854-1918) was one of the founders of the Golden Dawn and the principle architect of its structure of ritual and symbol. Fluent in the European tradition of Christian Qabalah, with the collaboration of Wynn Westcott he was able to develop a coherent system of great power out of a mishmash of often-inconsistent tradition. He was a major influence on Aleister Crowley, from Crowley's initiation into the Order in 1898 until they fell out when the Order disintegrated two years later.

The second is Abraham's transcription of Abramelin's instructions for working the magic. The third contains talismans that the magician can safely use only after he has obtained the knowledge and conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel. This knowledge is won as the prize of a six-month magical seclusion, during which time an aspiration for his Angel should be the magician's sole concern. Once knowledge of his Angel has been obtained, he gains power over the legions of good and evil spirits and can use the talismans in the third section with impunity. His Angel can also provide him with any other magical knowledge he may need, whatever the occasion.

Now the skeptics may think here that the idea of a Holy Guardian Angel is absurd, a relic of a superstitious age we are well out of. They may feel that our magic so far is an interesting case of psychic self-manipulation, but to say that there exists a personal Angel for everyone?.., it is to be childish! Perhaps so, but as the Good Lord told us, you've got to become as children to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And anyway, the skeptics miss the point. The point is that our unconscious selves are supremely protean, able to assume any symbolic guise we project upon them, and if a wizard insists (say through six months of devoted aspiration) that his unconscious produce a personification of itself, it will ultimately comply. Once this personification has been well developed, the wizard will have a way to communicate directly with his deep psyche, something most people can't do even after ten thousand dollars worth of psychoanalysis.² With his Angel's internal guidance, he can trace his psyche down to its roots in the collective unconscious, Mind of God, Absolute, Tao, Ain Soph (Qabalists' term), Kia (Spare's term), or whatever else he wants to call it. In this sense we can say that if we are the Eyes of God, our Angels are God's optic nerves. They're the ropes we can pull upon to lift ourselves home.

Austin Spare never mentioned the Holy Guardian Angel in his writing, though he must have heard about it since he was a student

2. We should point out, however, that psychoanalysis is medicine, and sorcery is religion. Medicine is for sick people. Religion is for people who are well enough, but who know there is something more, and want it.

of Crowley's in 1910, and Crowley made it a centerpiece of his system. Nonetheless, a wizard may easily adapt Spare's techniques to call his Angel to mind, and this without the long withdrawal from his life of commerce that Abramelin's method requires. I would not, however, invoke my Angel with Spare's technique and then ask her to help me use Abramelin's talismans. A Spare Angel may be the same basic psychic structure as an Abramelin Angel, but their symbolic orientations would be centuries apart.

The careful reader will have noticed that I refer to my own Angel as "she." Practical experience shows that Holy Guardian Angels, at least in their initial manifestations, often appear to be of the opposite sex of the sorcerer under their tutelage—male sorcerers having female Angels, females having males. This brings to mind Carl Jung's concept of the 'female' anima as an archetypal force in men, and the 'male' animus in women, and it would be worthwhile to pause here to inspect his views.

A Swiss psychiatrist who reigns as Patron Shrink for wizards across America,³ Carl Jung (1875-1961) was deeply interested in the 'occult sciences' as an additional set of windows for peering into the unconscious. But he was by no means expert in sorcery. His work on alchemy as a process of individuation and synchronicity as the "acausal connecting principle" behind divination is highly respected, but he had no knowledge of the English wizards whose work is the foundation for the present state of the art. So his conclusions on the anima/animus, reached independently through interviews with patients and research into dreams (and not medieval grimoires), can give us another look at what may be involved when we try to communicate with our Angels.

The two most important features of the anima/animus are that it is archetypal and that it is independent. Its being archetypal means we all have one, just as we all have livers and spleens. You may not be aware you have one, but you do, and if you're going to muck around down there (as sorcerers must), you have to know where it's at. Its being independent means that we have no control

3. Sharing this state of sanctity with Wilhelm Reich.

over what it is, any more than we have control over our heredity or our great aunt's neuroses. But we can encourage it to behave in a positive way, and discourage its perversions—an important point since its highest aspects can reach into the divine, and its lowest can bring us to the depths of human malignancy.

In men, Jung saw the anima as the source of all that is feminine—their capacity for love, their sensitivity to nature, and their ability to relate to their unconscious minds. A man's anima can serve as his connection to his deep psyche—the source of his intuition, his guide to a true knowledge of Self.

For a woman, a healthy animus can inspire her life with a spiritual rigor, filling her soft emotional exterior with an inner confidence that can cope with difficulty and manage her creative powers with intuitive efficiency.

For both men and women, the anima/animus is our point of communication with the unconscious. Jung called it “the mouthpiece of the unconscious,” and whether one's unconscious is healthy or diseased will determine the quality of the dialogue. For it is easy for a person's deep psyche to grow up twisted—distorted by parental bungling, religious upbringing, cultural stereotyping, or personal indulgence. In such cases the anima/animus will not show itself directly, but will make itself felt through projections. It will project its distortions onto the individual's perception of the external world, forcing him to see justifications for its bias within his experience of reality. Projections are especially insidious since the anima/animus is such a deeply unconscious structure that most people don't even know it exists. It is only through techniques like astral projection and dream analysis that the contrasexual reality within one's Self makes itself apparent.

For a man, an unhealthy anima can infest his mind with waspish moods, defeatism, hypochondria, and sexual compulsions. The anima will often project itself upon a flesh and blood woman, forcing the man to recognize the woman as a soul-mate, one for whom all may be sacrificed. Without any knowledge of his anima's wiles, it will be easy for him to see such an affair as the key to his destiny, even as it rips his life apart.

For a woman, an unhealthy animus is more apt to corrupt her intelligence than her emotions. He will manifest in unyielding opinions on the way the world should be, an ideal vision which will allow no argument, and which when challenged will be defended with either a dark, cold silence or a loud emotional scene. A sick animus might even tempt a woman to withdraw from the 'imperfect' world, isolating her until she withers from emotional starvation. Like the anima, an unhealthy animus can project itself upon individual men, whom the woman will idolize and then despise when she realizes they do not measure up to her standard of perfection.

Jung's solution here is for individuals first to realize that their anima/animus is a force that is not under willful control, second to recognize how it uses the mechanism of projection to hide itself, and third to become aware of its needs and to consciously come to terms with them. The man must realize that the imaginative world his anima provides him has its own validity, and he must take it into account as he plans his path through life. The woman must realize that her inner man does not offer final truths, only a vivid grasp of a reality that is subject to change without notice. Only then will the masculine firmness of her animus be able to help her on her way through the chaos of the world, instead of involving her in a foredoomed struggle against it.

For us sorcerers in quest of our Angels then, Jung's observations must give us pause. Our inner women/men may have self-destructive aspects to them, and we must be sure to recognize these as the flaws they are and not give them the respect due our Angels. Hence when a sorcerer meets a being of the opposite sex during his meditations, he must not jump to the conclusion that this is his Angel, *even if it assures him that it is!* Instead he should impose the sacred letter that represents his Angel upon this creature's astral figure, just as he would any other entity he meets on the astral plane. This is not, however, to say that these candidates for Angeldom will come easily. Abramelin's technique for bringing them up took six months, and even if our system is a little less rigid, it still takes a real effort.

To use our technique to meet your Angel, first express that aspiration in an alphabetic sigil, charge it with all the free belief you can muster, and then do automatic drawing with it until you find the proper letter, which you should confirm with a series of divinations spread out over several days. Once you have the sigil and letter, you should meditate on them, do astral work wherein your Body of Light takes the shape of the sacred letter, and continue to fill the alphabetic sigil with free belief (and also with the energy experienced while in the letter's shape). For some days or even weeks you may see little, but if you keep at it a time will come when a dazzling light appears in the space behind your sigil, and within a few sessions beings of the opposite sex will begin to appear. Each of these must be tested by superimposing your sacred letter upon it. Those less pure than it is will turn away or crumble; your own true Angel will welcome it. As soon as your Angel takes on a definite persona, you should ask it his or her name. Do not insist on an immediate reply, but repeat the question each session because once you know how to call it, communication becomes much easier.

But you should be aware of one other important indicator of an Angel's veracity: independent action. For instance, when I first confronted my Angel with her sacred letter, it turned into a pastry and she ate it! It was certainly nothing I'd planned on happening. More recently, I have record of a time when I was feeling a vague spiritual malaise and went up to talk it over with my Angel. I tried to ask her about a short story I was writing, but she wasn't interested. "Well isn't it important?" I asked her. She supposed so, but... "Well what do you want to talk about?" I pressed.

LIGHT! BRILLIANT WHITE LIGHT SPIRALING OUT OF THE CENTER OF MY FOREHEAD!

I wasn't prepared for that at all, and needless to say, the rest of our intercourse that evening was wordless. This episode was, in fact, the event that started me mapping out my chakras, an essential step in my magical progress. (Expert opinion holds there are ten chakras—from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Find them, name them, search out their power, and master it!)

So we see that your Holy Guardian Angel is your best possible guide to your unconscious. It will provide the names and sacred letters of any powers you think to ask for, thus giving you the freedom to roam as you will and allowing you to put aside automatic drawing, unless it be your will to continue it. Your Angel will be a fountain of knowledge on the workings of your psyche, a being whose good graces are worthy of the greatest effort and respect.

Without his Angel to guide him, the sorcerer can only blunder down his path in darkness.



XVa. The Subtle Body

The subtle body is the body of spirit that permeates the body of flesh with awareness, emotion and will. You may activate it most readily through breathing. Though other fluids—generally blood and semen—play a role in its sorcerous manipulation, breath is the engine that moves psychic energy through its psychic conduits. The essential movement is the inhalation of power into and up the spine—this activating the Kundalini serpent at its base—the power drawn in simultaneously with the breath, followed by the exhalation that lets it flow down and out. To begin to experience this, sit in a chair with your back straight and your head erect. Breathe slowly and deeply. During the inhalation, imagine the energy as Light in the base of your spine, and tighten the perineal muscles behind the anus in sequence as if to induce it to rise—to sort of massage it on up. Then with the exhalation, relax and let it flow on out.

This is the fundamental motion and introduces you to the power, but what to do next is problematic, quite dependent upon the personal equation and thus imminently suited to the involvement of your Holy Guardian Angel.

The problem is that the subtle bodies we begin with seem almost rudimentary: a Kundalini serpent that rises with excitement, chakras at the genitals, solar plexus and heart, an unopened Third Eye. The subtle body's more sophisticated operation—when the flows are regular and useful and operate through a well-defined subtle anatomy—only comes after you have imposed a discipline upon it. And the specific details of the shape that your subtle anatomy finally takes depend upon the features that your chosen discipline emphasizes. Buddhist and Hindu Tantra, Chinese Taoist yoga, Qabalistic and Rosicrucian practices all have defined similar, and yet still quite distinct, psychic anatomies. All have energy centers or chakras strung along a central column that encompasses the spine; all move energy up and down with attentive breathing; and all prescribe regular exercise of the Light as a necessary training. But matters as basic as the number of chakras can vary from five to

over fifteen. Such honest disagreement over details should serve as inspiration to do your own research, studying the ancient traditions to get ideas for methods you'd like to try, then following your Angel's guidance as to whether to adopt the practice, adapt it, or drop it in favor of something else. Your Angel can further assist you by helping you impose the sorcerous model onto your subtle anatomy. With your Angel's authority to name and bind psychic entities, you can address your chakras, their characteristic functions and also the power flows between them as if they were spirits, controlling them according to the usual sorcerous methodology. Thus you will gain the power to manipulate them through voice—opening and closing chakras, setting up circulations of the Light, assuming and stepping out of god-forms, and either applying or accumulating whatever energies you thus obtain—all through the vibration of the appropriate words of power.

Of course in the last chapter I declared that expert opinion holds that there are ten worthwhile energy centers in the human psychic anatomy, and so it behooves me to explain what I meant. The chakras I recognized then and still recognize now are, from the bottom up, as follows:

- 1.) The base of the spine: the source of Kundalini.
- 2.) The genitals: from whence creative power—either biological or spiritual—can be split off and sent into the world.
- 3.) The belly: for storing power, however it has been obtained, if it is not to be immediately used.
- 4.) The solar plexus: for sending power directly out into the world.
- 5.) The heart: for emotional connections.
- 6.) The throat: for speaking words of power.
- 7.) The third eye: for perceiving the world in terms of power.
- 8.) The hairline: for pulling power in from the outside, power that is essentially free but which must immediately be sent out again through the solar plexus, whether to charge a talisman, a eucharist or another person.

- 9.) The base of the skull: for protection—eyes in the back of the head.
- 10.) The top of the head: for access to the power of the Highest.

As important as the energy centers are the energy flows between them, energy flowing in with the inhalation and out with the exhalation. The Chinese call the exercise of this flow “circulation of the Light” and claim that it helps ensure power, health and longevity. The Taoist schools have a complicated procedure for this that involves several kinds of energy and a rather elaborate sexual discipline. In my own practice I have simplified this to a great extent. For the circulation, I simply try to get an amplified flow to all portions of my subtle anatomy, and store any residue when I am finished. For the sexual discipline I follow what Aleister Crowley referred to as “chastity.” I will cover these in this order.

Circulation of the Light is driven by visualization and breathing. On the inhalation I draw the energy in from the base of my spine, pulling it up in the way I described at the beginning of the chapter. I bring it up the back of my neck and past the base of my skull, over the top of my head, down in front of my face and then under my chin to merge with the flow on up to form a spinning egg of Light around my head. And this spinning motion helps me pull energy of a higher, albeit more attenuated sort in through the top of my head. The Lights from above and below merge within the egg, whose spinning energy tends to form whorls just outside my ears, which I then pull into the point of view behind my eyes. With the exhalation I reverse the direction to let the energy flow out through the base of my spine and the top of my head.

One particularly effective way to set up this flow is to define each of the currents—the flow up the spine, the flow down from the Highest, and the spinning orb around the head—as a separate spirit, and then name and bind them to obedience, just as you would for the individual chakras. Then when you engage in the circulation, chant their names as a mantra to set up the flow and get into the proper meditative state. Once the circulation is well practiced, you

may find that concentration on the spinning egg as much as upon the muscles around the base of the spine is the key to getting the flow started. Also, you may find it needful to include your arms and legs in the circulation, branching the energy off the main flow up the spine and sending it down and around and on up on the inhalation, and reversing it to let it run out on the exhalation. These flows, too, will require separate definitions as spirits.

I should note that according to the master of Taoist yoga Mantak Chia (whose works have provided a major inspiration for my own practice), circulations such as this invariably leave a residue of energy scattered throughout your aura, and it is essential to sweep it into your belly chakra for storage once you have completed your exercises. To do this simply imagine your belly as the hub of a wheel, with the spokes extending through your aura, and let the spokes pull the Light into the hub as you rotate the wheel, intoning your name for the belly chakra as you do so. According to Chia, the belly is the only safe place psychic energy may be stored. If you leave power in any other center, you will damage that center. To gather power into the heart chakra, for instance, tends to bring on chest pains and bruising. Open and shut the heart chakra at will; use it as a gateway to Universal Love, or to send and absorb emotional energy. But when you have finished working with it, shut it down and gather any residual power into your belly.

This method of gathering power in for storage is also relevant to what I see as an essential sexual discipline, what Crowley called "chastity." The idea here is that your sexual fluids are suffused with power and you must not promiscuously discard them, lest that power energize independent entities that would use it to work their own agendas in defiance of good order and your own will. This is not such a problem with intercourse with a partner, where the energy goes into the emotional interplay between two people, but with autoeroticism it is a crucial consideration. Here the elixir must be either dedicated to charging a talisman or else consumed as a eucharist. In the latter case it should be held in one's mouth until the energy has been wheeled into the belly chakra, and then swal-

lowed. The difference in one's energy level between occasions when one absorbs it in this way and those when one just discards it should be ample proof of the efficacy of these practices.



XVI. Advanced Conjuring

Once a wizard has determined the letter and name of a power, he has a way of bringing that power in to serve his will. He can use it for creating moods, controlling obsessive thought, obtaining knowledge, or charging sigils that need that sort of energy to manifest. The method of calling up the energy will vary from wizard to wizard, but the visualization of the letter combined with the mantric chanting of its name will certainly be at the center of the operation. Perhaps dance and incense, wine and strange drugs will play a role; perhaps the wizard will do the whole operation in his head while driving home from work. In any case he will enter a state of vacuity,¹ use the letter and name to bring up the power, then focus it into his sigil so it burns bright in his imagination. The difference between this and the beginners' level is that here the wizard uses the specific power he identifies with the letter rather than the formless potency of free belief, though free belief will always boost things along if it is available.

But with new powers come new cautions. The danger is that as soon as you start to use your sacred letters to connect yourself with a power, you expose yourself to the chance of the power rushing up with only the slightest provocation. For instance, you may be driving along the turnpike when someone cuts you off. You are angry; you dissolve your anger with the Neither-Neither; and suddenly you are riding on a cushion of undifferentiated tension: free belief. So you use the energy to visualize the sigil of your current desire and also the sacred letters associated with any relevant powers. But then a letter seems to spring to life and your whole body liquefies in a rush of cosmic understanding. The critical question now becomes: can you still drive?

For the true adept there is no question. His passengers won't even notice as he turns the car over to his 'automatic pilot' and works

1. With practice this can be done in a second or two. It all has to do with the way you hold your eyes, and set your head on your spine.

to stuff the energy into his sigil. The neophyte may find it prudent to pull off the road. The dilettante is at risk of flaming death.

Any problems here only rarely have to do with the automatic pilot itself, but rather come from an ego that panics and never turns it on. The pilot itself is offered as standard equipment in practically everyone; you use it every time you drive while listening to a baseball game. The panic comes when the unvarnished potency of the power is realized and second thoughts come up. These can be deadly, for if you fight the power, it can split you into pieces. The best option is just to tell the power it has its instructions, and use it to visualize your sigil.

But never let go of the steering wheel.



XVII. The Death Posture


With this advanced technique for conjuring, the wizard will find that he is no longer at the mercy of every curveball Fate might spin in his direction, that he can at least manage to avoid the more life-ruining traps existence might set in his path. If he takes the trouble to use it when he ought to, this magic should give him the self-control to manage unreasonable fears, the ability in divination and clairvoyance to avoid awful employment and hideous marriages, the sensitivity to recognize and steal away from impossible situations, and the power to call up enough inspiration to chase away any but the most fundamental boredom. And in case of direct attack, he will have the banishing ritual we gave in Chapter VI, which should by now be capable of secreting a psychic armor at a moment's notice, and which he will do well to fortify with appropriate powers out of his psychic arsenal. No matter whether it's his boss's wife making catty comments about his wife's drapes or the evil wizard Mortdread hurling blue thunder against his aura, his ethereal shell will serve as a mirror of indifference to reflect their spite back into their faces. A bright, firm aura, hardened by years of regular banishing and blazing under the force of a wizard's words of power, is his best protection against obsession, possession, and psychic attack.

But then on the other hand, defense against a hostile world is useful only up to a point, simply because the world is not hostile, it is ourselves. We cannot just activate our spiritual deflector shields every time we encounter some opposition. We have to uncover the source of resistance, understand it from its own point of view, and learn to deal with it as a force of nature. Only when we can see our opponents' justification for what they do can we grasp the part they play in the whole and so learn the best way to counter or cooperate with their purposes.

Of course there are many ways of achieving this mystical objectivity. Yoga, sensory deprivation, and magical ritual all reward the sincere practitioner with glimpses of the big picture, as can Spare's method of applying the Neither-Neither and, of course,

the guidance of your Holy Guardian Angel. But Spare had one other technique especially designed to give us an inside look at the levers and engines at work in the subbasement of Manifestation. He called it the “death posture.”

The death posture is as much an act as it is a position. The wizard *postures* death. He gives himself a performance, and if he can get into his role, he can lose his sense of place in the world, and so can drop all the beliefs he needed to hold himself there. “It is the dead body of all we believe,” Spare tells us in *The Book of Pleasure*, “and shall awake a dead corpse.... Know the death posture and its reality in annihilation of law—the ascension from duality.” By forcing his ego to mimic death, the wizard can ‘stand back’ to see the powers that energize his own and others’ actions and so learn how he can best work to carry out his will.

In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare gave explicit instructions for assuming the death posture. The wizard begins by staring into a mirror, gazing into his own eyes until the image blurs and becomes unfamiliar. His eyes will then close and he should visualize a light, an ‘X’ which will undergo “curious evolutions.” Regardless of these, he should hold onto it until he forgets all effort, at which time he will enter a great immensity, bound by unreachable limits. In it he will see this shape——which is Spare’s sacred letter for the duality that is the essence of consciousness. Floating alone in this empty expanse, the wizard will feel the emotion that affirms the necessity of assuming the posture. (You might find, however, that your own letter for duality works better than Spare’s. Mine has for me, anyway.)

As soon as the need is clear, the wizard will open his eyes, stand up on tiptoe, clasp his hands behind his back, tighten his muscles, and throw back his head as he breaths “deeply and spasmodically.” He should do this until giddiness threatens, and it is intended to bring about an exhaustion that will assist in the assumption of the posture itself. I should point out, however, that one’s heart here is taken from quiescence into exertion and then forced (as we shall see) back into immediate quiescence. Though no expert, I suspect that

this would be a strain for many, so if you have any doubts over your cardiovascular integrity, you should consult a physician before you try this. It is one thing to simulate a death agony, quite another to stimulate one.

Once giddy, the wizard will collapse from his erect tension into a prone relaxation, the death posture itself. The state he acts out is that of death, so he quiets his breathing, closes his eyes, and feels his body stiffen of itself. "...the body expressing the emotion of yawning, suspiring while conceiving by smiling, that is the idea of the posture." He will make his thought as still as his body by accepting all contraries, uniting opposites in annihilation. "Perceive and feel without the necessity of an opposite, but by its relative." In other words, remove all potential for alienation by including everything within the category 'Self'. This of course takes practice; one's attachments and aversions are not easily harmonized. Spare recommends a daily practice, until the wizard reaches "the center of desire."

Austin Spare believed that our sexuality is our deep connection to Kia, his name for the unnamable Absolute, what is commonly called God. By concentrating all our awareness within this link, we can pull ourselves back into Kia and glimpse reality from any of its myriad points of view, if only for a little while. In his book *The Magical Revival* (Weiser, 1973), Kenneth Grant quotes Spare as writing that the death posture is a "simulation of death by the utter negation of thought, i.e. the prevention of desire and the functioning of all consciousness through the sexuality." And also: "We are never fully aware of things except by the influx of sexual will awakening us." But we cannot connect with this flow so long as our aesthetic senses are clogged with beliefs smaller than Kia, desires smaller than its desire for Self-love. The death posture is Spare's way of slaying all partial beliefs, all partial desires, clearing away the superficial so we may recognize our identity with the immensity that lies watching from within.



From Form I, 1 — April, 1916

XVIII. Talismans and the Magical Link

Apparently Spare was able to achieve the just-described ideal of Cosmic Identity with some measure of success, for more than any other modern wizard, he is said to have had a knack for genuine, without-a-doubt miracles. According to Kenneth Grant, Spare once made rain on demand (in England, but the sky was clear when he started) and was also able to both read the minds of others and impress his own thoughts upon them. He did all this with the aid of spirits—“elemental automata” and “intrusive familiars”—which he called with the aid of the sigils appropriate to them. He was also willing to oblige acquaintances who asked for spells for their own purposes. He provided these in the form of plates, saucers, or bowls decorated with sigils, sacred letters, and evocative pictographs. He charged these by evoking intrusive familiars and using sexual means to impregnate the dishes with their power. A wooden bowl was thus made a talisman—a charged object that stores and can thus transport power—and talismans are the most common means of establishing a magical link.

A talisman can be any object a sorcerer chooses to charge, and its actual appearance depends on how he intends to put it to use. If he’s storing power to give to a client or for his own use later on, then he will emblazon it with whatever mystic symbols are appropriate to the power, whether planetary signs or alphabetic sigils and sacred letters. But if his magical intentions must remain a secret, he will use an object that appears to be innocent of sorcery. This could be something like a love letter or a job resume, and the magical charge the wizard puts on it will be there to sway the mind of the recipient, impelling that person to grant whatever request he or she reads on the face of it.

The physical base of a talisman should always be new—whether a wooden bowl or a sheet of gold (Qabalistically attributed to the Sun)—and it should be appropriately inscribed in advance of the ritual. When

it is ready it should be consecrated, and then the wizard should call up the power with which he intends to infest it. When the power has reached a climactic intensity, he should focus it into the object. He will do this by using words of power to fill it with astral light, or by anointing it with blood from a sacrifice or with the 'elixir' found in the 'cup' after sexual intercourse. Finally, he will be careful to wrap it in black cloth before the final banishing, thus preserving it from accidental discharge.

The sorts of ways one might use a talisman are determined by the sorts of operations one can perform. For the purposes of explaining the magical link, Aleister Crowley defined three different levels of working: 1.) operations within one person; 2.) operations between two or more persons, but on the same plane; and 3.) operations between two planes—that is, between the sorcerer and the trend of nature.

1.) When the magician works within himself, the connection between his will and its object is intrinsic, and no extra link is necessary. Our every spirit and demon is already under our influence, and we can have them do our will if only we can recognize them and bring ourselves to act upon them. If you wish to heal your ulcer, learn BASIC, enhance your artistic vision, or make yourself attractive to the opposite sex, the appropriate power can be called up astrally and bound to the task. Even so, a wizard may wish to use a talisman for this sort of magic, either as a way of turning a power on and off, or as a Eucharist.

A talisman as a switch is one that you wear when you want a power, and wrap up and put away when you don't need it. So a lover might put on a sensitivity talisman before going to see his lady, one he wouldn't dare wear to his job at the collection agency.

Eucharists are talismans that you eat. You imbue an object with the sort of power you wish to become, then consume it, thus building the power up into your aura. The Host here could be something like a cracker with a sigil and sacred letter drawn on in food coloring. You would charge it as you would any talisman—with Light, Love, or warm, red Life.

The big caution with Eucharists is that you have to be sure you want to become the sort of power you are consuming, as it is an obsession pure and simple. This is naturally more dangerous when sex or blood is used than when one is merely filling the Host with the mind's Light. Sex magic is dangerous precisely because it is so effective. The concentration of the participants is crucial, for if their minds stray from the purpose of the rite, so will the purpose be deformed, and the Elixir will be poison to them. They must have a common mental image of the power they are invoking, and they must not let it waver as they bring the power up from within. If they aren't capable of this, they should limit themselves to the power in their imaginations, and save the sex for love.

2.) When the wizard is working to influence another's actions, the need for a link is more apparent, but it may be met with a little effort. Crowley gives the example of a man who wishes to win the love of a woman. She is on the same planes as he is—those of culture, consciousness (sight, smell, sound), language (speech and writing), and unconsciousness (they both have one and they interact). So the wizard will have many avenues of approach. He may court her by praising her excellent qualities. He may affirm his praise and express his emotional need with dinner invitations, love notes, and by sending flowers, perfumes, or (to flatter her sense of self-worth) significant gifts. And to affect her unconscious mind, he might charge any or all of his gifts during a magical ritual. Thus they will serve as talismans as well as mere baubles, pushing her deep psyche over to his side even as they force his suit on her waking awareness.

The same considerations could apply to a job resume, a doctoral thesis, or a recording contract. They are all things that come in direct contact with the person or persons who will decide your fate. Such objects will be fit vehicles for your power, assuming, of course, that it is your will to take such a coercive course instead of one more Self-centered.

3.) With operations to affect a completely foreign plane, it is as if we were trying to twist the form of Fate, and so the question of the link becomes more difficult. An example of such a working

would be an attempt by a wizard to make it rain. The slightest acquaintance with meteorology tells us this is totally outside the realm of individual will; weather systems are vast air masses that develop over whole hemispheres, or continents, anyway, and have very little to do with the tube-like creatures that scurry across the surface. And yet the slightest acquaintance with pantheism (and almost all sorcerers are pantheists, this one included) tells us that All Things are One at the deepest level—at their source in the Mind of God. Thus, as extensions of the Creator, a small tropical depression should be available to us if we really need it.

The trouble here is that the Mind of God is a lot harder to get to than the aura of a reluctant love-interest, and once the wizard is there he is hardly likely to consider the need for rain. Unless, of course, it be his will. In such a case, however, he will likely not try to identify with humidity, fronts, and pressures low and high. Instead he will manufacture an elemental, a being whose will it is to carry out his commands with respect to the weather. But this takes more than the simple design of a sigil and sacred letters followed by some repression and chanting. The elemental must be created—that is, spawned and then nurtured into independent existence. Assuming that the wizard is able to maintain control over it, it will then be available as a familiar to serve his desire for rain. We will speak further of this manufacture toward the end of the next chapter.

To discharge a talisman, thank and release its spirit by pronouncing a formal dismissal, then banish it.

XIX. Means of Enhancement

It should by now be obvious that some magical workings take more effort than others, depending both on how distant what you wish is from the reach of your will, and how large an effect you wish to cause. A brief shower will be easier to start than a flood; it will be more difficult to make rain in Needles than Spokane. So you may require additional techniques to boost your power, elaborations on the bare bones of sigils and sacred letters already described. We will divide our coverage of these into four broad categories: 1.) ritual; 2.) herbs, oils, and incense; 3.) drugs; and 4.) sex.

1.) Ritual works only if the people involved in it know how to make it work. Most rituals performed by organized religion fail because the people performing them have no power: no power in the priest's speaking, no power in the congregations listening, no knowledge of the ways power can be called up and focused. Ritual must seem spontaneous. Even if it's the result of careful planning to produce just the right psychological effect, it must still seem as natural as breathing—and never forced or mechanical.

The reason for doing rituals is that there are sequences of mental states that you can follow to bring yourself into an identity with the power you desire. Rituals that try to create such an identity usually follow this order: a.) they define the power; b.) they excite the wizard until he overloads his ego and the power is recognized; c.) they identify the wizard with the power; and d.) they focus the power according to the wizard's will.

a.) The power is generally defined in an oath, stating precisely who the wizard is and what he is trying to accomplish.

b.) The excitation is usually the longest part of the rite and may be produced with song, dance, chanting barbarous names, taking the astral shape of the proper god or sacred letter, or whatever.

c.) The identification is what happens if you do the definition and excitation properly. The text of the rite simply declares it, and your exalted mind is quite willing to agree both in word and spirit.

d.) The method the wizard uses to focus the power will be determined by his purpose. If he wishes knowledge related to the power, he will evoke its spirits and question them. If he wants to change the external world or to store the power for later, he will focus it into a talisman. If he wants to change himself, he will use it to consecrate a Host, then consume it.

To sum up rituals: they weren't Austin Spare's strong point, and if you think you'd do well at them, consult the writings of Aleister Crowley, one of the great ritual magicians of all time.

2.) Herbs, oils, and incense are related in that they all have characteristic odors, and so are useful for ceremony and astral travel. On a materialistic level their effect is simple conditioning. If a wizard burns a particular incense only when he is trying to feel holy, then its odor will encourage him to feel holy anytime he smells it. On a more esoteric plane, tradition has it that some of these agents are mildly psychotropic, serving to enhance specific aspects of human consciousness. Since these aspects are related to the various powers available, wizards through the ages have filled volumes attributing the available essences to the powers they have recognized, some with more logic than others. For attributions in general (from incenses and drugs to planets and metals), Crowley's 777 is unsurpassed—if only for Crowley's open minded attitude—though of course he attributes everything to the Tree of Life. Since the one who works our method here grows his own tree as he finds his powers, such guides can be useful to him as rough outlines only. You'll do best if you do your own research.

3.) The value of the various drugs available varies with the drug and the person taking it. Three types of drug are important in my view. Crowley was intrigued by two others. Mine are a.) alcohol, b.) hemp, and c.) psychedelics. Crowley's two big ones were heroin and cocaine. Spare just drank a bit; sex was his thing.

a.) Alcohol has been a staple at magical rites since the earliest times. It helps by lowering inhibitions so the wizard may encounter his powers uncritically, giving them free access to his ego when he calls them. It hurts if it makes you fall asleep, makes you fall down,

or if you're addicted to it. It's also bad if you have to piss in the middle of everything—literally—or else break the circle.

b.) Hemp is an intensifier. It makes astral visions more intense; it makes sensual impressions more intense; and it makes one's thought-stream more vivid and more eloquent. It fails when things go so fast that you lose track of them, or when the visions get so vivid that you wallow in them, or when the reefer's so good that you go up like a rocket and then crash. Conjuring is often an act of endurance, and if you can't wait to fall out, you won't be there when power comes knocking.

c.) Psychedelics remove the filters from inside your mind, letting everything in, letting your imagination generate—vividly—anything it wants. Hence they are grand for looking, potentially terrifying if you actually try to do anything more complicated than putting on a record or going for a walk. They multiply perception, but at a cost of concentration, for your attention span will become minute. Hence psychedelics are dangerous if what you see makes you want to do anything at all psychotic—that is, if you project your personal buggaboos onto the outside world, respond to them, and then are surrounded by confusion when people start wondering why you're acting so crazy. That is, unless they know about acid, in which case they'll likely point out which buggaboo is obsessing you, and you can start to thrash it out.

Psychedelics are thus the quickest means for confronting whatever dark demons might be hiding in your psyche, and they have a nasty habit of fetching up the Dweller on the Threshold¹ and dropping him in your lap. The Pranksters weren't just playing word games when they labeled tripping “the Acid Test.”

But even if you aren't neurotic, psychedelics are better for passive contemplation than sorcery. You can call up powers, but

1. The Dweller on the Threshold is a personification of all that is despicable within any given wizard's psyche, and he is awesome. He cannot be denied or bound, only defied. His threat is potential, a quick glimpse into your own personal can of worms, and he wins by making you decide to keep it shut. The way you win is by going ahead and opening it, then turning your worms into dragons one by one.

they may not be the ones you want, and they may not leave when you tell them. You can go onto the astral, but it may be hard to get all the way on, or stay all the way on, or get all the way back when you want to. It's as if the drug itself plops down in the middle of your unconscious, and if you try to make your spirits do tricks while it's there, they'll only stumble over it and make a mess.

Psychedelics also produce a prolonged wakefulness which persists long after the fun's over. And then you can count on paying for your psychic intensity for the next day or so, when you will find you have very little energy and perhaps a slight loss of subtle coordination. So it's best to just sleep a lot then, and lay around. If you take a trip on a Friday night, you should be back to 95% by Monday morning, but only if you space out your trips. If you trip every weekend, within a few months they'll be 25% fun, 75% crash, and you'll still be walking into doorposts and stabbing your lip with your fork four days later. It's not good to overdue.

Crowley's favorite drugs were heroin and cocaine. He felt cocaine was an excellent stimulant and heroin a fine aid to concentration. He also died addicted, but he was 72 then, and quite lucid. I will leave the reader to draw his own morals and only assert that everybody's body chemistry is different and none may say what is meant for or forbidden to any other. As the god Hadit puts it in *Liber AL vel Legis*:

I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight and bright glory, and stir the hearts of men with drunkenness. To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all. It is a lie, this folly against self. The exposure of innocence is a lie. Be strong, o man! Lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.

4.) Of all the sources of energy that are available to energize the human spirit, none is so obvious as the one we may find in the sexual act. A person may live the life of an utter drudge, so mired in

the mundane that it ultimately kills him, and yet this single act—performed with joy of lust or love—can lift him out of the commonplace and touch his soul with power, if only for a moment. The sex act works for true believers and non-believers, the saved and the damned, and so it has been condemned or hedged about with laws by dogmatic religions of all stripes. But sorcerers abhor dogma, and they have used sexual energy to boost their powers of mind ever since the beginning. Since they recognize the dangers of this power, they have long concealed it with secrets and symbols, but—as we said—there is no room for fanciful symbolism in *Stealing the Fire from Heaven*. So we've been laying it all right out, the techniques and dangers together. The results I leave you to discover for yourselves.

The best known technique of sex magic is the one Crowley taught in secret. It is heterosexual, and the idea is that the sex act—performed with magical competence—will produce a “magical child.” This is an astral being whose power is devoted to carrying out the purpose of the participants. It is empowered by the white heat of orgasm and embodied in the ‘elixir’ generated by intercourse. The participants must give this child a name in advance and also agree on its astral appearance, for it must fill their imaginations throughout the rite, until climax sets it in their mingled fluids. Any loss of concentration upon it or independent thinking during copulation can be deadly, for then their child will be a monster. The two participants must therefore agree on the symbolism they will use, making this formula much more relevant to traditional magic, where common imagery is easy to come by.

Though Spare never mentioned them in his published work, he did use two methods that rely on sexual energy for their accomplishment. Descriptions of these can be found in Kenneth Grant's *The Magical Revival* and also in his biography of Spare, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare* (Weiser, 1975). Spare referred to these sexual techniques as “the formula of the Earthenware Virgin” and “the Witches' Sabbath,” and we will take them in this order.

The formula of the Earthenware Virgin is, like Crowley's more conventional technique, a method for spawning an independent

entity whose will it is to carry out the wizard's intentions. It differs in that it is autoerotic, and hence does not require any shared symbolism.

The Earthenware Virgin itself is a clay vessel fabricated so that its interior dimensions precisely accommodate the volume of the sorcerer's erect penis,² with just enough space at the bottom for a piece of paper bearing the sigil of his desire. Placed at the bottom of the Virgin, the sorcerer charges this sigil during the act of orgasm. At this time he visualizes his desire, holding the image in his imagination for as long as he is able. Once the mental image begins to fade, he seals the urn and buries it. He performs the rite so this burial is at midnight, "the moon being quartered." When the moon passes full, the wizard digs up this clay womb, replenishes the sperm, and—"while repeating suitable incantations"—pours it out as a libation on the ground. Then he reburies the urn.

Spare cautions that though this technique never fails, it is dangerous, and so he leaves much to be guessed. He hints at the formula's essential effect when he writes that it is the source of the legend of the genii trapped in the brass bottle. From this one may suppose that the urn acts as a clay womb in which the wizard breeds a familiar spirit. Such help can be as risky as it is effective, however, for if the wizard is in any way unable to control himself, he will have an even harder time managing a semi-independent power such as this. He must always keep the initiative over it, never allow it any scope for independent action, and always maintain a strict separation between its form and his own. He must *never* invite it into himself.

Spare's Witches' Sabbath, on the other hand, is designed not to create spirits, but more as a sexual affirmation of the Neither-Neither principle. It is the production of free belief by sexual means. A group working set up to gut the participants' aesthetic sensibilities, the resulting free belief is focused into a sigil designating their collective wish. Conventional ideas of erotic attraction are

2. It may be that a female sorcerer could design a hollow ceramic implement which would induce orgasm and collect vaginal secretions, but I will leave the research here to those who are anatomically equipped to carry it out.

dismembered through the participation of sexually skilled, grotesquely ugly old women, who assume a dominant role in the rite. Grant quotes Spare as writing that their ugliness is essential to transmute “the sorcerer’s personal aesthetic culture, which is thereby destroyed. Perversion is used to overcome moral prejudice and conformity.” This destruction of the participants’ aesthetic sense, together with the hypnotic effect of the ritual, completely subdues their conscious minds, allowing an uninhibited flow of free belief to energize the sigil.

As the goddess Nuit announced in *Liber Legis*:

Since I am Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof, do ye also thus. Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt.

But whoso availeth in this, let him be the chief of all!

XX. The Magic Circle and Evocation

The reader with some previous magical experience may by this point be wondering whatever became of the magic circle. Most other systems of sorcery place great emphasis on working within a properly consecrated circle as a protection while conjuring, and here *Stealing the Fire* hasn't even mentioned it.

Well, perhaps not as such, but we have—this in the sixth chapter, when we told all about how you have to banish and how you have to do it before and after any magical working. The fact is that a properly performed banishing creates an astral circle, one that will serve you well in any but the most powerful operations. If you are working on the astral or using any of the non-traditional techniques we've given so far, a physical circle is unnecessary.

Physical circles are required, however, in two specific sorts of working: blood sacrifice and the evocation of a spirit to visible appearance. With blood sacrifice the vital energy of the victim is liable to attract entities from without. When you evoke a spirit to visible appearance, you fill it with so much power that if by chance it should touch you, your personal identity may be overwhelmed or (at the least) your nervous system blasted. But then this precaution is more relevant to traditional magic, since such evocation can be necessary to charge a talisman.

Even so, Spare is known to have done this sort of work at least once, this at the request of two dabblers who wanted to see an elemental. According to Kenneth Grant, Spare told them that such powers were deeply buried subconscious “automata,” better left where they are and only manipulated through sigils and sacred letters. But they insisted, so Spare acquiesced.

He began the work by drawing a sigil on a blank card and putting it against his forehead while he repeated a mantra. Within minutes a greenish mist began to enter the room, gathering itself in one spot and thickening until it was dense enough to see (as Grant described it) “two pinpoints of fire, glowing like eyes, blinking in an

idiot face.” At this point the two spectators panicked and insisted Spare banish it, which he did by reversing the spell. According to Grant, one of these dilettantes died within weeks, and the other had to be committed to an asylum. Spare felt that the elemental that had come was a cutoff aspect of the psyche of one of the victims. It had seen its chance to come forth and grab control, and had easily taken the unfortunate amateurs by the neck.

Spare, of course, was unaffected, for his wizard’s aura was all he needed. Through steady banishing and years of magical work, yours can be as strong. As you sow, so shall you reap!



XXa. Elementals and Power Spots

The basic assumption for the sorcerous approach to magick is that any aspect of your life or the world around you that you can define as distinct or separate will also have an ethereal aspect that you can define as a distinct or separate spirit. And once you define a spirit you can enter a relationship with it—conjuring it, naming it, and binding it with a ritual Charge so it obeys your will.

This applies to specific features of the external world as well as to aspects of our unconscious minds or independent spirits or demons on the astral plane. Each location, structure, or ecological or geological phenomenon will have a spirit of its own—known as an elemental or a *genius loci*—which the sorcerer may cause to assist him as its nature allows. Of course for the average spot on the surface of the earth, this will be in no special way at all. The location will be psychically dormant, with no knowledge and no power, one spot running into the next without any particular psychic distinction, so there will be no point in dealing with it magickally. On the other hand, there are significant locations scattered all around us that display their power to anyone who is looking for it. Rivers and ridgelines, hillocks and woodland glens, lakes and meadows and inland seas—all these can have a potential for providing knowledge and power that may be used to promote our purposes.

Of course recognizing a spot as worthwhile is one thing, meeting and naming and binding its elemental quite another. For a beginner to meet the spirit of a place requires that he or she undertake a full-scale astral projection, which is not all that difficult if the spot is somewhat isolated, especially at night. But with practice, and especially after you have become acquainted with your Holy Guardian Angel, an astral state of mind may be acquired through a simple meditation to enter into rapport with the location's mood—especially if you add a whiff of cannabis to make the power flows more clear. Once you enter this state of mind, ask your Angel the name of the spirit of the place and any details you need to invoke

it, then use that name as a chant or mantra to call it to appearance in your imagination. When the spirit stands before you in your mind's eye, do all you can to perceive its essence, then gather it together to bind with a ritual Charge. The control you gain over the elemental will surely be more limited than what you could expect from a spirit residing in your own unconscious, but at least it will be sufficient to enable you to work with its power without risk of obsession.

Once the spirit of a place has been properly bound, you may rely on it for support within the realm of its competence. From an ocean you might obtain the power to attain your true level, which is to say, to accomplish your destiny. From a river you might take implacable motion (especially if it's in flood), or the ability to perceive in at least a watery fashion over the extent of its watershed. An escarpment might provide you with the access it opens to the power at the center of the earth. An office tower might supply you with insight into the corporations that are its tenants, assist you in getting a job or an account with one of them, and help you deal with the challenges you meet while in service to it. Or you might use the spirit of a place to promote a mutually beneficial purpose. For instance, to cause your favorite musical group to play with greater skill and verve, you might call upon the *genius loci* of the arena they are playing in, and of the earth its foundations are sunk into. This will give you an inspiring musical experience and also help the arena to pay off its bonding.

Any place potent enough to have a presence worth meeting may well include a power spot, a place no more than a few meters square where power can be absorbed directly from the spiritual fabric of the planet. Often these will be conspicuous from their incongruity, as with a spring out of a high rock or a rock formation in the middle of a marsh. Others will compel attention from their charisma, for instance a rocky seat set in the top of a cliff, or from their simple beauty. But even the subtle ones are easy enough to find if you ask the elemental of the overall locale. You can treat the energy emanating from that spot as a spirit, asking your Angel to call it forth and tell you its name so you might bind it and use it as

you can. Depending on what sort of spot it is, you might be able to pull energy out of it for later use, or perhaps it will serve as an entryway into the bowels of the earth into which you may place talismans so they will better accomplish your purposes.

On the other hand, I should note that spots vary in their qualities from the entirely beneficial (whose power can be taken into your aura and stored directly) to the pernicious (which should be avoided entirely). Even if the obvious differences in charisma don't give clear warning, your Angel will readily provide it, if only you think to ask.



XXI. Problems and Some Solutions

With the Witches' Sabbath we have the last of the magical techniques in *Stealing the Fire from Heaven*. The competent technician should be able to either adopt them as is or else adapt them to his (or her) circumstances, and then use them to carry out his (or her) will. But what do we mean by competent?

We mean someone who has an awareness of the passions within him (and which may tend to dominate during moments of stress), control over his own thoughts, and the ability to hold to an oath—to set forth on a course of action and carry it through to a conclusion.

He (or she) also needs prudence.

To know self, control mind, and develop will there are exercises. To enforce prudence, there is the Law.

Knowing self is, of course, the hardest of these, but between astral projection, dream work, meditation, honesty, and psychotherapy (for especially hard (and rich) cases), you should be able to discover the source of whatever sore spots exist on your soul. Then it's just a case of digging out the rot over a period of years, using whatever procedures work for you, whether based on common sense or the methods of magic. Suffice it to say that sore spots are usually reflexes burned in from childhood. Whether fear, rage, guilt, or self-pity, we all seem to have at least one (I've been working on rage for years), and they can't be ignored. Carlos Castaneda calls them indulgences, and whether Juan Matus exists or not, his teachings in *Journey to Ixtlan* and *Tales of Power* are classic accounts on how to deal with indulgence. I recommend them highly.

Another worthwhile approach here is work upon your own dreams, one I am just beginning to take up and so will not try to explain. Suffice it to say that Ann Faraday's *The Dream Game* (Harper & Row, Perennial Library, 1976) is an accessible and non-dogmatic text, useful for sorcerers and laymen alike.

Controlling thought is easier than managing indulgence, simply because an indulgence helps us cope in its own sick way, and so

when we give it up we lose a crutch. (Anger is such fun!) But when we can control our thoughts we gain a power, and this without any loss of neurotic enjoyment. So there's no inhibition to conquer, only inertia. This inertia can be considerable, but the exercises are powerful if done correctly. The ones we offer are the ones Aleister Crowley derived from the Hindu art of yoga, and the following distillation is based on Part One of his *Book Four* (Weiser, 1980), which I also recommend.

Yoga means union, and as it is practiced in India, it means union with God. There are lots of different yogas. Some give union with God through knowledge, some through love and devotion, some through work. The one sorcerers are interested in—*raja yoga*—gives union with God through mental discipline. The idea is that if you can look deep enough into your Self, you will find God at the bottom, but there are so many distractions in-between that you usually can't see Him. The disciplines of *raja yoga* are designed to eliminate the distractions. The worlds of commerce and human society are distractions, so the yogi lives like a monk. The yogi's body is a distraction, so he imposes postures on it until it doesn't hurt anymore. The yogi's breathing disturbs his concentration, so he imposes a routine on it. The yogi's mind wanders, so he exercises it in staying still until it stays still. And so on until he finally does find the God at the bottom and attains *Samahdi*. Bliss.

But we wizards don't do it that way.

Why? Because it's boring, mostly, and any moron can think of better ways to spend his life than to sit absolutely still for six hours every day, and play priest for the other eighteen. Even so, the methods that the yogis have developed work well enough, and we can use them to train our minds for our wizard work, even if we don't try to find God with them. But though we don't do them quite so much as the yogis do, we still must actually do them, and this whether we really want to or not. A half hour a day (15 minutes morning and evening) is good to start with, working up to a daily hour or so. This time should be put in every day (except when actually ill), and you should continue the exercises for at least two years. This work

is the foundation of your pyramid. If you neglect it, your whole structure may fall even as the Eye of God is within your reach.

The eight limbs (separate disciplines) of raja yoga are: 1.) Yama, 2.) Niyama, 3.) Asana, 4.) Pranayama, 5.) Pratyahara, 6.) Dharana, 7.) Dhyana, and 8.) Samahdi. The first two are preparation, the next four are techniques, and the last two are results.

1.) Yama means control. It includes anything you may need to rearrange in your life so you can meditate properly, from turning off the radio to finding a less cynical girlfriend. It may include giving up cigarettes so you can breathe more fully or giving up certain foods so your digestion will give you some peace. In traditional Hindu practice Yama includes things like non-acceptance of gifts and celibacy, but that's just a crock for simple minds and has nothing to do with us sorcerers. What Yama gets down to is that the work comes first, and if for some reason it doesn't, you have failed Yama.

2.) The "Ni" in Niyama is a contrary, so if Yama is focusing yourself onto your work, Niyama is the push outward that you need to conquer the difficulty of yoga itself and also the barriers the world and your mind erect against your purpose. And there will be barriers. Though the initial experience at meditation will be euphoric, it will soon settle into a real drag. The only way to succeed against it is to continue until you do win through and the initial euphoria returns redoubled. Niyama is perseverance, acceptance, strength, and understanding—all the qualities that enable one to shrug off minor pain and so get on in the world with a minimum of fuss.

3.) Asana is the first real practice of yoga, and it is a training for the body so it will sit still and not bother you while you do your meditation and astral work. You do Asana by sitting in one position and not allowing yourself to move for the duration of your meditation. Once you master a posture, you will have a way to sit that will let you drop your awareness of your body at will. This ability is vital if you're to make any progress in wizardry at all.

To begin Asana, choose a posture. The actual position you take does not matter, so long as your back is straight and your head

erect, for you must be sure you can keep steady at it and also that you won't fall asleep. The Hindus have invented thousands of postures for Asana, but you can waste your life studying them, so most sorcerers don't. The lotus position is great if you have stretchable tendons; otherwise you can just sit in a chair.

Assuming you have decided on your posture (including the most pleasant way to arrange your hands, ankles, and feet), you are now ready to begin. To do this, sit in it for however long you have decided to sit in it, and do not move. Do not dig down in to scratch your groin. Do not flick the itch on your neck with your little finger. Do not shift your legs to ease a cramp, or toss your shoulder to rearrange a tendon. The only movements you should allow yourself are those necessary for extreme breathing and small shifts of the hand to write in your magical record and perhaps operate a stopwatch. Only by keeping your body absolutely still can you beat your nervous system into submission—at least for this one posture—thus allowing you to begin your serious efforts to control your mind.

The progress of the average student of Asana moves through three stages, which we will simply call the beginning, middle, and end.

The beginning of Asana is quite pleasant. You will notice immediately how sitting still makes you aware of the operations of your mind—how your body normally keeps you from realizing that your thoughts have much in common with a cage full of monkeys—and you will be anxious to begin training them. Your initial efforts at Asana will also have a calming effect, and it will be clear that one must actually be able to sit still before one can perform any mental exercises.

This euphoric stage may last for a few days, but not many.

The middle part of Asana is a realm where pain rules. The practice becomes tedious. You begin to notice that you are not really keeping to your chosen position—that you are allowing your head to sag, your thighs to shift, your feet to change position. So you will correct yourself, and you will succeed in your corrections, but you will also become more sensitive to the pain. You will itch, but if you

break discipline to scratch, you will instantly begin to itch in three other places. Your muscles will cramp. You will become so tight that it will take ten minutes after it is time to get up before you are actually able to do it, and this even though you have only been sitting in a chair. But you must not attempt to evade this pain, as that will only prolong it. You must simply do the exercises you have assigned yourself and persevere—until you come to the end.

And there is a definite end. There will come a time when the pain will vanish and you will be able to say you are successful. You will neither itch nor cramp. You will be able to rise from your meditation without worrying whether your limbs will support you. Your body will simply no longer bother you, and any time you sit in that posture, you will rise from it refreshed. You will now have a position in which to perform your meditation and your astral work.

4.) Pranayama is control of the breath, and it is intended to force one's breathing into a steady rhythm, a habit that does not disturb concentration. Also, if the breathing is purposefully deep, the meditator enjoys the benefits of hyperventilation, though he shouldn't do it to such an extreme that he passes out.

As for the specific count, for beginners the four-fold breath is recommended: four counts in, four counts hold, four counts out, four counts empty. Later on you might like to breath in a ratio of 1:4:2, in:hold:out. Remember, the longer you can hold your breath, the longer you will have to do your mental work without the distraction of breathing.

You may tend to sweat a lot during Pranayama, and you may find your body tends to go rigid, which will help you do your Asana. Neither is anything to worry about, but do try not to fall over.

Asana and Pranayama are thus the two mechanical limbs of raja yoga. When you can perform them properly, you'll be ready to attempt the next two limbs, the mental exercises of Pratyahara and Dharana. It should be stressed, however, that regularity in practice is the essential thing, whether you feel like meditating or not. If you have decided on two half-hours of Asana each day, then you must spend them sitting still, or trying to, no matter what. If you

say you'll do a half-hour, thirty fidgety minutes are better than 25 rock-solid ones, and not even travel or the funeral of a near relation should interfere.

5.) Pratyahara is meditation itself, introspection into why you think the way you do, respond to things the way you do, why your train of thought keeps to one track instead of another. You can meditate on people, situations, dreams, objects—restricting your thought to your subject until there is nothing left in the entire universe, and then expanding your perspective until you see the subject's relationship with everything else in the universe, and how they depend on one another for their existence. It is a way to find your place in the Cosmic All, thus gaining perspective on how best to meet the Whole of It.

6.) Dharana. But to make much headway in Pratyahara, you must have enough concentration to follow a thought down to whatever god or demon might lie at its roots. To obtain this concentration, we have Dharana, which is concentration pure and simple and also really hard work. It is of value not just with meditation, but helps one's powers of concentration and also aids astral work, for it gives one the ability to maintain one's presence of mind during a trip—to keep the astral landscape in focus and generally finish what's been started, close what's been opened, and leave nothing that needs doing undone. The practice of Dharana is the visualization of a single mental image. To begin, sit yourself in your Asana and perform Pranayama in such a way that your breath neither distracts you nor unduly excites you. Then visualize a simple geometric shape and *do not allow it to waver!* It could be a red square, a green cross, a blue bell—but once you have decided on its color, shape, size, and the type of background, hold it to that and permit neither changes nor additions. Do not allow the green cross's arms to shrink, or the red square to yellow into orange. Do not allow white flowers to bloom on the blue bell, or let its gray background molder into green. Hold your image steady in your mind, do not allow anything else in, and do not allow the image to change in any way.

In the beginning, if you're really well disciplined, you might be able to keep this up for about nine-tenths of a second. Then the

image will change in some way or another, you will force it back, and then you will be distracted by some alien thought and leave the image entirely, until you catch yourself and drag it back.

The most obvious source of distraction is sensations from your body, but then these will vanish once you have perfected your posture. Next will come sounds from the outside world, but with assiduous use of the hyperventilation principle, they sort of take their place in an overspreading carpet of noise, and may thus be ignored. After that come thoughts generated from memories of the recent past—what Reagan said on the tube, what you did in the garden today, what downtown looked like the last time you drove through. It is amazing how intricate these recollections can become, making it clear that our minds absorb far more information than we realize while we're absorbing it.

The sneakiest form of distraction is plain old daydreaming. You will be Pranayaming away in your Asana and you will decide to concentrate on an orange star. You will get it; its points will shift a bit and its color will turn greenish, but you will generally have it. You will have it so well that you will be able to keep it with only part of your mind while another part starts to think of something more interesting, like where you went last weekend with the lady whose pants you're trying to get into. That will take you to thoughts of what it will be like when you finally do, or your next step in trying, and before you know it your orange star will be forgotten.

The only way to fight this is to hold yourself strictly accountable for what you are doing. Aleister Crowley tells us that the wizard should do his Dharana with a pad, pencil, and stopwatch so he might know precisely how steady his mind is becoming. "One of the essential difficulties in practice is that it takes a great deal of skill and experience to become really alert to what is happening. You can go on daydreaming for quite long periods before realizing that your thoughts have wandered at all."

Crowley also stressed that one should be careful to avoid straining one's mind. "In my early days I was often satisfied with a

minute or two at a time; three or four such periods twice or three times a day.” If it starts to hurt, go back to Pratyahara—maybe try to figure out why those kids were mean to you in the second grade.

A higher source of distraction than mere daydreaming is when your effort at concentration interferes with the object. You may be distracted by thinking of how well you’re doing, or how much easier it would be to do it in northern Maine. This sort of break is not so bad, a slight variation in the one-pointedness you desire.

Crowley mentions two other sources of distraction—auditory hallucinations (a variety of psychic atmospheric) and also the desired result of the practice, Dhyana and Samahdi.

7. & 8.) Dhyana and Samahdi are the results of performing the previous six disciplines with such dedication that you don’t leave yourself time for anything else. It is not my suggestion that you should do this, only that you use the practices to learn your mind’s habit of thought and bring it under control of your will. Hence you may never experience Dhyana or Samadhi through yogic practices. Suffice it to say that Dhyana is catching sight of God, and Samahdi is union with It.

To end this chapter we have one more discipline of Crowley’s. It is a technique for developing will, a method even more mechanical than that of yoga. Crowley called it *Liber III vel Jugorum* and you can find it on page 427 of *Magick in Theory and Practice*. It consists of the student taking oaths forbidding the performance of arbitrary actions—for instance touching his face with his left hand for a week, saying the word “of” for the space of a month, thinking about spring during January and February, or whatever. Since it is virtually certain that he will violate his oath during the period it is in force (dozens of times, even), he must also swear to a punishment that will oblige him to mend his ways. The choice of punishment is arbitrary, but since it must be easy to repeat often (as often as three times in a minute if he has sworn not to say “and,” “uh,” or “I”), that pretty much narrows it down to physical pain. Crowley recommended the use of a straight razor on the forearm, but that’s overkill.¹ A pin concealed in a hem can be good to stick your leg

with, or if you'd rather not break your skin, put a thick rubber band around your wrist and give yourself a good snap whenever you do the forbidden thing.

It is important that we stress that the acts you forbid yourself must be arbitrary. If they had any moral or emotional value, for instance if you forbade yourself between-meal snacks or thinking about your ex-husband, you would be corrupting your will with your desire and also risking the mental sickness that can come when dark nasties are repressed. It is better to strengthen your will first on denials that are entirely innocuous. Then when it is fit, you may use it to evoke your dark nasties so they appear in all their malignant gloom, determine their names and letters, and then bind them to your purpose.



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1. It's also an example of Crowley's sense of humor and may have been intended as a blind, an absurdity meant to scare away those aspirants not gifted with common sense.

XXII. The Law

Law is humanity's great bulwark against chaos. Whether tribal, common, statutory or religious, law moderates conduct and preserves order, damping down the mayhem and keeping people off each other's toes. Depending on how well the law is suited to the people it regulates, it is successful in this effort. When a culture is secure, its laws are a mere embroidery on a solid social fabric. When a culture is in the throes of change, its laws become by turn faulty, futile, fatuous, and tyrannical. Eventually each man and woman—from lowest to highest—in some sense becomes a criminal, until authority collapses and a new order has a chance to arise.

There was a time not too long ago when law wasn't so dubious as it is now. Law was the way to maintain the status quo—the state in which property and class were the mark of rank, and rank was something to be perpetuated within a family through the generations. The laws that ordered this establishment were invariably handed down by wise old men: Moses, Mohammed, and Albertus Magnus; Hammarabi, Caesar, and Napoleon Bonaparte; the Founding Fathers. In one-way or another they all established or maintained a social order. People knew their place, knew when they were out of place, and knew that everyone else would know it too. And so it was for 5000 years.

But no longer. Economically, the technological revolution has blasted itself into space and achieved a stable orbit. Politically, the old empires are just stamps in albums and coins in desk drawers, and even the superpowers seem unable to keep their spheres of influence intact. In religion, all is on the brink. If you are a Christian, we are entering the Last Days. If you are a Marxist, the masses worldwide are rising up to throw off their chains. If you are a Hindu, it's the end of the Kali Yuga. If you're an orthodox Jew, you may be expecting the Messiah soon, and if an astrologer, the Aquarian Age is just around the corner. And if you're a wizard, you may be thinking it's the advent of the aeon of Horus.

I know I am.

So however you look at it, it's obvious that the old rules don't work that well anymore. Nor do they have much relevance to how we may most prudently live our lives as sorcerers. The time of patriarchy, of wise old men telling us what to do, is over. Things just happen too fast now for them to keep up, and if we want prudent wisdom, we'll have to find it for ourselves. To this end we offer Aleister Crowley's apocalyptic vision, which isn't really apocalyptic at all, in that it only announces a change of phase, not an end of all things. The new phase requires a new law, which is what Crowley offers, and as significant a sorcerer as he was, it behooves us at least to consider it.

The advent of the aeon of Horus¹ was first announced in April of 1904. The announcement was made by Aiwass, a discarnate, non-material intelligence that manifested through voice to Crowley, who was visiting Cairo with his pregnant wife, Rose. This announcement was not triggered by anything Crowley did. Rather, Rose insisted that Horus² had a message for him, told him he must invoke Him to receive it, and gave him enough symbolic information³ to convince him that some higher power was working through her. So he carried out her ritual instructions and as a result received the dictation of *Liber AL vel Legis*, the Book of the Law.

Liber Legis consists of three chapters, one each for the three gods who rule this new aeon: Nuit, infinite space; Hadit, the point of view; and Heru-Ra-Ha, consciousness, the orgasm resulting from the union of Nuit and Hadit. Heru is a paired deity, with active and passive aspects. The active one—will or intention—is called Ra-Hoor-Khuit, who for the Egyptians was a personification of the

1. Displacing that of Osiris—patriarchy—which had held sway for the preceding 2000 years. Before it came the aeon of Isis—tribalism—which began sometime back in our primate prehistory.

2. The hawk-headed Egyptian god.

3. Of which he knew her to know nothing.

sun in its greatest heat. The passive one—perception—is Hoor-paar-kraat, the Babe in the Egg, whom the Romans called Harpocrates, the god of Silence. Naturally Ra-Hoor takes the lead in dictating Heru's chapter, though references to Hoor-paar-kraat can be found throughout the book.

But it is not our purpose here to delve into the deep inner symbolism of *Liber Legis*. All we will do is offer its more fundamental precepts and show how they serve as fit guides for the sorcerer as he makes his fall through Infinite Space.

- 1.) "Every man and every woman is a star."

The model for human relations in the new aeon is that of stars in a galaxy. Each has its own course and proper motion; there are no boss stars or starry institutions—no governments of the stars, by the stars, and for the stars—to tell the individual orbs how to move. What we human stars must do is gain the skill to perceive our human environments with the same dispassionate precision that stars use to respond to their neighbors' gravity, and then apply it to guide our progress through our human space.

- 2.) "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

The law then for each of us is to find our proper motions and follow them. By adhering to our respective orbits, what Crowley called our True Wills, we will be in synch with the movement of Infinity, and all things—even the wind and the trees—will work to assist us.

- 3.) "The word of Sin is Restriction...."

"Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect. The Perfect and the Perfect are one Perfect and not two; nay, are none!"

We have no right but to be ourselves, and that to the best of our ability. We have no right to dither away our power in alcohol, TV sports, or dead-end jobs. We have no right to waste our souls and the economy in a mindless pursuit of wealth for its own sake (as opposed to wealth as a reward of a productive life). We have no right to expect anyone else to conform to our idea of what they should or should not do with their lives. But once we find our wills and follow them, we need fear no interference. If we are opposed by circumstances, we have the sure knowledge that the momentum of the universe is with us, and we need only persevere to win through. If we are opposed by individuals, people well aware of their meddling ways, then *Liber Legis* sanctions whatever means might be necessary to remove their interference. As Ra-Hoor put it in his Chapter Three:

- 4.) “Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth. Nu is your refuge as Hadit your light; and I am the strength, force, vigour, of your arms.”

When we face direct opposition and are sure of our ground and our right to be on it, we may let the power of Ra-Hoor-Khuit blast out against it and disregard the discomfort of those it strikes. But it must be a direct opposition. If it is your will to make mousetraps, and someone else makes a better one, to do your will you must transcend yourself and your competitors to reach new heights of mousetrap design. But you may not conspire to restrain trade or sabotage your competitors’ factories. This would be Restriction, the word of Sin. In the same way, if you want a woman (or a man), you may not harass or conjure her into submission. So you must be infinitely sensitive to what your true course involves, for you have no right but to do your will.

But first you must find out what it is.

The first thing to consider is that this must be an individual effort. There is no one who can know you better than you do, and

even if someone (say, your mother) seems now to have a better insight into your character⁴ than you do, that will change as soon as you begin to use the techniques we give here in *Stealing the Fire from Heaven*. The second thing is that you can know yourself precisely only after you have obtained the Knowledge and Conversation of your Holy Guardian Angel. Your Angel is the link from your mind to the Mind of God, and only when you are in communion with her (or him) will you know precisely what you must do to maintain your balance with the Cosmic All (or whatever else you may wish to call it).

The third point is that unless you have some inkling beforehand as to what your True Will might be, you will never come close to meeting your Angel, let alone striking up a conversation. So it is necessary to approximate at first, to find the wide trough that narrows into the groove that becomes so deep you couldn't get out of it if you wanted to, though you won't want to because "pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."

And how do you start down this trough?

By being yourself, mostly, and by discarding all those aspects of your life that are pleasant enough, but which aren't you, really. You must drop your cynicism, your fear, your sloth. You must shrug off the mockery of ignorant peers. You must disregard the material rewards you suppose lie at the end of the various alternate paths you may choose from. They may or may not be there, you see, and even if they are, what profit is it to a man to gain the whole world, if he loses his soul?

Once you have tossed out what isn't your will, then, how do you find out what is? By doing what challenges you, by finding work that is fun for you and then doing it. By cultivating *enthusiasm*—which, incidentally, is a word whose Greek root means to be inspired

4. Actually, she will probably have a better insight into your character flaws (demons) than the essential you, and as you begin to correct these flaws and come into your power, she may well remark that she doesn't *know* you anymore. This development is to be encouraged.

or possessed by a god. According to *Liber Legis*, we are gods, and when we do our wills we behave as such, and earn the right to claim divine prerogatives. As Hadit tells us:

- 5.) “Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.”

And also, from the first chapter, that of the goddess Nuit:

- 6.) “Love is the law, love under will.”

We must embrace everything we encounter as we do our wills, making no difference between any one thing and any other thing, and if these encounters bring us human love, we may accept it without hesitation.⁵ But we may not allow the integrity of our wills to be poisoned by sentiment. To give up what you are to gratify another is not only to rob yourself of spirit, but to burden that other with responsibility for your emotional support. Conversely, to shrink from aspects of the body of Nuit⁶ that you meet in your path—whether from hate, prudery, fear, or disgust—is a gross weakness. Whatever you meet you must be prepared to embrace, if that be your will. If it is not your will you must leave it alone, no matter how superficially attractive it may be. If you cannot do this, if your sight is clouded by lust for one thing and aversion toward another, you will be pulled off your path by your passion. To flow freely through Nuit you must be able to tolerate whatever bits of her manifestation you might meet, and since all manifestation is part of her exquisite body, you must become entirely dispassionate.

5. This does not preclude fidelity to one person. Vast numbers of star systems in our galaxy are multiple, two or more stars rotating around their common centers of gravity as they fall together around the galactic hub. There’s no reason the same can’t apply to human couples (or triads or quadrinaries), even through multiple incarnations.

6. That is, anything at all—people, animals, situations, anything.

The trouble is, there are many in this world who take their passions and prejudices very seriously, so seriously that they feel privileged to determine what's right for other people and then force them to conform to their conclusions. From parents who want their children to marry into society to politicians who prefer all their citizens to be hard-working heterosexuals who follow the Marxist-Leninist line, we who seek our true paths have many who would restrict us. And while it's practically impossible to ignore their blundering evil, it's harder still to oppose it. If you doubt this, try selling the *New York Times* in Moscow, or lighting up a joint as you wait for a traffic cop to let you cross the street. The forces of restriction are fighting to maintain their version of order, and their efforts are supported by the strength of millions of wills. It is true that much of this strength is exerted out of habit and not conviction, but however fitfully it may be applied, it is still far too potent for us to confront directly. Even so, these forces are powers of patriarchy and as such go against the current of the new aeon, against the whole motion of cosmic power, which will break them in pieces and sweep them away.

So what *Liber Legis* offers is anarchy. Like all anarchy, it presumes that human nature is ultimately benevolent, though it admits that in its present state it is thoroughly corrupt. In order to cleanse it, sorcery offers disciplines like those we've given in *Stealing the Fire from Heaven*. Their application will take time, though, so we don't propose any of the traditional anarchist options—throwing bombs and such like. Instead we suggest that each person begin to search for his own True Will and then, as he begins to find it, do his best to do it without regard for civil law or social convention. To make an active opposition would be needlessly dangerous; neither Nuit nor Hadit nor Ra-Hoor-Khuit have any good words to say for martyrdom.

Another reason not to violently oppose the old order is that there are risks in victory as well as defeat. The old forms protect us even as they restrict and threaten. Take, as an example, our modern economic establishment. For the most part it discourages the

acquisition of power by individuals, simply because its mechanisms require willing cogs and not wizards, slaves rather than hunters after power. So we may be tempted to overthrow this establishment in hopes of constructing something more in tune with the new time. This is a fine motivation, but the results of success would be intolerable. Not only does our existing economy feed, clothe, and shelter the hundreds of millions of people who would be dead without it, but we depend upon it to fend off foreign tyrants whose allegiance to the idol THE STATE holds all individual liberty in contempt. Nor, in the final analysis, do aeons change in such catastrophic ways. From the second chapter of the book, that of Hadit:

- 7.) “Yea! Deem not of change: ye shall be as ye are, & not other. Therefore the kings of the earth shall be Kings forever: the slaves shall serve. There is none that shall be cast down or lifted up: all is ever as it was. Yet there are masked ones my servants: it may be that yonder beggar is a King. A King may choose his garment as he will: there is no certain test: but a beggar cannot hide his poverty.”

So the captains of industry have no worries on Hadit’s account. The change in aeons has not given us an intrinsically better breed of human. It has merely changed the rules by which humans may better themselves. When a slave refuses to serve, that’s when he starts to become a King. But Kings have to win their thrones, and that can take years. What the new law does is remove divine support from patriarchal restraints and transfer that support to the individual’s search for his own identity. His only barrier now is his own conception of what he is, and the habits of life that maintain it.

So it is clear that our prescription for social change is a personal one, making the aeon’s presence extremely subjective, existing as reality only for those who have accepted it. The others remain slaves, bound by whatever remnants of patriarchy still hold them in thrall.

The responsibility for beginning the new time lies with each of us alone.

What we offer, then, is a natural selection. Magick, in Crowley's definition, is the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will. Hence everyone is a magician; it's just that some have more skill at it than others. This skill can be learned, and *Stealing the Fire from Heaven* is one of many texts available that offer instruction. The number of people who wish to gain such expertise has multiplied in recent years, an obvious sign of the advent of the new aeon. We can expect this number to continue to grow and as it does these competent causers of change, or at least the effects they produce, should become quite noticeable. Eventually they should be able to evolve whatever institutions the new time requires—institutions I will not be so presumptuous as to attempt to describe. Let us just say that if we have the skill, there will come a time when those who follow their own balanced paths will be a majority on the planet. When that happens—no matter what shape human culture has assumed—the power at the root of us all should be gratified, glad that it went to all that bother to begin with.

XXIII. The Bornless Ritual

Throughout this essay the magic we have offered has been extremely *individual*, with only laws of aeon and psyche to guide each wizard's personal approach. So it may seem strange for me to write of such a well-worn ritual as the Bornless—all the more so since it is at least 2000 years old and was dearly beloved by Mathers, Crowley, and all their Rosicrucian ilk. I do so because it works. The Bornless Ritual works both because its structure is beautifully attuned to producing the needed psychic effect and also because it is as old as it is. Its age gives it a certain venerability and also assures us that we need not take the Rosicrucians' treatment of it as dogma. You can be sure that the ancient Alexandrian who wrote it, or copied it from an even earlier text, knew nothing of Christian Rosenkreutz—or even Qabalah, in that it hadn't been invented yet. So just as the Golden Dawn-type people adapted the Bornless Ritual to their purposes, we can make it mesh with ours, since it gives us the one thing that the person who treads this path needs: a way to keep his spirits obedient and in their place.

Though the origins of the Bornless Ritual stretch back to Hellenistic Egypt, the text was not known among European occultists until 1852, when Charles Wycliff Goodwin published a translation of it in his *Fragment of a Graeco-Egyptian Work upon Magic*. Some forty years later the rite was partially reprinted by E. A. Wallis Budge in his *Egyptian Magic*, and in this form it attracted the attention of the members of the Golden Dawn. Aleister Crowley adapted it for use as a preliminary invocation for his *Lesser Key of Solomon: Goetia*,¹ and in so doing transformed a rather stodgy piece of scholarship into a spell that reeks of power.

As Crowley went on in his magical career he found this "Preliminary Invocation of the *Goetia*" to be of great practical effect, especially for the purpose of invoking one's Holy Guardian Angel. As he acquired more experience with it, Crowley further adapted

1. Which he had paid MacGregor Mathers to translate for him.

the ritual by giving its long strings of untranslatable “barbarous names of evocation” Qabalistic attributions, and he also wrote a line-by-line comment on the various states of mind that should take hold as one moves through its half-dozen phases. He published all this under the title *Liber Samekh*, which is Appendix IV of *Magick in Theory and Practice*.

By this point some of you may be asking, “Who needs it?” After all, any wizard who uses Spare’s method will be able to make contact with his Angel through the use of sigils, automatic drawing, and sacred letters, so why bother with the Bornless? Two reasons: 1.) it provides a more intense union with one’s Angel than may otherwise be possible, and 2.) it serves as a tool for calling up one’s psychic powers for inspection and subjecting them to the discipline of one’s will. It is this second purpose that is most relevant to Spare’s technique. While a Qabalistic magician begins his work with his spiritual chain-of-command all in good order—gods ruling archangels, archangels over angels, and so on down to intelligences and spirits—and needs only to introduce himself and take his proper place in it, the one who works this magic must organize his personal chaos single-handedly, and needs every tool he can get. So I give the Bornless Ritual as it appears in *Liber Samekh*. The rite itself is indented; my comment is not. The text begins with the oath:

Thee I invoke, the Bornless One.
Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens.
Thee, that didst create the Night and the Day.
Thee, that didst create the darkness and the Light.
Thou art ASAR UN-NEFER (“Myself made Perfect”):
Whom no man hath seen at any time.
Thou art IA-BESZ (“The Truth in Matter”).
Thou art IA-APOPHRASZ (“The Truth in Motion”).
Thou hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust.
Thou didst make the Female and the Male.
Thou didst produce the Seeds and the Fruit.
Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate
one another.

I am ANKH-F-N-KHONSU thy Prophet, unto Whom
Thou didst commit Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies
of KHEM.

Thou didst produce the moist and the dry, and that which
nourisheth all created Life.

Hear Thou Me, for I am the Angel of PTAH-APO-
PHASZ-RA: this is thy true name, handed down to
the Prophets of KHEM.

The oath in a ritual defines the power to be invoked, identifies the sorcerer, and asserts his right to invoke it. By applying the epithet “The Bornless One” to his Angel, Crowley identifies it² with the Highest—whether you call this God, Ain Soph, Kia, or Tao. With the next three lines the Adept declares that his Angel created the Universe to serve its Self-Realization, and in the fifth he defines it as himself-made-perfect. But since this is only a title for the Angel, Crowley advises that as soon as the Adept learns his Angel’s true name, he should substitute it here in the place of ASAR UN-NEFER.

The same thinking applies to the words ANKH-F-N-KHONSU and KHEM. In the original Goodwin translation “Moses” is given as the name of the magician and “Israel” as the source of the mysteries. Crowley substitutes ANKH-F-N-KHONSU as a name for himself and KHEM as the ancient name of Egypt, reflecting the Egyptian background of *Liber Legis*. I personally use one of my own magical names instead of “Moses” and “Kia” in place of “Israel”, thus reflecting my bias toward Spare.

PTAH-APO-PHRASZ-RA is an elaboration of ASAR UN-NEFER and may be treated accordingly by the Adept who possesses a well-stocked arsenal of sacred letters.

The next four sections each begin with an initial injunction followed by a list of barbarous names. These are meant to enflame the magician’s mind with power, and after each set comes a “Charge”

2. Crowley did not subscribe to my anima/animus attribution, and for him the Angel is male. So contrasexuality is just my own experience, and you should research it yourself to find your own truth.

to that power, the wizard's own command to it. For the record I shall give it all as Crowley does, though without his interpretation of the names. As you skim over it, try to keep in mind that these four sections are the ones most open to personal adaptation. Crowley attributes them to the Four Elements—Air, Fire, Water, and Earth respectively—and interprets the barbarous names accordingly. For myself, I discarded the barbarous names entirely and substituted the names of my sacred letters—these sorted into four categories. But more on that later.

Crowley begins with Air:

Hear Me:—

AR, ThIAF,³ RhEIBET, A-ThELE-BER-SET, A,
BELAThA, ABEU, EBEU, PhI-ThETA-SUE, IB,
ThIAF

Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

And then goes to Fire:

I invoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God: Who dwellest in the Void Place of the Spirit:—

AR-O-GO-GO-RU-ABRO, SOTOU, MUDORIO,
PhALARThAO, OOO, AEPE.

The Bornless One.

Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

3. Crowley tells us “the letter F is used to represent the Hebrew Vau and the Greek Digamma; its sound lies between the English long O and long OO....”

Then Water:

Hear Me:—

RU-ABRA-IAF, MRIODOM, BABALON-BAL-
BIN-ABAFT, ASAL-ONAI, APHEN-IAF, I,
PHOTETH, ABRASAX, AE00U, ISChURE.

Mighty and Bornless One!

Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

And finally Earth:

I invoke Thee:

MA, BARRAIO, IOEL, KOTH A, AThOR-e-BAL-O,
ABRAFT.

Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

As should be obvious to anyone who can count, the most conspicuous feature in all this is the Charge: “Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that... every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.” And though it may be tedious to read four times over, it does contain power, especially when you’re on the astral (where this ritual must be performed) and imposing it upon whatever spirits the barbarous names have brought forth. If you can hold your will to the Charge, vibrating each word with full concentration and intent, then the spirits there will be bound by it, made subject to your wishes within the limits of your will.

It might be helpful if I offered some of what Crowley wrote

on how to bring these spirits into a position where the Charge can affect them directly. Crowley advises that the Adept assign his will a phallic shape and then thrust it out beyond his astral circle, shining with “the Light proper to the Element invoked.” As he utters each word, the sound should run along the shaft so it swells into the aether and acquires added “authority.” “Moreover, let the Adept fling forth his whole consciousness thither. Then at the final Word, let him bring rushing back his will within himself, steadily streaming, and let him offer himself to its point, as Artemis to PAN, that this perfectly pure concentration of the Element purge him thoroughly, and possess him with its passion.” Thus at one with the Element, the Adept pronounces the Charge, claiming dominion over it and all the freedom and responsibility that goes with it.

But then we aren’t working in terms of the four Elements here, or at least I don’t. Personally I find Fire, Water, Air, and Earth to be as arbitrary as the Tree of Life, and they have little to do with my alphabet of desire.

Even so, I found the division into four helpful. But instead of the four Elements, I sorted my sacred letters into four general categories: 1.) structures in my unconscious, 2.) passive powers, 3.) active powers, and 4.) aspects of the external world. At each of the four sections in the rite I called up one of these groups—vibrating the names and visualizing the letters—and once I felt the power’s presence I used another letter to gather them in for the Charge.⁴ Thus I bound my diverse aspects—positive powers and demons alike—under the single command of my will, putting myself in hand so I might be worthy to invoke the blessed singularity of my Angel.

The invocation of the Angel itself occupies the remainder of the rite. It begins with another list of names.

Hear Me:—

AFT, ABAFT, BAS-AUGMN, ISAK, SA-BA-FT.

4. Though I didn’t do it quite the way Crowley did.

Crowley tells us that the magician should recite these names in

a manner of adoration, not command. He extends his will upward, but with the last word he does not draw it back. Instead he imagines that “the Head of his Will, where his consciousness is fixed, opens its fissure (the Brahmarandra Cakra, at the junction of the cranial sutures) and exudes a drop of clear crystalline dew, and that this pearl is his Soul, a virgin offering to his Angel, pressed forth from his being by the intensity of his Aspiration.”

For the possessor of an alphabet of desire, the problem here is composing a sequence to replace the barbarous names. Perhaps he would do best if he simply asked his Angel (in an interview initiated through a means like the one we offer in Chapter XV) to describe (in terms of sacred letters) Her (His) conception of the connection between Angel and Man. Then the sorcerer can work the names of the letters into a mantric chant which he can place in this section to repeat as he strives upward, his astral form in the shape of his Angel’s sacred letter. He should keep striving until he begins to feel his Angel’s presence. He should then solidify this perception by reciting the next section of the rite:

This is the Lord of the Gods:

This is the Lord of the Universe:

This is He⁵ whom the Winds fear.

This is He, Who having made Voice by his commandment
is Lord of all Things; King, Ruler, and Helper.

Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that
every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon
the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the
Water: of Whirling Air and of rushing Fire: and every
Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

5. Again, Crowley did not subscribe to the contrasexual theory. And sometimes it seems to me that at the deepest levels the Angel may be sexless. To determine the facts, dig down to the bottom of your own and see.

The “Gods” are the spirits that compose the Adept’s psyche.

The “Universe” is every ‘external’ phenomenon that might impose itself upon his circumstances. The “Winds” are his random thoughts, the current ‘I’ that keeps him locked up in his separate existence. The “Voice” is the medium of words of power—the sacred letters—which the Angel uses to manipulate the various mechanisms of manifestation, and which the Adept may use to work his will on his psyche and, through it, the world.

The Charge is pronounced in a tone of supplication, not command, and the Adept’s voice should be a human one, not a magical vibration.

If the rite has been properly performed, the Adept should now be in the presence of his Angel (especially if he’s already made Her acquaintance through the means of sigils and sacred letters and so already knows Her name), and the energy of this presence should be immense. To heighten the intensity, Crowley suggests that the Adept should resist his Angel’s approaches down to his last ounce of strength, closing himself within his inmost sanctum of personality so his Angel must blast it apart to reach him, rolling over his ego with all its power. As he finds himself thus overwhelmed, he should begin to pronounce the last set of barbarous names, which Crowley gives thusly:

Hear Me:—

IEOU, PUR, IOU, IAFTh, IAEO, IOOU, ABRASAX,
SABRIAM, OO, FF, AD-ON-A-I, DE, EDU,
ANGELOS TON THEON, ANLALA, LAI, GAIA,
AEPE, DIATHARNA THORON.

Crowley interprets these to be a celebration of the unity of Man with Angel, and if you use sacred letters, they should mean much the same thing. Again, you should repeat them as a mantra that leaves no room for anything but the Holy Intercourse.

When union is complete, the Adept will have the perspective of his Angel, and hence will be able to speak from its point of view. The rite continues:

I am He! the Bornless Spirit! having sight in the feet:

Strong, and the Immortal Fire!

I am He! the Truth!

I am He! Who hate that evil should be wrought in the world!

I am He, that lighteneth and thundereth!

I am He, from whom is the shower of Life on Earth!

I am He, whose mouth ever flameth!

I am He, the Begetter and Manifester unto the Light!

I am He, the Grace of the Worlds!

“The Heart Girt with a Serpent” is my name.

The Adept affirms his intrinsic immortality, his freedom, and his power. He affirms that as master of his psyche he is master of his perception, and so may see truth. He affirms that it is his duty to redeem the world, through whatever powers his will might allow. He affirms his unity with the source of all creation, and hence all creativity and beauty. From this position he is able to pronounce to all his spirits the closing Charge:

Come thou forth, and follow Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me!

IAF : SABAF

Such are the Words!

Thus we have the text of the Bornless Ritual, and an account of the effects this text should produce in the mind of the Adept as he makes his way through it. But ritual texts do not stand by themselves; if they did, anyone who could read aloud would be omnipotent. He who recites the text must be using it not as a final end, but as a prop to induce the mental states that bring about the actual magic.

So the speaker of the spell must be competent. He must

be, as Crowley entitles him, an Adept. Any beginning sorcerer may design a sigil and—after a year or three of yoga and such—start doing astral travel and evolving his alphabet of desire. But it is only after he becomes competent in all these that he should attempt a ritual like the Bornless.

When the Adept feels he is ready, he should begin an intense study of the ritual, reading Crowley's treatment of it in *Magick* and even digging for Goodwin's version, if he be of a scholarly persuasion. Once he is acquainted with what other people have done with it, he should adapt the ritual to his own situation, making all its parts relevant to his inner reality, even as he is careful to maintain its general effect. He should memorize this personalized text, branding each phrase and word of power onto his recollection, for the ritual must be done on the astral plane, a place where hard copy can't follow.

With the text firm in his mind and his astral feet well-shod, the Adept is ready to commence. Immediately before beginning he should wash, don any vestments or ornaments (robes, rings, crowns, etc.) that have power for him, anoint himself with oil and ignite the incense.⁶ If he is experienced in their use, he may want to fortify his mood with wine and strange drugs. Then he should banish, enter the astral, and begin the invocation. When he has finished by speaking "Such are the Words," he will license any spirits present to depart, banish, return to his waiting body, and banish again. Then he should write everything that happened into his record.

6. The Great Mage Abramelin gives formulas for the oil and incense, and the two scents together produce an odor so compelling that it constitutes an excellent argument for the authenticity of his book. For the oil, combine four parts oil of cinnamon, two parts oil of myrrh, one part oil of galangal, and three and one half parts olive oil. For the incense, grind together four parts frankincense, two parts storax, and one part sawdust from lign aloes, rose, cedar, or some other odiferous wood. Heat this mix on a hot metal plate (over a candle or charcoal), in this way boiling off the oils without fouling your temple with the fumes produced when resins are carbonized (for instance, if you put the incense directly onto a charcoal).

Of course our Adept might not be entirely successful on his

first attempt, and even if he is, his powers will need a long-term instruction. And as he imposes this discipline, he may discover that he has demons within him that he was unaware of. Then he will need to ask his Angel for their names and letters so they might be bound, and also for the names and letters of powers that might help him counteract their influence. In short, one must do a series of rites. Crowley recommended 560 repetitions stretching over ten moons time. I got good results with about one tenth that effort, in about half the time. But then I knew my Angel's name when I started, a tremendous advantage.

But I still had problems whipping all my spirits into line, even after I had their names and letters. They were just too unruly, too well-entrenched, too powerful. This lack of discipline was most obvious when I tried to impose the Charge on them. The "Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me..." slipped easily through my lips, but I couldn't keep my mind on it, so my will couldn't be doing very much binding. The powers were just too distracting. So being under forty and in good physical shape, I decided to risk preceding my Bornlesses with Death Postures. This worked wonderfully well, stripping my demons of their importance and forcing them to lie still under the Charge. On the other hand, I found that using it put a nasty irregularity into my heartbeat. No matter when I did the Posture, when I lay down to sleep that night my heart would start kicking like a nervous colt. Everything would be quiet, I'd hardly notice my pulse, and then wumpity... wumpity... WHAM-WHAM-WHAM wumpitywumpitywumpity...WHAM-WHAM-WHAM and so on until I hyperventilated a bit and things calmed down. So I quit doing Death Postures after the ninth one, and **within** a week my heart was back to normal.

But even a mere nine Death Postures were enough to give the Charge a chance to take effect, and the demons that had held still because of the Posture stayed still even without it. I did three or four more Bornlesses, then dropped it because it was becoming old hat.

It's okay to drop a practice because you've done it and now it's

boring. It's when it's hard, or scary, or boring because you can't do it that you have to force yourself to press on. It's either press on or go back, and if you go back too far you can be caught in the most tedious trap of all.



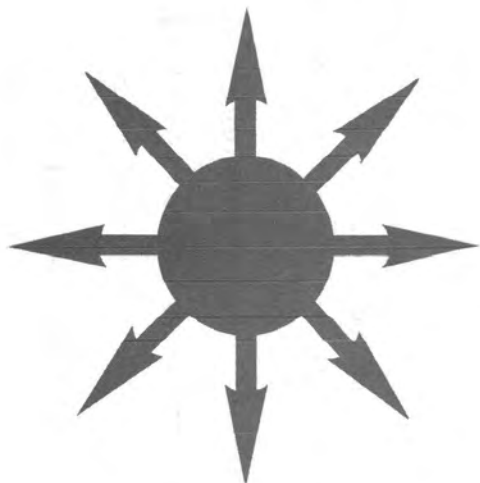
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About the Author

Stephen Mace was introduced to the study of sorcery in 1970, when a Tarot reading predicted an imminent disaster in his life. Three days later the State Police raided his apartment, confiscated his stock and trade, bound him with handcuffs, and locked him in their tomb/womb for six weeks. In the 35 years since he has dedicated himself to the discovery of the fundamental dynamics of the art, the better to empower individuals to defy the oppression of the State Apparatus. To this end he has written several books including *Stealing the Fire from Heaven*, *Sorcery as Virtual Mechanics*, *Taking Power* and *Shaping Formless Fire*.

notes

notes



Stealing the Fire from Heaven

A TECHNIQUE FOR CREATING INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS OF SORCERY

This essay offers a technique that individuals can use to create their own systems of sorcery, systems precisely tailored to fit their own unconscious minds. By following its instructions, the reader can cause his or her subliminal self to design its own symbols to represent the powers that lie within it. The result will be what is essentially a personal language of power, one that has meaning only for his or her self, but full of potency because it is his or her own soul's way of expressing itself.

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"Stephen Mace begins with the ideas of Crowley and Spare and takes them several steps further in a way few others have. His writing is, by turns, engaging, erudite and very down-to-earth. *Stealing the Fire from Heaven* is a must-have for any modern occult practitioner."

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- George Holochwost, Sectionhead of the Illuminates of Thanateros America.

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