

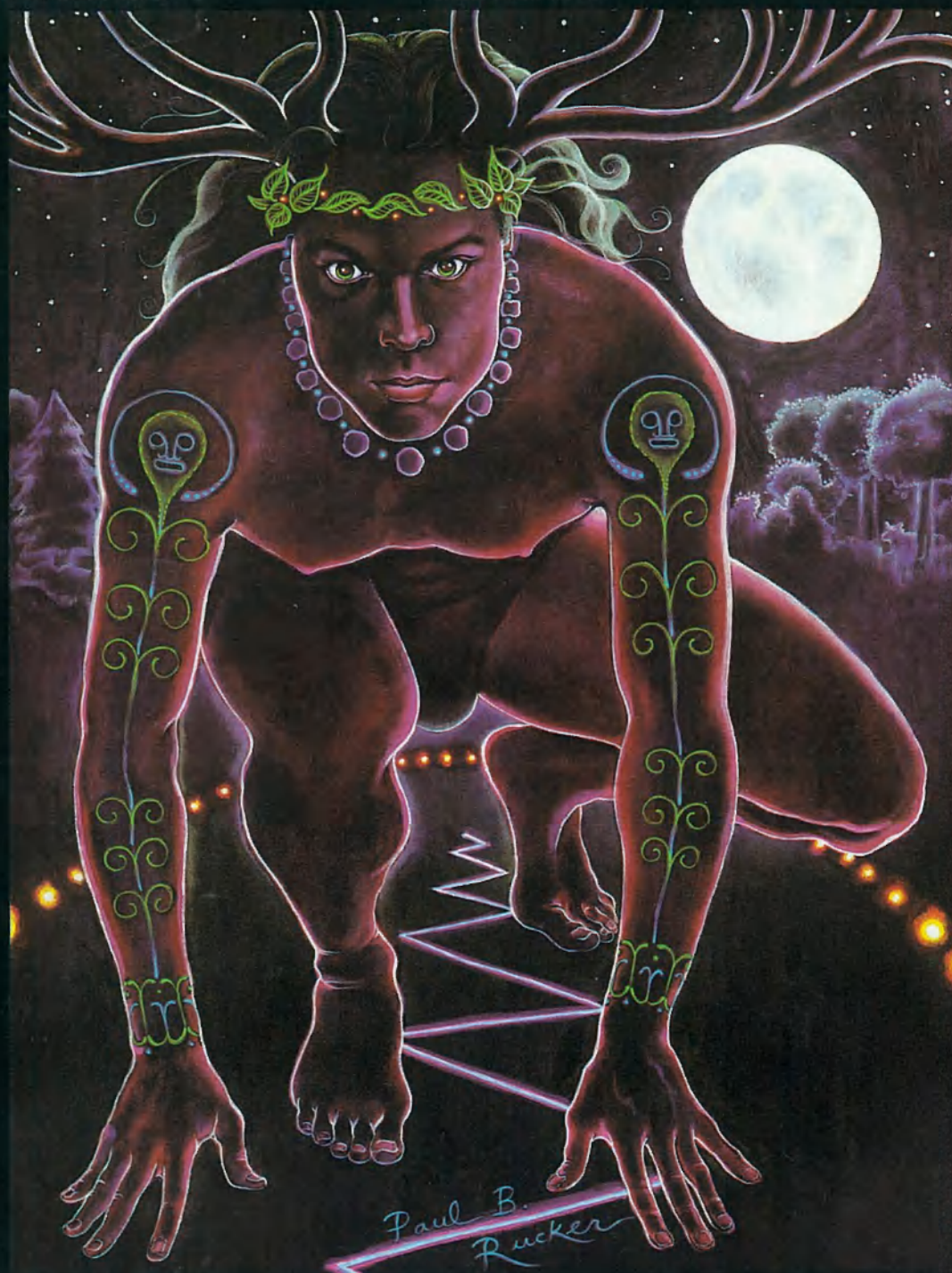
MEZLIM

PRACTICAL MAGICK FOR TODAY

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THE UNDERWORLD

MEZLIM

Practical Magick for Today!

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"Just what does the word "Mezlim" mean, anyway?"

I've been asked that question a lot, and I'm sure there are many others who just wonder in silence. It comes from the Aramaic version of the Hebrew word *Mazel* (as in *Mazel tov!*). It means, literally, "the influence of the divine", or "the sparks emanating from Kether", the Crown of the Tree of Life. It references the fact that the divine lives in many paths, with each path as unique as the individuals who walk it.

Here at **MEZLIM**, we subscribe to the premise that we are entering a new aeon - a new age - which is bringing and will continue to bring many changes in the way we see ourselves and the world around us. We are dedicated to presenting information, views, images and ideas concerned with our transition into this new world which we are creating. Our editorial policy is androgynous, egalitarian and eclectic, supporting all growth oriented, magickal movements; celebrating the spirituality of the Living Earth!

So, in our own way, we are attempting to bring a few "sparks of the divine" into the world through our magickal labor of love: Mezlim.

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Planting the Seed

Spring is finally making its presence known, as I put the finishing touches on this final issue of *Mezlim*. There are Christians celebrating Easter, Jews sitting down to the Seder dinner, and Pagans getting ready to dance the Beltane fires.

For those of you who have not yet heard, this will be our last issue of *Mezlim*. For various reasons, most of them practical, we chose to conclude this particular magickal labor of love.

Strange – and strangely fitting – that a magickal working that we began at Samhain of 1989, should come to a close at Beltane. I'm still trying to understand the irony of this conclusion. But it is clear that every birth is also a death; that immortality is made up of equal portions of life and death.

We have certainly had our share of life. This has been a wonderful, challenging, ecstatic, awesome experience. It has fed the souls of those who helped to create it. And we sincerely hope that it has left a meaningful impact upon our community at large.

The very first Editor's Forum I wrote spoke of the seed and spark of the New Aeon leaping forth from the dying

god. It went on to say, and I quote: "The underworld holds fertile soil for this seed. Who knows what may answer our call to awakening. The seed is planted, and we grow!"

The theme for this issue – the Underworld – was chosen long before we had thoughts of closing down. And it was only recently while searching for a way to say my farewells that I came across the reference in that first issue. That voice speaks to me now more strongly than ever. How elegant, how beautiful that we should conclude by planting the seed; placing it into the Underworld, the Silence of the Self.

What that same voice says to me now is this. All that lives must die. Even the Beloved Child must die, in order to truly live. Even the very sparks of the divine must eventually fall through creation and, having spent their life fully, return to the ashes, from which new life arises.

Our sparks have offered life, creativity, passion, beauty and wisdom. Our collective voice has spoken of the Priesthood and the Prostitute; initiations and relationships; healing and death.

Perhaps it is only now, after six long years of work, that the seed we called *Mezlim* is truly planted. And who knows what wonders may arise from this lovely seed?

Thank you,


Kenneth Deigh

Getting There and Back Again

A NeoShaman's Guide to The Underworld Experience

by Kenneth Deigh



Is It Real?

One of the most frequently asked questions about all this "Traveling" about in "other realms" in altered states of consciousness – loosely referred to as Shamanic Journeying – is also the most useless: "Is it real?" Imagine that you live and work in Cincinnati, and you take a month's vacation to Tibet. While there you see all sorts of marvelous things that you never imagined existed, as well as some relatively familiar things that you might have seen

"back home". Now imagine that upon returning from your incredible journey all your friends want to know is not how wonderful it was, not how strange and unusual the people and the scenery were, but "was it Ohio?"

While it's obvious that this question is absurd, most people don't realize that the question of "is it real" is equally so. What you are asking is – in effect – does it conform to my ordinary experience, which obviously it does not. But you are also asking, is it an experience of valid, irreducible phenomena whose effects have a real and lasting impact on your life – and the answer to that is a resounding "yes!"

The experience of the Underworld is real, if for no other reason than that it has a very real effect on every person who has an authentic experience within its realms.

Is it a place? Not in the way we think of "place". Rather it is in between places, and beyond the Inner World you know. If you begin to think of different states of consciousness as "places", you begin to get the picture. If you've ever done a creative visualization, or been hypnotized in order to look into your own mind, this is the doorway to the Underworld. Keep on going from there and that's where you will end up...but don't start just yet. It's better to have a very clear idea of what you're in for.

In terms of a Shamanic map, the Underworld is one of the three realms that make up the whole of the multiverse. These three are the Upper World, usually associated with celestial vistas and the realms beyond the merely human; the Middle World, which is sort of a mirror image of our own earth; and, the Lower World or Underworld, which is associated with everything from spirits of the departed ancestors to chthonic creatures of the Deep.

In a very real way, you are your own doorway into the Underworld. It is your state

of consciousness which allows you access to the Deep; your own mind, body and spirit which create the shamanic body that moves into that other world.

Getting There

Okay. It's not really as easy as it sounds. And that's good, because it is a lot more dangerous than it sounds. While the basic theory is quite simple, it takes a lot of work to be able to master the necessary focus to effectively move yourself from one state of consciousness to another at will, while remaining completely aware. Most people lose awareness as they move into shamanic state, and end up going to sleep. Probably just as well. The reason they do this is that their consciousness is unstable in these other places. It's like being a disembodied ghost. So what do you do? Why, you build yourself a body.

To create your Shamanic form or body, you begin with your intention. Your intention is to create a spiritual double that will journey into the Underworld, while your physical body remains in its accustomed locale. It is easiest to have it look as much as possible like your physical body, simply because that's what you are used to identifying with, and you will want to be able to identify with this body even under stressful circumstances. You create the foundation of this body through the use of your imagination; clearly visualizing what it will look like; then you feed the body on energy drawn from whatever source you find appropriate, and then sent through your own nervous system. If you don't know how to raise energy and move it through your own body, then you've no business messing about in the Underworld, so I won't go into greater detail here.

Granted, there are some people who seem to have a ready-made Shamanic double already formed. This may be due to the rigors of their life, or perhaps to work done in some previous existence. Still, I recommend creating your Traveling Form from scratch, if only to know it better.

Once you have developed your Shamanic Body, you will want to be able to move into and out of it at will. You can practice this by entering Stillness; imagining your double as an image in a mirror, your heart centers connected by a strand of light. Then allow yourself to move along the strand to enter the double. Feel yourself as completely IN that other body as possible. Turn your attention back into the "mirror" and see your physical body there. Now move back through the mirror again. Once you have become adept at the transfer, spend some time getting used to feeling

sensations through this new form. These senses may be indistinct at first, and it is doubtful that you will lose all sensation of your physical body, but with practice you should be able to get a clear sense of what your double is experiencing. Now get up and move around in the body. Practice moving, stretching, dancing, running, even flying. When you feel completely comfortable in your Shamanic Body, then you are ready to move on.

As I mentioned earlier, your first step on the path to the Underworld is through your own self – and something called Stillness. Enter Stillness first. Move into Shamanic Form, then continue in Stillness IN that other body. Find the portal that lies at the epicenter of your Shamanic Body, and move through that door. You will find yourself in the same inner world that you visit in creative visualizations. Move through this place, seeking the boundary between what is you, and what lies beyond. You will recognize it when you find it. Then, go ahead. Jump!

Things to Consider

Allow me to interject – right here in the midst of everything – that the techniques and practices that I am suggesting are NOT the only ones used for this type of work, and might very well not even be the most suitable or the most effective for every Shamanic Traveler. However, you will find that all effective measures respond to the Underworld Experience as a coherent phenomenon. It is your responsibility to explore the options and thus discover what works for you.

For the sake of brevity, there are many things that I am not addressing here, but which are important to consider. For example: Effective preparation for your journey; various tools that you will need; and, a more detailed discussion of the liminal states of consciousness that allow you access to the Underworld. It is not my intention to offer a guide for beginners in a brief article, but to address some of the essential elements of the Shaman's journey, in a way that speaks to those who are ready to take the leap.

If you think you are such a person, ask yourself these questions. Do I know myself well enough to trust my responses in any given situation? How would I react in a life or death situation? Can I count on myself to act reliably under stress? Am I intuitive enough to be able to judge my surroundings clearly? Am I experienced enough with functioning in altered states of consciousness that I can do so effectively and reliably?

If you cannot answer each of these questions with an honest yes, then you are probably not ready to go Underworld diving. If you are...

Finding Your Way Around

What will the Underworld look like? Well that depends entirely on you. Unlike the more dense realms of earthly existence, the Underworld tends to be even more reflective of the viewer's own nature. In other words: What you see is who you are. So, needless to say, it's a very good idea to know just exactly who you are.

Upon entering the Underworld, you may find yourself in a gigantic room, or on an open desert plain; in a primordial forest, or in a dank cellar. Go with it. Everything you're seeing is coming from your own experience of what is actually there, interpreted through your beliefs, values and past experience. It's not that there is not an authentic "otherness" present, but our sense of self paints the scenery – so to speak – in the colors that it knows.

Appearances aside, there are some common sites you will probably run into. There will most likely be something, perhaps a river, that you will need to cross. There will be portals, maybe even a whole series of gates, each with a distinct guardian. There will be whole areas which appear to be sealed off. Best let them remain so for the time being.

The key to all of this is to pay attention, both to what's happening around you and to your own intuitive sense of what it means. If you are crossing a river and you feel that it's a good idea not to let the water get onto your skin – pay attention to it. The rules are somewhat different for everyone.

Underworld navigation is like flying by the seat of your pants. It is being able to FEEL where you are coming from and where you are headed. There is no way to accurately describe the sensation. If you've been there, you know what I mean. If not...well, it's a little like being able to sense the energy moving through another person's body. If you can feel it, you know what it's doing. If you can't feel it, you have no way to tell.

Though your own perceptions of the Underworld are unique, they do tend to be persistent, so mapping is a very good idea. Pay attention to shortcuts especially. They can save a lot of energy moving from one place to another.

Getting Back Again

One of the easiest ways to return from the Underworld is to have an "umbilical cord" connecting you all the way back up through your center and into your ordinary state of awareness. Remember to create this connecting link before going on any journeys, and you will have a sure-fire method for coming back in a hurry. If not, well, you can get lost down there. Getting lost in the Underworld is a very bad idea. So make sure you know how you intend to get back before you start your journey.

It is best to keep your first journeys as short as possible, with clearly defined goals. At the beginning it will be enough to make the trip down, turn around and come back. Once you are confident of your ability to go and return safely, you can start to explore the Underworld landscape – your own unique experience of it. When you are able to find your way around in that landscape with relative ease, you can begin working with it for healing, transformation and growth – but that's another article.

Final Cautions

Although you can find ways to heal yourself through this type of journey, you can be damaged as well. Don't make changes "down there" until you have a clear perception of what it is that you are changing. You are the one who will have to live with the outcome.

Know yourself very well before attempting this work. Know your strengths, and especially know your weaknesses. Know when to be quiet and listen. Know when to duck. Know when to run.

There are monsters in the Deep. In modern terms, they are reflections of those parts of yourself you do not yet know; shadows of your unrealized self. They are the children of your pain, your fear and your rage. And they will try to destroy you in order to survive. To calm them, to gentle them, to come to know them – that is a large part of this work.

But the monsters are there – and they are real – and they can bite. So pay attention, and be careful.

LOVE-SONG OF THE DARK LORD: The Lure of the Underworld

by Paul B. Rucker



When I was fourteen years old, I read the story of Inanna's descent into the Underworld, the land of death, for the first time; and fell into a lucid trance in which I became Inanna and experienced her story from her own point of view. As Inanna Herself I passed from the gardens of Sumer and through a forest that translated gradually into a wasteland of clay and bones, where the door to the depths awaited. In undergoing Inanna's death and her resurrection, which felt like sunlight awakening a long grey sleep, I understood what it meant to encounter a Mystery, a thing which must be experienced to be grasped. I date my conscious interest in Underworld matters and Shadow work from that time, as I came to learn that progress on an occult path is very limited without experience of, and respect for, the depths. Derived from a root meaning "to conceal," the very word *occult* refers to hidden matters, toward a standing-underneath things as they are conventionally perceived; that is, *understanding*.

Magick in all its forms deals with our empowerment and as such involves a lifelong series of initiations. Initiation brings us to an encounter with some particular aspect of our power. Some initiations are given to a person by others acting as guides or teachers; and these are the ceremonies we are familiar with as "initiation rituals" — but some initiations emerge from the raw circumstances of one's life. As people do not usually request to visit the Underworld, a descent to the depths often happens to us as a challenge "sent" from that part of our souls that carries our personal power and which must be challenged to move from dormant to active. In the same way, seeds, the embodiment of potential in the plant world, are sprouted by the "Hades power" that pushes seedlings up from the deep. In magickal terms, the descent might be diagrammed like this: to produce the fruit of one's Work (DEMETER), one must incorporate one's tradition and culture as the base and the avenue (GE) of the descent to the utterly impersonal foundation where the strength of the Underworld exists (CHTHONIC — meaning "subterranean," — thus underneath Terra, the earth).

The Underworld confronts us with the naked face of our true desires, whether benign or cruel, and with our true fears. It contains the EYE of the DEEP, the searching eye of self-revelation and self-judgment, as personified by the Judges of the Dead who are found in all Pagan cultures: Minos, Rhadamanthus and Aeacus in the Greek; the Annunaki in the Babylonian; Anubis and Osiris in the Egyptian; and many others. Persons who are not involved with acquiring magickal strength and knowledge during their lifetimes encounter such figures only once: after death; but for magickal people, the encounter with the shadowland at intervals is a necessity. For the more involved one becomes with the complicated business of self-revelation, of being tested, the more ability one has to change things, to become empowered, on the "topside" world.

Issues about Sex, Survival, Belief, Race, Will, Politics, and Boundaries all form the nexus of our core values where our shadow selves and shadow power lie. Our restrictions in these areas impose limits on what we can accomplish but also give us the firm ground necessary to accomplish anything at all. The encounter with the Underworld is necessary for the formation of a Magickal Adult, a person who has moved away from the naive position that "anything can happen with me because I have infinite potential," which archetypal psychology calls the *puer* or *puella*, the "flying boy" or "flying girl," who is not able to earth their potential into actuality. (Peter Pan and Persephone before her descent are frequently cited mythical examples of this immature condition.) A Magickal Adult moves into the realm of works and their consequences, all of which engrave the soul with its own experience, with its own understanding, leading at last to the formation of a person's unique wisdom.

The Underworld is the place where dreams of all kinds are born and buried; it is "in-between" one form of life and another, fertile in options. It is the obverse of the "topside" world, where one is alive and awake and does one's day-to-day business in one's accustomed role. Though the Underworld abounds in its own strange rules, it twists the normal rules with which we are familiar, and is thus a place of Revel, Revelation, and Revolution. Here we trade in "unacceptable" forms of information and behavior, tasting "forbidden" roles and sayings, dance a ring-dance with horror and beauty, sometimes both at once. Things change us here; and the mark of this place remains upon us, for dealing with the Underworld shades us toward the alien: we become *outré* to whatever "topside" context we experience — much like the traditional image of the Witch — because we take on the energy of this place of otherness.

The Underworld can also be a place where we hit rock bottom — the place of depression, lifelessness, death thoughts,

where "all food is clay and all drink is dust," where the joy of living slowly vanishes as we become more and more bound to the downward-pulling force.

Regardless of whether we perceive its bewitching or its deadly aspect, the Underworld is the home of our Shadow: the "Dark Lord" who is an intimate yet disowned power within the human psyche. In the terms of archetypal psychology, the Shadow is all that is "Not-I" — apart from our Ego, with which we tend to identify; the two are separated in childhood when a holistic and undifferentiated awareness of self prevailed. We call such a state *innocence*, and it begins to end when the Shadow is pared away from us and sent to dwell "elsewhere." Spiritual alchemy relates this activity to the *separatio* stage, where the parts of the ingredients of the Work (the growth of the Self), must be separated to be understood, much as the components of chaos were separated at the beginning of the world to form sky, sea, earth, and underearth. Each domain has its provenance, and so also in the human being are mind, heart, body, and soul experienced separately before the spiritual Will unites them into one being. Sky, sea, and earth are then universe — the universe in its skyness, its seanness, its earthness. And the Self becomes the whole: the experience of mind, heart, body, and soul blent into a wise totality. The moment where the Powers integrate is the moment when the chthonic self, the Shadow, gives momentum to the magickal Will.

My belief is that the Shadow is the "negative" aspect of our inner guide, the Daemon — the presiding "genius" of our destiny, also known by such names as the Holy Guardian Angel. The character of one's Daemon gives some clues as to the magickal nature of one's Shadow and the route by which we encounter it in life. For instance, a person guided by an erotic Daemon would be likely to encounter the Shadow wearing the face of a lover; and a person guided by a heroic Daemon might find the Shadow in their enemies. Magickal people meet their Shadow, their Underworld Initiator, on their life's road — as a teacher, a friend, a family member, a lover — in the form of an intimate relationship. Sometimes the Shadow trial is more distant — in the form of a boss, for instance. It may not even be with a person, as disease (AIDS, psychosis, leprosy, etc.) brings one to the Shadow's door. Addiction, especially as an expression of the Shadow quality of weakness, invokes the descent. The "Dark Lord" is the Boundary Keeper within, the Challenger in the deep: failure to respect the inner limits or to meet the challenge of the Shadow can contaminate one with toxic emotions or perhaps the illusion — the *shadow* — of power and control.

Between six and eight years ago, I was very fascinated with Shadow things: I dyed my hair black, wore lots of black

and silver, fetishized the Dark Goddess Lilith, and eagerly availed myself of any opportunity to portray Shadow figures in ritual. One instance in particular stands out: an initiation in which the Babylonian mythos was utilized. For years afterward, not only the initiate but several of the people involved in this ritual felt echoes of the dark in their lives. In the words of Karen Nelson, the closest friend of the initiate, and who later became the Guide for the rite: "When we do rituals for ourselves, their effects continue on into our lives until we are that ritual." To put it another way, to comprehend water one is no longer looking at the water; one becomes a fish in the water. And, as I have discovered, working the shadow for others seems to prepare us for an initiation of our own into the Underworld. We dance, I believe, with the "daemon lover" or guardian, not once, but several times lifelong — each time strengthening our being so as to contain more gravity, more spirit power.

The basic script of this rite was brought forth by Underworld means: Karen fell into a trance in a darkened room, where both of us had been discussing the essential Babylonian texture that the rite, we felt, needed to convey. As she slept and dreamed, I wrote furiously pieces of script that seemed to come from nowhere. Ritual with the Underworld involves not only descent, but drawing the darkdeep upward — a reversal in movement of drawing down the Moon, but one that parallels the seed growth mentioned earlier. In this case, a complete rite was drawn up; and as Karen awoke, we "compared notes" to find that her dreaming had contained the exact series of images as my writing. The elemental quarters progressed from fire (Sidouri) to water (Apsu) to earth (Enki) to the one the Babylonians considered preeminent: air (Anu — a male god portrayed by the high priestess, wearing armor, and with her long hair drawn in front of her for a beard). Each one presented the candidate with a challenge relating to the element.

The culmination of the rite was the confrontation with the Dark Goddess Ereshkigal, drawn into and played by myself, who gave the ultimate challenge, beyond even life and death: that of Being and Non-Being. She named Herself the Night Sky and the Abyss, the infinite sky of possibility and its reflex, the infinite depth to which all that is, returns. One can ascend forever or descend forever — there is no end to height or depth: such is the lure of the infinite. The candidate was given symbolic blood to drink (wine): blood evoked as the source and the end of life; he was then led to the world of day.

"I believe that doing the dark, the blood, is something missing from most of our rituals because we no longer hunt," remarked Karen when recalling the "creepy" reaction a few of those present had to the "blood," "but for a ritual this profound, we could not do otherwise." We tend to forget the roots of many Pagan rites in sacrifice, in atavistic times when survival

was indeed a bloody matter. The role of blood, and sacrifice, and the invocation of such charged material at all, is to make us magickally mindful, to reaffirm our connection with our heritage of necessity. (Although, as you can see, it was not necessary to actually sacrifice a living creature to achieve such a result: the symbol can be equally effective if it is magickally intended to be so.)

The initiate encountered the Shadow many times for the next three and a half years, mostly as persons embodying the Trickster, who would appear at first to be light, and then manifest a sudden reversal into dark behavior. For instance, a young man to whom he had given shelter stole an athame from his altar to use in a robbery; on another occasion he was left at gunpoint in the heart of the Louisiana swamps at night — a place where earth and water change places with every step, a place filled with "the energy of Ereshkigal." But he was not the only one for whom the Shadow came; I also was led to the Underworld to endure a psychic transformation, and what I can only call an "Initiation by Pain." Looking back, it seems very much that "I asked for it!"

To begin with, I consider myself to have very much exemplified the *puer* condition about five years ago, when my Shadow journey began. In fact, I do not believe I would have so innocently involved myself in so many Shadow workings if I "had known then what I know now." But I do recall a sense of unrest about my own aspirations and ungroundedness, as well as a darkening sense of loneliness. I wanted a Lover. So I created an elaborate altar at home dedicated to the God and Goddess of Love and Passion, and a private ritual to go with it: I asked the Powers to bring me a special someone, of either sex, but to make this person so obvious to me that I could not mistake my "chosen one."

A few months later I met him at a party: in the classical romantic fashion, our eyes met across the room, and when he came towards me later to tell me how beautiful he thought I was, I answered him with only a kiss. I saw him as far more grounded and worldly than myself, and was attracted by his curly hair and blue eyes, which, although I did not think of it at the time, matched my inner image of my personal Daemon, Eros. In the first month I experienced the intense magnetism, the compelling draw, of a Daemonic interaction. Because I was too naive to draw boundaries in time, our relationship progressed with a whirlwind speed: down, down, down.

After the "honeymoon" vanished, the truth came out: he was a "recovering" heroin addict, in addition to having a host of other psychological problems — none of which added up to the maturity that I thought I had seen at first. We lived together in a tiny studio apartment in San Francisco, where he

introduced me to various drugs — at first because I wanted to “be experienced.” When his cravings awakened, he would greet me after school with news of another “deal” on the streets, usually costing hundreds of dollars and more often than not for an abortive experience. Inexperienced with people who required psychiatric medications, I couldn’t understand why his personality altered so abruptly with the various prescriptions he took. My contact with my friends dwindled. Needy to an obsessive degree, he never let go of my hand in public. The abusive harangues and the physical violence increased, often as a side effect of the chemicals. Because part of our initial interest was built on our common interest in spiritual and visionary pursuits we would often try to “vision quest” and otherwise psychically link together with the “help” of chemicals.

We tried this just before his first suicide attempt, and I couldn’t understand why I saw such things as petals floating in darkness, skulls, and other morbid imagery. He then confessed that he had tried to overdose, and later, when his stomach had been pumped, informed me that he “picked up” my negativity, which he claimed had depressed him into this. He tried, usually the same way, to kill himself almost fifteen times in as many months. Each time, a piece of my belief that I could heal or help such a person through love or loyalty withered, to be replaced with a panic for myself. But I had nowhere to go and had cast my lot completely.

At this time my dreams mirrored my inner state perfectly: in one, our tiny studio housed a raging whirlwind, making it almost impossible to stand up; and tiny devil faces peeped out from odd corners, in mirrors and picture frames — in this dream of madness it took hours to crawl a few feet to the center of the room. In another dream, a faceless bride carved from a knob of bone confronted me. Images of death, stagnation, and decay constantly assaulted me, oddly balanced by dreams of such beauty that they became one of my few refuges: in one I recall descending in a spiral to the center of the world, and the farther down and deeper in, the more beautiful the summer land within became.

After my graduation I found it very difficult to find work and I became more and more depressed. Feeling completely trapped, I began to drink, in a way I have never done before or since (I am allergic to alcohol); sometimes I spent my last two bucks on rotgut just so that I could feel numb for a while and half-forget where I was and whom I was with. I thought about death constantly.

Near the end of this relationship, and near the end of my savings, I had entered a sort of “zombie” state of deep depression, in which I had given up. I was canny enough to see

how my lover had been enacting my Shadow for me, like an illumination casting my despised and hidden inner weaknesses into bold relief — but not canny enough to see how to end it, until one night almost sixteen months after we had met, I managed to make it to a psychiatric hospital where trained observers were able to observe his behavior and make a detailed report. (He and his mother both had been very careful to keep the violence hidden, so that no one really suspected what went on with this person. Ironically, she was a social worker!) At last I escaped to Minneapolis, and for the next two years I “detoxed” from the physical and emotional toxins of this relationship, sometimes crying hysterically, sometimes vomiting, often feeling as if the very marrow of my bones were squeezing out a bitter gall. I had lost faith in my own magick, for certain, for look what I invoked! I spent those years in the greatest poverty I have ever known, selling off my books to pay for food, trying to hold a job while constantly sick from the purging process. There were no rituals, no gods in my life, at that time: the tower of my beliefs had crumbled.

The classical description of such a time is *The Dark Night of the Soul*, which is “accompanied by a sense of intolerable dryness, a dreaded awareness of the fact that all of the powers of the soul seem dead, and the mind’s vision closed in dumb protest, as it were, against the harsh discipline of the work itself.”(1) It is during such a time that we Dance with our Shadows, experiencing great pain. As people normally seek to avoid pain, so a painful process can become a “sacred wound,” a vehicle of initiation, catalyzing the alchemy that will reform our character along stronger lines if the challenge is successfully met. If we are not able to face the Dark Lord within, we may repeat the same challenge throughout our lives, or may seek to discharge the experience of pain by causing the same pain to others. But to validate such pain, we are better advised to endure *The Dark Night* with patience, so that it may pass, and allow, hopefully, a greater spirit awareness to emerge. “Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.”(2)

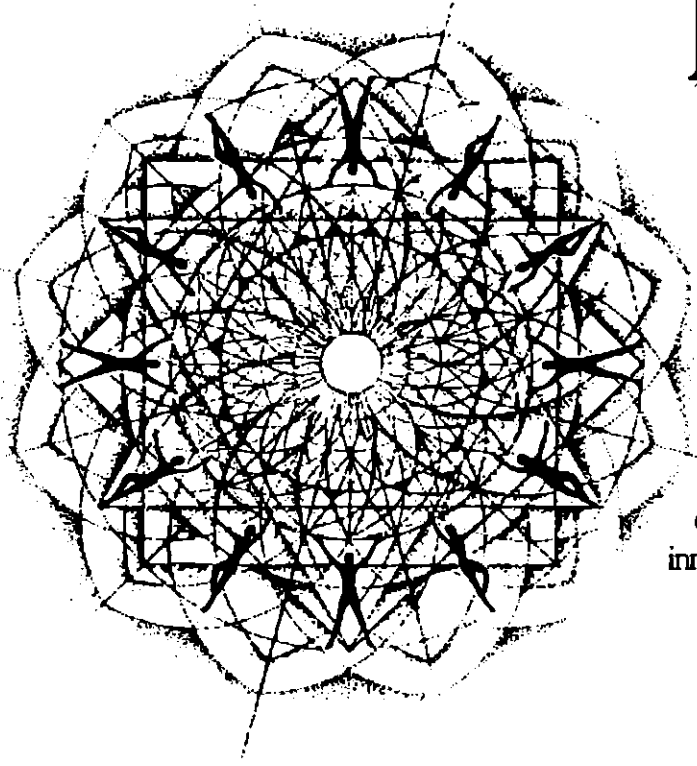
If we go far enough into the dark, the depth, eventually we discover the secret of “the Sun at Midnight” and return to the light, paralleling the ascent of the sun from the land of night. In my case, I found, after years had passed, that my naivete has dissipated, leaving me at last more mature, less gullible, and certainly more grounded than before my Underworld journey. A younger self has died, and in its place has been born a person more united with his shadow and stronger because of it.

(1) Israel Regardie, p. 33, *The Golden Dawn*. (Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul) 1989.

(2) Kahlil Gibran, p. 47, *The Prophet*. (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York) 1961.

LumensGate '96

"As Within - So Without"



A few years ago, we worked with the theme of reuniting the human and the divine. For many of us, this represented the magical equation of: As above - so below. This year's theme follows, by working to reunite our unconscious, internal world with the conscious, external world. Just as we tend to forget that the Divine is present within the so-called mundane, we may also have the habit of not noticing that our outer lives manifest the qualities of our inner landscapes. This year's rituals will focus on reminding us of this essential connection.

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Relativistically, then, not to discount your experience and perception, all this is obfuse and circular, but perhaps you have heard of the Shrinagar concept of circularity symbolized by the triple aspected endless self consuming fire worm with whom I channel epistles to this generation's builders of endless consumption that the Embliss point out to me in shipping mall corridors ...

HE WENT ON A SHAMANIC JOURNEY BUT LOST THE ROAD MAP TO GET HOME.



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MOONPUPPIES

Exploring the Underworlds on The Warrior/ Shepherd Path

by Sabra



In the ancient Mid East (my part of the world), we have traditionally thought of there being more than one Underworld. They called most of them "Otherworld". For example, to the ancient Sumerian, one Otherworld was similar to the barren desert beyond their orderly and safely walled cities. To the ancient Hebrews, one was the barren hot, dry wilderness of Az'azel, identified by some with the desert of Tsin in the Negev, where the scapegoat was annually chased, bearing the sins of the entire people. And there were others, too....And then of course there is the AMHA view, if the AMHA (People of the Earth, Sabra's Hebrew Warrior Shepherd Path) can ever be said to have one view, of course.

One of the AMHA calls all these the "Otherworlds". Your type of Underworld – the place where the dead go – I suppose could

be seen as one of them. But for its origins as a keeping place for the dead, we have to move forward in time, and also north and west.

So let's talk about this ancient place for the dead, this Underworld first, since that is what people think of first usually, when they hear the word.

Homer informs us that the ancient Greek dead went to an Underworld, the Elysian Fields.

Dante, in the time of the last Crusades, in his Divine Comedy, described it that way too. Sometimes the place, as the Greeks saw it, was also cold, possibly foggy, a depressing sort of landscape, where the souls wander in sadness and sorrow forever. Not as a punishment necessarily. In the view of all ancient people I have mentioned so far, it was for good and bad people alike. Nothing to do with punishment for bad deeds done or good deeds left undone. You need a salvationist religion, a religion of redemption from genetically transmitted sin, where sin equals perdition, and non-sin – or grace – equals being saved from that preordained – unless prevented perdition, which would have been a totally alien concept to the ancients.

It is also an alien concept for the Hebrews, both today, as well as in the past. As to the ancient Pagans that I've mentioned so far, what it boiled down to was simply, that the dead wish they were still alive. They want to be enjoying the things of corporeal life, and so they pine, once in the Otherworld, having left one's loved ones behind.

Being dead, in other words, is bad since it means being exiled from all you know and all you loved, sometimes in barren lands, and that is it. And in all these cases, the assumption is that living in one's body, in This World, is not as bad as living without one.

You will notice that we do not hear the ancients saying that body is bad and that, consequently, this “material” world is a vale of tears. No. Earth was and is no vale of tears to them, at least not when compared to being dead. That, they viewed as infinitely worse.

Even in ancient Egypt, where we do get a sense of punishment looming – the heart of the dead ones is depicted while weighed on scales against a feather to gage their good or bad deeds—we only know this to have applied to Pharaoh or other aristocrats, and do not fully understand the context. What we are sure of is that we know of no special Ancient Egyptian place reserved for the bad ones for eternal punishment – or any punishment. Quite literally then, being dead, in itself, was hell.

Or rather, by the early Middle Ages, it was being in Hel. This word, spelled with one “l” is what the tribal Germanic folks used to name the place were the dead go – which may have been borrowed by the Teutons from the Mid East via the Greeks.

To the Germanic – who were good Pagans after all – a person who was evil was no more or less likely to end up in Hel once dead than your regular Jack or Jill – or pardon me, your average Ragnar or Friedlind. They all ended up there. But there was reward: At least by contrast to Hel, the place known as Valhalla, with the endless feasting and drinking parties. However, that merry place was only for Warriors who had died honorably in battle, of course, the modern Muslims have the Seventh Heaven for that, only they have to die in battle trying to foist their faith on others - and by the way, the feasting in the Norse Valhalla was in between bouts of interminable fighting.

Otherworlds are a mixed bag...some good, some not. There were Otherworlds as places of death, but also of rebirth, like the place that Pharaoh went to, and reemerged from, reborn. Then there were still more positive places, like the Gardens of Inanna/Ishtar, precursors of the Eden/

Paradise in the bible, where Inanna as a young maiden tended the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. But that was for Her, not for the humans. Later that gardening job was the King's, done on behalf of Inanna, Queen of Heaven. As in ancient Babylon, where the ancient inscriptions show that the King describes himself as the “overseer” or “steward” of the Goddesses gardens.

Adam and Eve, by the way, had the same job description: Stewards, that is, overseers, of the Paradise Gardens belonging to the Godhead. How people today read this, tells you how people misunderstand the intent of the biblical

text. Humans are supposed to be working as “overseers” and “stewards” over the Earth. This is not a blanket permit to ruin the Land, but rather a specific job description which entails a great responsibility to treat the land with respect. How long do you think, can a steward ruin the land s/he is in charge of before the ruling God or Goddess that set them there would punish them for mismanaging the property? I believe that this passage is misunderstood by people who lack the cultural context of the ancient Mid Eastern thought. They talk about supposedly “Judeo-Christian” contempt for Earth, which is not a valid critique, as you can see. At least not for the “Judeo” part of it.

The Babylonian/Assyrians, also conceived of darker places, clearly an Underworld – where Queen Ereshkigal



ruled. There is no indication that it was the repository of the dead at all, nor a place of punishment either. None of the ones we have cited was. Ereshkigal, the Queen, was wife, and later widow, of Death. The Underworld was merely the territory she was assigned to rule, that's it. And her abode was just that, her abode and that of her crew and servants. The spirits were living things of fear and terror, because they were associated with the realm of Death, of the cessation of life, but still, not necessarily the same as Hell, not a holding place of any kind for punishing human souls. Not even a dwelling place for the departed souls of human beings. Inanna/Ishtar, the Queen of Heaven goes there; but before she is dead, not after.

If you are wondering where the concept of punishment in the afterlife was, you must understand that there was no salvationist religion yet. In the ancient Otherworld you did not get punished for your beliefs. This was a key reason for Christianity to have a well developed Hell; a place to store all their heretics and unbelievers.

This is not to say that there were not a whole lot of ancient gods who could reward or punish you. You could, in some cases, tick off some god, or get punished for some deeds or some omissions, but that is what averting magic and sacrifices were for - to assuage the God(s) and give them offerings to keep them tame and benevolent. The assumption of course was that it mostly worked.

Another point you might notice is that there is no mention of the "Devil". This is quite simply because there was no Devil then. There were Gods or Goddesses, one or more of them ruling a land of Happiness - of which say, the Gardens of Paradise might be a part. There were Gods of other things sometimes, or Gods of nothing at all; (it wasn't until the Greeks that each of the Gods had specific job descriptions) and then there also were one or more Gods of the Otherworld or Underworlds. But they were not the opposite polarity of the "good" God. The Gods or Goddesses of the underworld were powerful and fearsome entities, like the lesser spirits, because of their association with death; with the end of life and love and laughter as we know it. What there was definitely not, is a sort of God of Evil like the Christian Devil. Nothing like the Satan envisioned by some westerners today, particularly by some Protestant sects.

Not even the fearsome Ereshkigal is a match for the Great Gods who at last order her to release Inanna, Queen of Heaven. She mutters but gets mollified, and complies. Ereshkigal and others like her were fearsome, as I said, but not seen as a God of Evil; an enemy of "Good" or in

permanent conflict with the concept embodied in any of the other gods. Of course the Gods had their quarrels and their feuds, but She wouldn't have lived an instant, had she dared to make opposition to the Ones on high, a sort of permanent political position.

In fact, Ereshkigal is quite satisfied in the size of her dark territory; she has no desire to expand it. She finds Inanna's trip down there an intrusion, a trespass of territory. She wouldn't dream of trespassing on Inanna's territory either, nor to walk the human world. Let alone attempt to take control, say, of this world, or of the people on it. She is no Evil One stalking the souls of innocent humans.

Of course, the ancient Mid Eastern beliefs were that there were Otherworld spirits of all types, coming from all sorts of Otherworld realms. Some occasionally hurt people. Among these were the male and female Lilim, (winged spirits of the night in ancient Sumer and Babylon from which the name Lilith is derived). Essentially all the evil they ever did was that they had torrid sex with humans in their sleep, rendering them unfit for ever enjoying sex with a mere human.

Eternal damnation did not become associated with having sex with an incubus or succubus in one's sleep until the European middle ages, when Christians were pathologically concerned about the "sins" of sexuality. Nor was there ever, among the Pagans of antiquity, a sense of devils or spirits making people do evil deeds in order to gain control over where they go after they die. Those concepts of evil stalking the good, as the whole Good God - Bad God polarity, came much later, some say, via Zoroastrism, to the modern western world today, primarily through Christianity. Not through Judaism.

As I keep saying when I write or lecture, if I hear the term "Judeo-Christian" misused in this way again I think I will get nauseous! For the ancient Hebrews, as for the AMHA today, there was no Underworld which corresponds closely to the concepts of Christian Heaven or Hell; no Christian Good God vs. the Christian Evil God whom they call Satan here. Certainly not as the fundamentalist Christians today understand them.

The ancient Hebrews, and AMHA today, believe the same. Fundamentalist preachers notwithstanding, the entity "set over" the Underworld of the Dead is an angel, whose job description is that of overseeing the place. No more. Just an underling, a bureaucrat, demoted, some say, for speaking out of turn. Holding forever a job in a disagreeable, faraway and

undesirable place. Not a Power threatening to overcome those who are in the realms of corporeal life.

Only in later folk tales and in some of the canonic literature, there is mention once of the Great Liar named Satan, AKA the Serpent. That is, the cunning Serpent. The Serpent was wisdom, too. Cunning, for the ancient, was not far from wisdom. It implied skill, knowledge – like the arts of healing – or seemingly magical tricks.

Hence Serpent was also an ancient Mid Eastern symbol of healing. The Bible says that Moses had a bronze serpent built that healed snake bites. We know it was preserved in the Hebrew temple for centuries until an ultra-Yahwist king had the effrontery to remove it. There is a theory, too, that the biblical serpent is possibly a “sanitized” revision of the ancient Sumerian tale of the animal in Inanna’s Huluppu tree, which stood in her garden. And, by the way, Woman is the Serpent’s greatest enemy. She crushes Him under her heel.

Funny how that story changes meaning when you say that. Woman, the great enemy of Evil. Not a popular motif in more recent mythology.

Life, and the Force of Life, for the Ancient Hebrew and for the AMHA today, is always, invariably, perceived as stronger than Death. In fact, they are not even in contrast; Death is only an underling of Life, a cog in a system, the cycle(s) of Life.

I can conceive of no greater parting of company between belief systems than this one. And of no greater misunderstanding of how the Ancient Hebrews viewed these issues than the ones preached by some westerners today. Ours is a Path of the spiritual Warrior/ Shepherd. Neither of which in ancient days or now, has time, patience, or use, for anything but keep it simple stupid.

Simple, not easy. As Shepherds, the AMHA strive to live in harmony with the rains and the sun and the growth of plants. We are keenly aware that our own lives depend on the cycles of Life of Adama, the Earth. Being on the Path of a Shepherd is also about protecting Life. AMHA is also a Warrior path. Warriors of course have to have skill, if they are to last. Warriors also fight and hunt. All Amha do both. Either in the realms of Malkuth, or in the Otherworlds. Ideally, in both.

AMHA work includes being a regular Traveller in

the Otherworlds. Getting to travel in the Underworld of the Self is the first job of the Warrior/Shepherd Path. Later, there are other Journeys to Everywhere Worlds and between them. We take these journeys to accomplish self healing. We were in war zones, when we started. That gives you lots to heal from.

One way to Travel is to Shepherd the Self where it needs to go for nourishment. The other, as said, is to Hunt. As AMHA I know of no entity or power outside myself who can condemn me to Hel. But in the Underworld/ Otherworld of the human soul, Tiamath lives. This is the real Monster of the Deep. There are dark places and there are terrors, and gaping wounds, from war and the battle for survival. It is part of the AMHA Path to seek them out, and to confront them. To move through the dark recesses of the Self as a warrior, listening for Tiamath, the formless one of the Deep, listening and following her spoor until sure that S/he is identified. Then, either during the same journey, or during the following ones, the AMHA stalk this Lady of the Deep, hunt her down. And when She is at bay, the next step it to come forward to confront Her, and then, to find ways to kill Her.

All this does not necessarily happen in the same inner journey. It can happen all at once, in a visioning; or piece by piece, in successive encounters. It can take years. There are many ways to confront and destroy your personal Tiamath(s). Sometimes the AMHA gets killed in the process – in the Otherworld sense.

AMHA includes a lot of shamanic type of work. Shamanic death is an inevitable part of the Path. For those who founded the AMHA, shamanic death experiences were frequent. The instances diminish as the healing increases...and one gives fervent thanks for that...

One would expect that since so many, if not all, early Amha were combat veterans, they would be sort of jaded about facing death; that having experienced facing their own death, they would take it more in stride. On the contrary. I have compared notes with people; and it seems that the more acquaintance the person has had with actual pain and death here in Malkuth, the more graphic, terrifying and intense the shamanic death experience seems.

Remember, in the Underworld the Hunter is naked and has only today and only now. Past successes, victories or triumphs do not exist. Not, at least, unless they have become such a part of the Hunter’s Innermost Being, of their innermost self, that they come down to the Underworld with

him or her, and hence can be relied on as support. This does not happen as often as you might think, though; for it is part of being human to have doubts. So the practitioner, even if s/he successfully survived combat, stands mother-naked facing their Lady of the Deep.

AMHA who have been on the Path for years, have fought with many a Tiamath of the Deep. For there are many issues one needs to heal. So shamanically speaking, they have been killed not once, but many times, and have witnessed and felt their own dying in every detail. Though such people have faced, during wartime, their own personal annihilation, at times, meeting their Tiamath(s) and getting killed over and over was a far worse strain.

In the other worlds, when you go to face your Tiamath(s), you do so mother-naked, as Inanna the warrior goddess faced Queen Ereshkigal. Believe me, you are left with nothing, nothing but yourself, your innermost, your most naked self, to face the confrontation.

Another disturbing piece of this experience is that, while in Malkuth you may hope to survive a combat encounter, in the Deep of the Underworld, you eventually get to a point where you know you have to die. And, then, just as in real life battle at its worst, you exist only in the moment, the here, the now. You cannot see beyond the instant. There is not room in this moment for the knowledge that you have survived before. Or, if I make it, I will be airlifted out and I will go home. There is no other universe, no other time but now; so there is not an other world to hope for, no future time. As a result, only what you have in you already, at that instant of confrontation, will determine if you can go through with it. So you end up acquiescing to going through your own shamanic death, in order to overcome. For somebody who has had the kind of energy required to survive threats of physical destruction, that acquiescence in itself can require all you've got. This is a place where there is no macho, no pretense possible, you see. No room for it. None at all. And each time you confront Tiamath is different.

Needless to say, this kind of shamanic practice requires a good deal of ego strength. Part of the problem is that when stalking in Otherworld you always run the risk of finding exactly what you are hunting. The strain on one's nervous system can be enormous. But you must understand that the purpose here is not some kind of proving. The purpose is to try desperate measures, to heal wounds so deep, traumas so ghastly and grotesque, as only, or almost only, war can give you. Healing is the goal, a goal that can take years to reach.

As said, we AMHA like to keep things simple. The AMHA way is to touch tools, listen to drums, breathe or in other ways begin to focus while s/he purifies the space and inner self to ready body and mind for the Inner Journey. Once one has prepared one's self for the journey, one enters a trance, which is like a trapdoor into the Underworld.

The Work of Travelling for a Hunt requires courage and planning ability; to face oneself before one is going down, and dare to formulate the hard questions one is about to take down to the Underworld. This is needed to materialize the objective, once one is underworld. One has to name the Tiamath one is going after, at least where one is going to look, if one is to find anything at all. It also requires the ability to focus so tightly that the focus remains intact even during the rockiest rides the Otherworld provides, so that the question can be asked while in a very altered state of consciousness, thereby materializing one's objective.

Clinicians speak of the risk of psychotic break. NO Amha I know ever had that happen. But maybe the latent psychos had all died in battle? Either way, the Journey and the Hunt also requires the skill to effectively identify the monster one needs to be rid of, before trying to stalk and hunt and kill it. They easily mislead you into passing them by - plus, it feels safer to avoid them... And lastly, it requires a will to clarity, to face one's truth, so as to correctly interpret what one is encountering down there, when at last one encounters it. The nature of the Traveller's Path is such that you go higher as you go deeper. Such is the nature of Otherworld Journeys.

Travelling the Underworld also requires the ability that only the more experienced warriors learn - the skill to pace oneself; to know when it is time to stop and to turn back, to know one's limits, and the limits of one's psyche. I have sometimes literally exhausted myself physically, from the sheer focusing effort and the intensity of it. It is well done to take that into account and not tackle more than one is ready for.

Most of these skills I learned in war. Most AMHA I know learned the same way. You'd be amazed, to paraphrase some British writer, how wonderfully war helps you to learn to focus your mind and to stay focused... so when I began journeying the skills were there.

To summarize, to the AMHA, there is no Hell. There are only Otherworlds, and some are easier and safer to move within than others.

As they say on TV, don't try this at home.

MEETING DEATH ON THE ROAD

by Magenta Griffith

Back in my student days, in more ways than one, I read all Carlos Castaneda had written up to that time, circa 1978. I was influenced by him, thought he had some insights, though I didn't believe the events he wrote about had happened exactly as described, as some people did. I was also smoking a lot of weed.

One day, a friend and I spent a good bit of the afternoon smoking and talking, as we often did on weekends. Then he got a powerful urge to go driving, as he sometimes did when he was stoned. Back in those days, there were no campaigns against drunk or drugged driving, and we thought little of tooling around the highways and byways in very altered states.

We were over at my friend's house, and anyway, I didn't own a car in those days. So we went out in his second hand BMW. Beautiful car. Very comfortable, and according to my friend, it handled very, very smoothly. This was between Samhain and Yule, the dead time of the year, and about twilight - late afternoon, though it seemed like evening because the sun set so early. No ice on the roads, but cold enough that I was glad the heater worked. His favorite drive was the river road, a curving blacktop lined with trees that followed the Mississippi. The streetlights were the old fashioned kind, right out of an Edwardian illustration.

I don't remember what music was playing, but there was music, rock music of the 70's, or 60's. There always was. The kind of music that made everything feel cosmic, meaningful, important, especially if you were stoned.

I was paying more attention to the music and the state of my head than to the road. I knew approximately where we were, and I knew I would find my way home at some point. What else did I have to think about?

And so we came to a curve in the road. We had driven that road many times before, but usually not this fast. The posted speed limit was 25 mph. He often went 30 or 35. I think we were going 50 that night. We approached this long, sharp double curve, where the road veered away from the river, around a deep gully, and back to hug the river. I expected him to slow down. He didn't.

I knew better than to say anything. He had given me lectures against back-seat driving, that talking to the driver was a dangerous

distraction, and anyway, he knew a lot more about driving than I did.

I braced myself a bit, and told myself he had taken this road many times. He would slow down in time. We would make the curve.

All of a sudden, I wasn't sure we would. We seemed to be getting faster, not slower. And I remembered a passage in Castaneda about death. Death is our companion, always there. We can ignore it, or we can ask death for advice, make death our advisor. I became absolutely certain that we would not make the curve, that we would go into the icy Mississippi, that I would die that night, that hour. And so, I met my death on the road.

It was a long moment. I looked at my death, and knew that if not today, some other day. Death is always with us, as with all mortal beings. This death, at least was quick. I looked it straight in the eye. I had not sought it, but neither would I shrink from it. Anyway, there was nothing I could do. And death told me, "that is the way to face me. I will come, you have not sought me, so do not run from me. This is out of your hands, indeed, out of any mortal's grasp, what happens at this moment. Watch it as it unfolds."

All the petty concerns that had been going through my mind all day disappeared. Homework undone, debts unpaid, books unread, vanished from my life. So much of my life was focused on trivia. And so much felt unfinished. I couldn't leave my life now, but it seemed I would.

Except... we made the curve after all. What seemed like a few seconds, and an eternity was over. The road ran straight along the river again. But nothing was the same. I had known death, and was no longer afraid of it. My first intimation of mortality, that my life was not endless, that my time, sooner or later, would have its stop. There are many things I still fear - poverty, debt, pain, loneliness. But not death.

The OtherWorld is all around us. It is not a place, but a condition. We meet it, by accident or design, mishap or folly, when It comes to us. If we recognize its presence, that the OtherWorld is warp to the everyday world's woof, we have great power to draw upon. If we measure our day to day lives against eternity, we use the only natural yardstick we can know. The presence of death gives life its limit and its shape. If we fear it, we lose our chance for power - or peace. If we trust our death, and listen to it when it speaks to us, we have a wire to infinity.

(Needless to say, this incident lead to a serious discussion when we were both sober. We decided to stop combining pot with joyriding. We stopped the aimless driving, since the price of gas went up about that time. Drugs and driving should NOT be mixed.)

JOURNEY INTO DARKNESS

by Jaq D. Hawkins

“Do not hide from darkness. Only in balance is truth to be found.” —Nick Frost

To journey through the underworld is one of the most common themes known to the mythologies of humankind. The stories vary, but the general theme is one of a hero who passes by or conquers a guardian of the gate to the underworld, then passes through various adventures (experiences) which may include a test of courage or a quest to rescue a damsel held prisoner — only to emerge back into the daylight strengthened by his adventures. This theme is archetypal to the magician, although the hero may well be a heroine and that which must be rescued is likely to be a part of him or herself.

The catch phrase, “acknowledging your dark side”, is growing in popularity even among the most idealistic members of the new age community. The journey into one’s darker self is an internal journey, but it is one that cannot be simplified into something as easy and non-threatening as a pathworking. To truly look your dark side in the eye, not only acknowledging its existence but accepting it as a part of oneself, is a balancing act of the soul that could put shivers down the spine of the most jaded alchemist.

Many of us have experienced pathworkings which veer away from the “all niceness and white light” journeys and take us into realms of the subconscious where we face potentially frightening encounters, most effectively when we face our own fears. The most potent experience of this sort that I’ve ever had was the result of a past life regression

tape which followed a theme of looking for recurring patterns over many past lives. An experience of this sort can bring out realizations of imperfections in ourselves which can be very upsetting to have to acknowledge, but it is a beginning toward looking into our darker selves.

Acknowledging one’s dark side, and accepting it, are two very different things. We can acknowledge our negative thoughts, admit to ourselves that we are human enough to hate our enemies and wish nasty things to happen to them, but can we allow ourselves to act on these natural human impulses freely, without guilt?

For example, if I acknowledge that I am inherently a selfish person, the natural inclination in today’s society is to attach guilt to that which might be described as a character flaw. As a magician, to accept that description without question would be a much more serious failing than to act selfishly in many situations. After all, selfishness is a survival instinct. A healthier attitude might well be to accept the selfishness for what it is, an integral part of myself, and find ways to use it to my advantage.

If I acknowledge something much more socially unacceptable, such as a desire to kill an enemy, the situation is different because acting on the impulse would bring consequences. Even if I thought I might get away with it, murder is a rather permanent solution and doing it would negate any possibility of making up the quarrel or possibly even finding some selfish use for the offending person at a later date. Besides, there is always the possibility of ending up in prison or somehow fouling up the job.

So, in the interest of self-preservation, I can acknowledge my hatred and feel no guilt for it, and then find an intelligent solution to the problem. Sometimes this can take a lot of imagination and foresight, but the gratification when a plan comes together, or in some cases when you simply walk away from something, is far greater than any quick gun to the head solution. I speak from recent experience on this one. I’ve recently taken control of a long term situation concerning an ex-husband using financial advantage and personal attacks including my beliefs to try to take my daughter

away from me. It isn't finished yet, but while I wait for the judge's decision, I've been busy working out and setting up ways to completely destroy my enemy through the same legal means he tried to use against me. No guilt.

There is an incredible feeling of strength that comes with walking through the fires of Hell and coming out with the prize. The prize, that part of oneself that is rescued, is the confidence that comes with facing down seemingly insurmountable odds and coming out better than when you went in.

Coming to terms with one's dark side is more than just a test of courage. It is a balancing of the personality which makes it possible to deal with real life situations where emotional distraction could make the difference in whether one survives the experience or not. The art of cold calculation in a difficult situation with no thought for moral issues or what is fair to all involved is dangerously efficient. One can feel the emotions, but use them or choose not to react to them until a less crucial time.

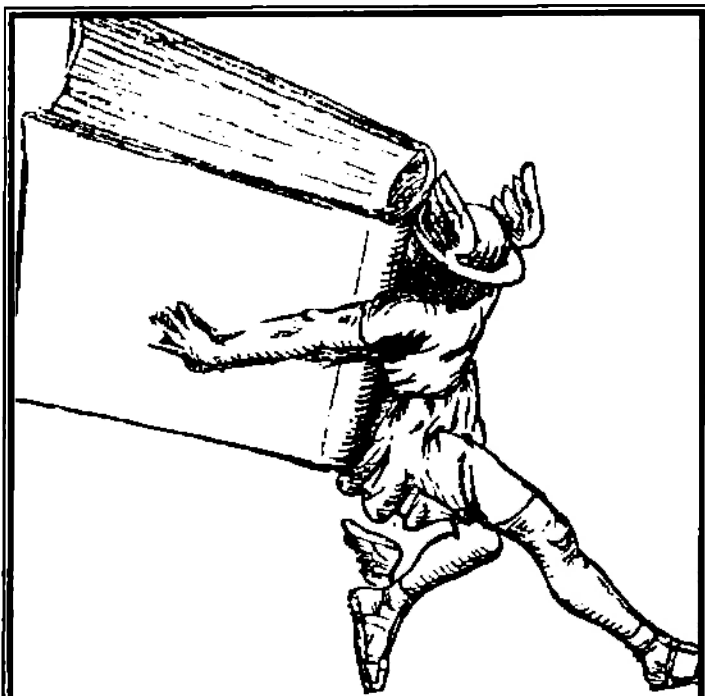
Self interest is not evil, it's just good sense. The journey into darkness, whether it is a dark part of ourselves or a dark time in our life, is a valuable learning experience. To allow fear to keep us from experiencing darkness of the soul would be a great loss, a loss of a part of ourselves.

Since I started this article with a quote, I'll finish with another one, much more widely known.

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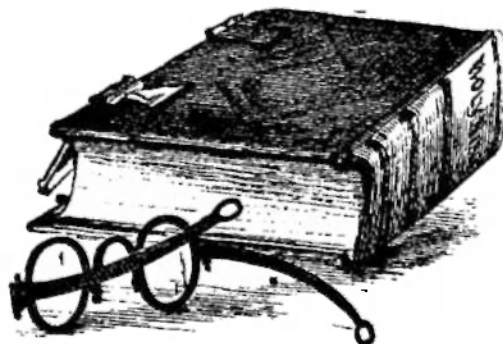


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INTO THE UNDERWORLD...

by Keter Elan

It has been an extended magickal working. This article appears in our seventh volume, first (and final) issue. We began this endeavor with the Samhain 1989 issuance of Mezla which morphed into Mezlim in 1990. It has always been a labor of love, of creativity, of desire to share magickal information amongst more experienced practitioners... those who are out there truly doing their Work... and looking for others with whom they could exchange information and grow as we all progress down our respective paths to enlightenment.

In this sense, I feel that it was a success. We pushed the envelope of existing magickal publications and printed work, good work, that wasn't available to magickal practitioners anywhere else. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough interest in what we printed. Maybe we were all too busy with our everyday lives; maybe there wasn't enough experienced practitioners out there who were interested in furthering their growth in this particular manner; maybe we didn't sell ourselves well enough. There are a lot of "maybes" that come to mind, but the reality is that after "lo, these many years" of extensive dedication of time and resources (in US dollars we've invested almost \$100,000 of our own money to keep this going over this period), we have decided to move on.

This is the final issue of Mezlim to be published by N'Chi Publishing. Should another organization or individual be interested in continuing this tradition, we would be happy to talk with them further. However, we no longer have the time and/or dollars to do justice to this wonderful concept. It is sad, and in a way feels like we are losing a large part of ourselves, but we had stopped growing... both personally and professionally. The work had been reduced to Administrivia which none of us wanted to do, certainly not for free as all our labor has been volunteered to date; the number of ads and subscriptions coming through our doors had gone down so that cash flow has been even less than usual. It was obvious that the magazine was slowly dying from lack of interest/attention; so, rather than let Mezlim die this slow and ignoble death of attrition, we have elected to sacrifice it upon the altar of Lessons Learned.

Death can be viewed as being swept into the Underworld, into a place of subjective rather than objective reality, or, in other words, into the Unconscious. The concept with which we worked, to support "all growth oriented, magickal movements; celebrating the spirituality of the Living Earth!", is still a passion within our lives. Each of us is currently struggling to find our own means of furthering this goal within ourselves and our work. I have only recently begun my own personal search for meaning amidst this ending, and for focus on how to proceed. I must identify that which is most important to me from the investigation and imagery of my own underworld, my own subconscious.

I have realized that I am not what I have been doing, be that publishing an esoteric magazine, supporting a small health oriented business, or being a corporate cog in the wheel. These are manifestations of basic needs within my life; tips of icebergs that have surfaced in my conscious mind, but which maintain the bulk of their existence below the water line of my subconscious. My questions have moved from

“What should I do?” to “What should I be?” to “What am I?” These are not questions which can be answered by the rational, conscious mind. I must go seeking below the surface... “for it’s down to the Underworld we must go, for our jewels, treasures and riches.”(1)

The Underworld is full of amazing images which provide gateways to the lands within our psyches that hold the essence of who/what we are. To the extent that we can open these doors and access these realms, these aspects of Self are readily available to us to draw on (as sources of power and of wisdom) in our daily lives. However, to the extent that these doorways are closed against us, shrouded in darkness and fear, entire landscapes (and the related light that they might shed on the mysteries of the Self) are made unavailable to us. Many people live their entire lives without having access to the complete landscape of Self; never knowing that a richer, more meaningful life could be theirs if they could only find these doors and open them. Even for those of us who understand this, it can be extremely difficult to locate the doors and, once located, find a way to open them.

I have visited my Underworld many times and know that I have a number of closed doors awaiting me, but like mirages on a desert, they often shimmer just out of reach. I have become too caught up in “Doing” to take the time to adequately reflect on “Being.” Mezlim, which was supposed to be about my magick, became a barrier to my magick. The large amount of care and feeding it required did not allow me the time to focus on my own growth and purpose; and, in almost seven years, it never grew to the point where it could walk on its own two feet, thereby freeing me to focus on my Will.

I am not trying to absolve myself of Mezlim’s failure to thrive. My life throughout this period has been inordinately busy. Steps that could have been taken to generate growth and improvement were not made because I had no additional time to work them into my already overcommitted schedule. It is hard to take time away from the activities that constitute your livelihood for an activity that has very little hope of return. Small magazines, good magazines, fail all the time.

Until this past year, we had grown each year, not by

a lot, but at least by some small margin, enough to continue to hold out hope that one day the magazine would pay its own bills. However, 1995 was a terrible year. Our advertising coordinator resigned and no one else wanted the job. Our correspondence & subscriptions coordinator met the man of her dreams and no longer had the time to deal with our correspondence. Our largest distributor underwent a massive reorganization and became extremely slow pay (at one point they were nine months behind in paying us). All this at a time when it was becoming obvious that my corporate job, which has paid for all our shortfalls over the years, is in the process of going away. With no money, fewer resources and declining growth, the decision, although painful, was obvious.

While I mourn the passing of this momentous undertaking from my life, I look back upon many good memories... of great authors and wonderful artists who have given us their time and the fruits of their labor for nothing other than a complimentary copy; of long hours worked in the company of friends to meet a deadline while delivering the best possible product; of people met and ideas exchanged over interesting and, at times, controversial topics; of festivals attended as a vendor of Mezlim, watching people discover it for the first time, and sharing in their joy at that discovery. I have been richly rewarded for my investment of time and money over the years, but it is time to move on. And so, to all of you out there who have believed in us and supported us and submitted your work to us... farewell... and thank you, for without you, it could not have been what it was... which was one damn fine magazine!

See you in the Underworld!

(1) Partial quote from “The Underworld Rap”, created by Keter Elan and Tara Webster at a LumensGate fire following the main rite (The Kadesha Ritual, June 8, 1991).

Attention: S. M. Quantum Realities/Druid’s Grove. Please contact Cinthia. Need Daughter’s chart done. Would appreciate much. More Light! More Love! More Freedom! More Joy! Namaste.
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DEATH AND CONSCIOUSNESS

by *Mary Schoeppel*

Death is the transition to the underworld. Physical death occurs when the processes holding the flesh together as a unit on the body cease to function. The surface flesh decays, leaving only the essential bones. Mental death is the process that leads one, through successive layers, to the essential structure within.

The collapse leading to death is the collapse of one's assumptions and beliefs in the experiences of one's life. Cause and effect relationships that always worked before now prove invalid. The axis upon which one's world was spinning crumbles, leaving one flailing in space.

If one is to survive, a new structure must be put in place. This new structure is already there - it lies deep within the previous one. Thus life "after death" continues in the "underworld". Death exposes rawer conditions; rawer, but more vital, and closer to the source. Death is a challenge to strip away layers of illusion and trust a new set of assumptions.

Survival truly is at stake. Humans rely upon their minds to procure their needs from the environment, which means they use relationships to get from cause to desired effect. The key is to alter oneself to fit the new order of cause and effect operating in one's life, rather than frantically trying to patch together Outer circumstances that would seem to be cohesive in the old order, except that the

old order is no longer in control.

Death in the Tarot is associated with the sign of Scorpio, the number 13, and the Hebrew letter Nun. $1+3=4$, and 4 is the number of the Emperor, which is associated with Aries and the letter Heh. Both Scorpio and Aries are ruled by Mars, which is associated with the Tower, and the letter Peh.

These associations imply that the cycle of life and death is a breaking-down process. They also reveal that analysis is the catalyst of this process. Observing (Heh, window) circumstances and dissecting their parts (Nun, fish) and seeing the internal relationships that bind them together into a process is analysis (Peh, mouth as the organ of speech, of definition).

Analysis by a new set of assumptions cuts away the deadwood and reveals a new form of consciousness underneath. This "death by new analysis" transforms consciousness by altering the limitations the mind can use to establish its identity and make comparisons to the Outer world.

A new Emperor has seized control. A new ruling principle has power. The ruler is bound by the principles, not vice versa. Note that the Emperor is surrounded by the mountains of his kingdom - they define his kingship. If he can no longer hold the borders of his territory together, he is no longer king.

Death is a change in the perception of the Emperor. Each successive death exposes principles closer to the source. If the Emperor (consciousness) is successful in retaining his rule, it is because he embodies and manifests the new principles he comprehends.

The Sun is exalted in Aries, and Mars rules Aries. Thus the overall structuring principle is Martian in nature, while the ruler guiding his kingdom within this framework is Solar. He supplies the processes in the system with a constant flow of energy through the structure, leading to a renewed purpose. The same holds on the macrocosmic level; entropy is ever increasing, and only the energy supplied by the Sun keeps the

system going.

The Tower depicts the collapse of the most basic set of limitations the mind uses to interpret the sensations it receives: geometry.

The crumbling tower was constructed using geometry. Geometry is the underlying key of the mind (the Magician, the magickal link) because it is the reference frame the mind uses to organize the environment so that the body can move and change position. A "change of position" is the aim of all magick, whether seeking superconsciousness or a material desire.

Euclidean geometry is convenient for explaining processes in everyday experience, but it treats space as rigid and fixed. This system of geometry falls apart at the atomic and cosmic levels. The collapse of the rigid structure of the Tower indicates that a geometry that assumes space is a fixed box is not the truth. The non-Euclidean geometry used in relativity theory reveals space and time as inseparable. This geometry reacts to matter introduced into the system; it is not static. Light is matter, and the lightning flash reveals that anything introduced into the system will alter the shape of space.

Viewing the world through the lens of Euclidean geometry is a learned technique, but is essential to a certain continuity of reality. It operates within the Four Quarters that are described as pillars that "hold up the world" - i.e., all human minds function from this basic premise, propping up the reality around them.

The Magician makes use of this same idea every time he performs the Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram. By performing the Banishing Ritual, one sets up the reference frame of one's own reality. This reference frame provides boundaries, or limits, that the mind uses to establish its position and extend its identity Outward through relationships to them. The Magician calls these relationships his magickal Instruments, or Weapons, and the boundaries to which he is relating himself he calls the Elements. The Instruments truly are extensions of the Magician's consciousness; they act as messengers to the forms of consciousness embodied in the Elements which comprise his reality.

When setting up this reference frame, one acts as Magician and Emperor simultaneously. The Magician stands Outside of the system (reality) as its creator; the Emperor functions inside the system, as manager and controller.

The Magician has his Instruments on the altar, which is the cube of Euclidean space, but he is beyond it, so he is in a fluid and reactive space and geometry.

The Emperor sits upon a solid cube - his rule rests upon the limits of the reality he created. The Emperor is aware of all of his territory, he is the observer. His Will is separate from what he observes, yet controls all that he observes. His ability to observe is his power, yet he must be detached enough to be essentially at the point of Nothing that is within All.

Yet what is really at work in that ritual relates to what is called the "Copenhagen interpretation" in quantum theory. This interpretation says that there is no definite cause and effect at work in the universe, that there is no objective reality. Where a moving particle will end up cannot be predicted with absolute certainty. The particle will react in accordance with the expectations of the observer, an observer who is part of the system (Emperor), but it also acts as if it "knows" the quantum state (energy level and movement of all particles) in the entire system, and behaves accordingly.

The concept of the Four Quarters that "hold up the world" is the same: all of humanity observes and has learned to expect a Euclidean space, and so that is how the everyday world arranges itself within those limits.

When unobserved, a particle cannot be said definitely to be doing anything, or even existing. Only when observed does it exist and act. It is as if when unobserved, there are a multitude (Nun, fish) of phantom particles in any of the possible states this particle could occupy, given the quantum state of the system. The act of observing (Emperor and Tower) combined with the particle's awareness of the state of every other particle, determines which state the particle will occupy.

The same can be said of a huge number of particles - there are multiple realities when unobserved, but once the observer expects to see one of the choices, all the other possibilities are eliminated and that choice is "real".

When one switches one's assumptions about what is there before him in the world, one alters consciousness and thus the entire universe "knows" of this change and reacts to the decision of Will embodied in that angle of observation.

Now if one is creating the reference frame of their own reality when performing the Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, this means "banishing" in the sense of excluding all those other phantom choices. But this obscures the deeper truth: it means one's Will supercedes all other influences. By setting oneself up as creator and controller of this reality, the Magician is making his Will - his observation - the stronger influence, and since there is only one Will, he is assured that his desire will find a way of expression through the present quantum state of the universe.

This can happen only if the controlling consciousness is simultaneously Inside and Outside of the reality of which it is creator. The key is understanding what consciousness is. There are different forms of conscious "matter", but the basic "matter" of all is the same, and all are linked. Once the Magician fully grasps the implications of this and how to alter his most basic assumptions, death is a renewal process under his control. All one is doing in magick is communicating to other forms of consciousness, whose observations contribute to what we call reality. Note that each Tarot trump has an associated "Intelligence", or form of consciousness.

The challenge of death for the conscious mind is to do the irrational: trust in the unknown. One makes use of the fact that nothing exists when unobserved. When the Magician turns his back, past events now exist only in how his mind uses them to interpret the present. Carry this further, and the past is not allowed to influence the present. Trust is the gateway to the underworld and renewed life. When everything collapses, one has only two choices: push beyond the immediate pain and trust in the unknown, or become bitter and fearful and be stuck in the old structure, spinning wheels around the hub of the question, "Why?"

Those who refresh their lives don't give a damn about "why". They plunge their Will into the void in front of them and trust that Love will crystallize the new structure around it.

"Love is the Law, Love under Will." The woman in the Tower wears the crown. Love rules. Love supports Will, She is not under the dominion of Will. Love makes Will possible.

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GEOGRAPHIES OF LIFE AND DEATH: A Traveler's Advisory

by David Sparenberg

Whoever lives, also dies. Yet death is not a cannibal-oblivion. It is part of the scheme of reality; it is how things work together. From here, on this physical plane, life is light and death is shadow. From the side of that other, immaterial region, the terms of darkness and luminosity are different. Perhaps they are even in reverse?

Most importantly, there is this: Life is a phase and death is another phase. Death is a continuation of life's journey. And so, within such unific perception, life itself, and the extension named death, is either wholly natural or wholly supernatural; one's decision regarding these identifications being determined by the solidity or fluidity of the barriers the mind erects between the several dimensions of creation.

If any such proposition as the foregoing is accepted, what becomes a truly momentous question pertains to the event and means of entering the conditional topographies of death. This question can be phrased as

follows: "If to die is natural (or supernatural) and projects the disembodied soul into a continuum of differently attuned, but not wholly different, systems of possibilities, what moral behavior accompanies the transition into the world of the dead?" Or: "As the journey must inevitably be undertaken, how and why should it matter when it is so?"

While this question may well be the inquiry of ultimate practicality, generations of human beings, in widely diverse cultures and under varieties of beliefs, have provided responses through such commonplace remarks as "premature death" and "going before one's time".

No doubt, the moral evaluations invested in these and kindred terms engage the sheer animal excitation and apprehension before violent bloodshed and mortal disease. Beyond this level of instinctual response, however, is a spiritual awareness and consequence, which is apparently fixed to time as a standard of appropriateness and fulfillment. Rising from some conditional depth against the shock of aggrieved and unwarranted death, this same awareness alludes to a paradigm of origin and destiny that is intuitively carried within the consciousness of being human, while on the same level implying a participatory tropos woven into the intricate, and yet most intimate, tapestry of existence and being.

That this consciousness is recurrently expressed by ordinary, rather than esoteric, language adds to its reliability and power; including, as it does, a normative democracy of transcendent anticipation and experience. Moreover, we can explore our paradigm, more correctly, metaphysic, along the following lines.

The spiritual origin of a life; as relates to characteristics and personalizations of the quality called soul; even as the destiny of soul; as relates to furtherance along a concourse of continuance and meaning; is obscured from the normal considerations of ordinary consensual reality. Yet beyond this

obscuration — the overrunning of spiritual (or magical or mystical) perception by habitual, reductionary activity and the resulting inertia before the mundane and banal — resides an intimation or wisdom of imaginal vision. And the components of this alternate seeing articulate into belief or occult knowledge, as can be found in Druidic, Orphic or Tibetan doctrines, to mention but three of many planetary sources.

Harkening back to the universally effective structure of "primitive" shamanic cosmology, each such wisdom way shares a stock complex of essential, experiential convictions: first, the multi-dimensional or, at least, tripartite nature of cosmic organization, ranging from subtle to gross infrastructures of communion and maintenance interfacements; second, the presence of a rarified entity, individuated in human identity, formed and motivated by both the laws of inner evolution and the ecosophy of a holistic, creational economy; third, ecstatic practices, via this same subtle entity, of bilocal migrations between the interdependent manifestations of polymorphic, cosmic mutuality.

In truth, even so limited an explanation as the above, contains within its concentrated expression responses sufficient to the ethical demands of the question with which we began.

The economy of our posited worldview is an economy of life, regulated by a procreative life force that is at once both dynamic, purposefully diversifying and radically invested in a harmony of transition and permutation (which is to say, in the genuine, lawful and comprehensively natural appropriateness of the transformations of "each and every"). Whereby we can further understand that the consequences of "premature" death — brought on by aggression, homicidal or genocidal malice and the intentions of willed malediction resulting in soul loss — are ripples of disruption running from dimension to dimension and causing afflictive disintegration to more levels and communities than the limited and present family of earth inhabiting humanity.

Obversely, we see here clearly how the peacemakers and threshold travelers (the guides and retrievers of souls); as indeed all questers after those numinous and luminous magics and mythologies which normalize mortal awareness of the great ordinary as the unique, outer body of extensive, imaginal reality; are benefactors of total creation, charged with responsibilities of immeasurable spiritual worth and dignity. The geographies of death, no less than the geographies of life, being inhabited by creatures of condition, are equally maintained through potencies at once pathetic and reciprocal, insistent on continuance in ways and measures outside of the scope of mental sophistry, but not outside of living awe and wonder.



DEPRESSION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

by Paul Joseph Rovelli

For each of us there is a facet of our psyche that remains totally gullible. This is a weakness for which we must maintain a constant vigilance. In the spiritual community this leads to many abuses as there are profit sharks who seek to make money by pretending to be wise to those individuals seeking spiritual rapture to counter the pain of their morbid existences. Indeed this is in many cases the primary motivator to spiritual work; the pain of life. The most effective provocateur in this regard are those events that happen to us that cause the most extreme psychic trauma.

How do we deal with this psychic trauma? Krishnamurti would say simply not to reflect upon it and it will become weak in and of itself. He portends to advise us that it is as simple as removing a dirty piece of clothing. And he almost mocks us when we can't seem to do it. And mixed in with this are so many other spiritual systems (like Buddhism) that teach that transcendence will free you from all desire and hence the resulting pain that must accompany desire.

Well, I have my desires and my pain.

This is part of my personality and I don't seek to kill off any part of me. Yet there is a higher component to my psyche. So I insist that no matter how limited, I do have some spiritual experience. At least I'm a few steps along the path — and it's not important how far I may or may not have to go as the journey is at least as rich and rewarding as the goal. And so, in my most profound times of psychological pain I can catch myself laughing with such joy. This part of me seems always to be present even though you may not be able to see it for yourself. And yet, I consistently have my down times.

Winter is just such a sad time for me... with no sun and my doors shut, I can feel so isolated and cut off from the world. My neighbors are a big part of my life and when I find myself cut off from this I find myself cut off from the world around me. Lately I find myself living alone, and there's not necessarily someone to come home to. This is really a new experience for me and has been cause for depression. Perhaps because of the transitory development in my psyche as I have to learn to live more fully with myself. This can really ruin a good day when one wants the company and it's not readily available. Locked inside my house alone and with no sun or heat around me, it's to that deep within that I must go.

And so I can sink deep inside myself and find a favorite and dreaded place. I love this place as it is the source of inspiration — hence the mystical and artistic life that I now live. There is a society of angels and demons if you will, that has its own culture and activities. I dream my dreams and feel those feelings which are common to the interior lives of us all. Yet still in this place there is an abiding loneliness that exudes so much pain that I can wince from the thought of it. It is the home of the flip side of all those good things that I just mentioned. And still I find it so hysterically funny that both can so easily cohabitate in the same space. This is a wonderment that captures my fancy.

It leads me to wonder... Can a

transcended man or woman experience sadness? Does he or she get angry (perhaps even unjustly)? Is just such a one capable of mistakes? These are questions that should be answered in the affirmative and this is important to state publicly. So many flock to good teachers (gurus, spiritual advisors, et al) and when they discover their humanity they get so pissed off. Enlightenment deals with one's perceptions of life and not necessarily the day-to-day situations. At least not in a necessarily overt manner. The Qabalah teaches us that there is a hierarchical level to existence and that we exist on all these levels simultaneously.

So it makes sense to me that I can be in a state of rapture (Atzilutic consciousness if you will... for those familiar with the Qabalah) while still in the slimy murk of my own mundane desires (Assiatic consciousness). And believe me when I say I have had my very bad, down moments... and they have been witnessed by others! This could possibly lead to embarrassment, however, I am not as easily given to that emotion as I once was. And this has cost me a student or two in their ignorance as they seemed to have wanted to put me on this pedestal. This was an obstacle for them that they or I could not overcome and hence their departure.

Many seek the occult and other spiritual studies because of deep psychic trauma. And my story probably parallels many. We start with absolutely incorrect ideas about the spiritual life. And like the Fool of the Holy Tarot, we plunge in with both feet not really knowing what we are getting ourselves into. Yet there is so much wisdom in our folly as we have plunged onto the true rock of ages.

Yet there are others in doing this that meet with the wrong guru without the experience to really make the right determination. In some systems, the student would be viewed as spiritually unfit and hence deserving of this fate as they would only persist in their own ignorance anyway. I rather see this as a period of gullibility where the spiritually astute would learn by trial and error. Still a truly effective con-wo/man will milk this student for money and sex or any number of other things while not returning any spiritual insight but only propagating and maintaining the student's naivete.

S/He seems to get fulfillment of Hir desires... but these are shadowy desires as the psychic pathology is mostly hidden deep in the strata of the subconscious... on the part of both parties. Both the charlatan guru and the gullible student have made a psychic connection with like parties. Both are lost in an alienation from what would truly be

beneficial to them and hence, both consistently maintain each other's neurosis.

There was just such a time when I was caught in this situation. I worked with a major occult order and really looked up to several members as profound teachers. Of course this was my projection as I was seeing what I wanted to see. When they eventually revealed the darker side of their consciousness I saw that deep interior which they so fervently worked to surround with light. This was a profound moment for me. It showed me my darkness within and enabled me to bring it forth, which I now have done. And so in its place I have put the vesicle of light and it has become shrouded by the darkness that I have brought forth.

This is the beginnings of the path. And that does not mean to imply that I have generated all the necessary energy to maintain such a balanced and cohesive structure. There are moments and days when the darkness plunges deep back into me and I reach for that blanket of light to comfort me in my despair. This can be almost life threatening in the scope of its power. There is much to learn about any path before one can truly take a sure foot along that path — and beware any impudent confidence in your footing lest you trip on the thinnest of twigs along that route.

There is a certain impeccable proclivity that develops when you have experience along the path you choose. And part of that involves constantly reaching in and pulling out so much more darkness from your psyche. Wear this on your sleeve and let a gnostic light grow deep within to fill the void. There would be no brightness to that light if there wasn't such a deep darkness to provide the contrast. I remember hearing from another of my spiritual teacher's students. He was in the process of garlanding my teacher with praise and compliments in recognizing his attainment to a certain grade. And I remember my hearing about my teacher's response. To paraphrase, he said: "I am simply a fellow sufferer through this life with you."

The rewards of spiritual attainment I can most certainly say are there in whatever limited capacity I have partially partaken. And these rewards are most indescribable. We have built a culture that more easily has learned to create a vocabulary of pain and suffering as our psychological establishment delineates with great articulation in all of its many dissertations. Perhaps we can begin together to create a vocabulary of joy! Let the mystics of this world enjoin the psychological establishment to research psychic health and let that be our addiction.

ENDARKENMENT:

The Marriage of Light and Shadow in the Process of Creation ¹

by Joseph Robert Jochmans, Lit.D.

Recognizing The Darkness Inside

Within us, as a multi-conscious being, we possess two important aspects beyond our waking consciousness which play a key role in the process of creation. These two aspects are our Divine Consciousness — our spiritual selves, the Spark of God/Goddess that dwells within our Center of Centers — and the Dark, Shadow or Hidden part of ourselves, that occupies the deepest and most secret part of who we are, the Unconscious.

When Initiates attain divine Consciousness, in a state variously called *nirvana*, *samadhi*, etc., they are sometimes mistaken in believing they have reached the final level of consciousness there is. However, only as we can achieve the greatest spiritual aspect of who we are, are we then ready to face the lowest depths of ourselves, to fully release the last limitations and attachments — to enter into the “dark night of the soul.”

It is only through the combined action of the Divine Consciousness bringing Light into and transmuting the Dark aspects of the Unconsciousness, that an individual can make the quantum leap of transforming the Unconsciousness into All Consciousness, the true state of Oneness. This is the final summation and culmination of who we can become, before eventually awakening to and Transcending beyond

into our Star Selves, our Cosmic Consciousness. The interaction and eventual fusion of the Light and Dark within us, and as it exists throughout the rest of the Universe, is the Great Mystery of Mysteries that gives birth to direct Creation and Manifestation itself.

There are many individuals who refuse to acknowledge that the Dark exists within them, or that the Unconscious has a definite energy and power within our lives. To attempt to cut one's self off from the Unconscious self is to sever the individual from a major part of who they are, to separate one from a major potential source of self-creation. Just as all Darkness is blinding, so is all Light — we need both Light and Shadow to be able to offer enough contrast to be able to see what is Real.

Like our physical shadow that is always with us, so our Inner Shadow is there, acting not as the antagonist to self, but rather as our complement. The goal is to perfectly assimilate our Shadow as a functional, positive aspect of who we are. Otherwise, if we run away from it and the lessons it has to offer us, then we end up projecting our Shadow out onto someone else. Inevitably, they will reflect it back to us, causing conflict and disorder in our outer world, because of our own inner imbalance.

As we are beginning to understand the Universe in terms of light and dark matter, so we are also recognizing that the same balance must exist within us, as it does in the rest of Nature. In the Eastern symbol of the Tao, half the symbol is a swirl of white, the other half an equal swirl of black. Yet within the white is a single black dot, and in the black is a single white dot. This represents the Darkling Light and the Shining Dark.

The Buddhist poem *Sandokai* notes: “Within the light there is darkness, but do not be attached to this darkness. Within the darkness there is light, but do not look for that light.”

As we long for the Light within us, our Divine selves, so there is also a longing for Darkness, to find one's shadow places within. We are not to be obsessed with one or the other, but to

always seek balance first, then eventual fusion, between the two. Neither Light nor Dark are ends unto themselves, but means together toward greater Realizations.

In ancient alchemy, the transmuting substance turns into nigredo or “blackness” before turning to gold. In Tibetan Buddhism, blackness is recognized as the stage before enlightenment. To the Sufis, one must go through blackness for the soul to achieve its “beatitude.” In Turkish the word black symbolizes purity; in Celtic it stands for fertility. In our own language, the word “black” originally came from a root word meaning “gleaming.”

Our Shadow Self exists on the border between Light and Dark. It is on the edge of Darkness that Light arises. Light shines from Darkness. Darkness engenders the Light; Light and Dark interweave in the act of becoming. In Light the Dark dies, giving birth to new Light. Light dies first in order to touch Darkness, and return to Light.

To be awakened, one must first sleep. We must return to the Source, to be able to go forward into new birth. What is remembered must first be forgotten. Only in completion comes total remembrance. Darkness thus fulfills the Light, while the Light transmutes the Dark. Shadows dim the Light so that Reality can be observed. Light dispels the Shadows, yet does not take away its energy. Only together do Light and Dark transcend to create Oneness.

Light And Darkness In The Act Of Creation

The Ancients not only spoke of the Unconscious in the analogy of Light and Darkness, but they also repeatedly described it as the “Great Ocean.” Within the psyche, the archetype image of the Ocean is very ingrained. The Ocean perceived there is not only that of the individual Unconsciousness, but it also represents our getting in touch with the Collective Unconscious of all of humanity, the Collective Unconscious of the Earth, and even the Collective Unconscious of the Universe. It is all the same Ocean, the One Ocean, as the Primordial Waters out of which all Creation comes.

The Ocean of the Unconscious, within us and everywhere, is composed of “the Aethers,” or, in more modern terminology, Unordered Ether. It is the Unconsciousness that provides the Basic ENERGY of Creation. When the Divine Consciousness interacts with the Unconscious — when the “Spirit of God moves upon the face of the Waters” — it brings FORM to

the Ether, organizing the Basic ENERGY into Etheric Structures, which then become the primary matrices around which matter coalesces, to manifest into physical reality.

The active ingredient, the one essential catalyst that allows this union between Spiritual FORM and Unconscious ENERGY to take place in order to fully bring Creation into being, is LOVE. LOVE is the Ultimate Builder. It originates out of the Divine, both from the Creator of the Universe, and in the Spark of the Creator that exists within us. Because Divine LOVE dwells at our Center of Centers, as we express it we can play an active role in the process of Creation ourselves.

However, along with Divine LOVE we as human beings were also infused with free will. And in an excessive overuse and abuse of that free will, we have unfortunately produced a second ingredient which now plays a role in Creation — FEAR.

FEAR acts as an inhibitor. Where FEAR is projected into the Unordered Ethers of the Unconscious, they remain unordered and chaotic. The Ocean is in storm. Unmanifested realities are not allowed to collate. Where there is no LOVE, only resistance through FEAR, there is no fusion between Spirit and Ether, between FORM and ENERGY, and as a result Creation as it was meant to be does not manifest.

It is important to realize, first, that we are the source of FEAR energy, not the Divine. Second, FEAR in and of itself does not have the ability to organize the Ethers. Its only power is as it acts as an inhibitor, or as a delay to eventual Creation. All other “power” of FEAR is illusion. Collective FEAR can only be organized based on our very own thought forms and belief — nothing else.

What happens is that Divine Consciousness, in order to free the Etheric Waters of the Ocean from an accumulation of FEAR energy we have placed there, at times creates Etheric Structures out of the Ocean containing the FEAR elements. This allows the FEAR to manifest into a physical form so that we — as their original source — have to deal with them physically, face to face. All the Divine Consciousness does is, as an act of LOVE for all Creation, compensate for what we ourselves are creating, and gives us the opportunity to correct what we have done.

In the apostle John’s *Book of Revelations*, there is a number of wonderful symbols that directly relates to the interactions of both humanity and the Divine upon the Collective Unconscious, and what is potentially being created. We find, toward the beginning of the work, the image of the world being a “raging sea,” representing the “nations, peoples and tongues” of all humanity —

the archetypal Ocean of the Collective Unconscious. Out of this “sea” there repeatedly arise “beasts” and other phantasmic creatures that bring war, disease and destruction — the collective FEAR energies suppressed by humanity throughout the ages into the Ocean, that are periodically returned into physical manifestation.

Eventually, however, the epitome of FEAR — coalesced into the images of “Satan,” “Hell” and “Death” — through direct Divine intervention are cast into the “Lake of Fire,” the symbol of ultimate Transmutation. What then emerges is a New Earth where there is “no more night” and “no more sea” — the Collective Unconscious is fused perfectly with the Divine Consciousness, and is now a harmonious part of the “Sea of Glass,” the All Consciousness that surrounds the Universal Throne of God.

Within this ancient symbology we are also given a number of important keys for learning how to deal with the FEAR energies we have generated, and actually prevent them from manifesting. The first effort we can take is not in allowing FEAR to enter the Unconscious to begin with. This we can do by facing the FEAR immediately, not resisting it, but accepting and fully assimilating its lesson into our lives. Physical FEAR can be dealt with consciously; emotional FEAR is the prerogative of the subconscious; mental-psychic FEAR belongs to the higher consciousness; and karmic FEAR is under the jurisdiction of our soul consciousness. It is only when we refuse to face FEAR on any of these other levels first, that it finally and inevitably plummets into the Ocean of the Unconscious.

This affects not only ourselves, but because it is part of the larger Collective Unconsciousness, it can also potentially affect humanity, the Earth, even the Universe. In John’s *Revelations*, humanity’s collective FEARS are given a chance to be initially dealt with through the physical Seven Churches, the emotional Seven Seals, the mental Seven Trumpets and the karmic Seven Vials, before they finally and tragically manifest as the “Beast” and the Seven Thunders of the Collective Unconscious.

If FEAR does enter into the Etheric Waters of the Unconscious, then we are given a second key. This is the ability to transmute the FEAR energy into LOVE. Because we possess the Spark of the Creator within us, we are given the power, if we so choose to exercise it, to direct Divine LOVE into the Ocean, and change the FEAR into LOVE, so that the Creation that is released will not be detrimental for humanity, but instead will be positive and life-affirming. Again, Divine Consciousness only brings Creation into being — we are the ones who are responsible if that Creation takes the manifested form of either FEAR or LOVE.

The Darkside Of Self And Humanity In Today’s World

Perhaps as never before in human history, it is paramount that humanity both individually and as a whole learn to face the Darkness Within and exercise again our role in the act of Creation, for we are reaching a critical point in our history when the Shadow, representing our worst nightmares we’ve been avoiding for the past two thousand years, is returning to haunt us with a vengeance. There are certain basic principles about the Shadow Self we need to acknowledge and work with, if we are to survive and co-create together a future that will be life-affirming and not self-destructive.

First of all, how we think and what we act upon in our life is limited by what we fail to recognize. When we fail to recognize our Shadow Self, and fail to even see that we do not recognize it, there is very little room for growth or change. Until we finally see clearly what role our Shadow Self plays within us, and within all Humanity, then we will also see what really shapes our thoughts and actions, both personally and collectively.

It is better to be whole than to be good. Just trying to “be good” suppresses the inner part that we think is “bad,” which eventually forces itself back into our consciousness in the attempt to be recognized and dealt with. “Love your enemy as *being* yourself.” The only real enemy is not outside us, but what we’ve projected outward onto someone else, who mirrors back to us that inner aspect we don’t want to admit is within us. Genuine self acceptance of all who we truly are is the first step in achieving integration into wholeness, not only within ourselves, but also with others.

The Shadow Self is that aspect that “gets the joke,” because by laughing at others we are really laughing at ourselves, at the inner part of us which has been unable to express its own pain or ridiculousness. Laughter is truly the best medicine, for it is a joyful release and transmutation of what has been hidden and held onto for too long.

We can neither embrace the Dark Self and let it rule our life, nor can we deny its existence and the accumulation of repressed aspects within us it personifies. Falling into one or the other of these is self-deception and self-delusion. Either direction is also a denial of spiritual growth.

The Shadow becomes a monster only when we ignore what it is we are forcing it to express. The Shadow can only take more and more extreme measures until it is finally heard and can

no longer be denied. These extreme measures may take the form of unpredictable or excessive behavior, over-reaction to situations, even violence acted out against others. The Shadow can become an inner Frankenstein or Mr. Hyde of our own making or unmaking. And on the collective level it can manifest as a world conqueror or an Antichrist.

Remember that the goal is not to empower the Shadow aspect itself, allowing it to become the dictator of our soul, for that will only deepen the inner conflict and confusion. The idea is to lessen what makes the Shadow powerful, which is what it is holding onto — all the unpleasant qualities we are trying to hide rather than letting go.

The more our Shadow Self is forced to hang onto, the more energy it needs to do so, and the less energy there is available for self-healing. By releasing the grip on what no longer works in our life, we also free up a tremendous energy reservoir which can be redirected for our own rejuvenation. What is more, the Shadow aspect contains not only the last unresolved attachments, but also all the undeveloped talents and gifts waiting to be released. For every inner dragon that awaits transmutation, there is a treasure it guards over which can be ours.

The world has become the stage for the collective Shadow Self to be manifest. Through every mass media of communications and expression, the Shadow cries to be heard. This is not a time for making judgments or for censorship. It is a time to watch, listen, and re-integrate what has been lost within the human condition.

We have reached a crucial period when each person the world over must choose not to add their personal "darkness" to the collective Shadow, but instead works to bring the Divine Clear Light of clarity and understanding into the Shadowland, to own again what has been disowned within all of Humanity.

Receiving the Divine Light is not in and of itself enlightenment. It is in the applying of the Light to see into the darkness of ourselves that enlightenment comes. "At the darkest moment comes the Light" — the birthing of the All Self into wholeness. This is not a singular occurrence. Once triggered, it is an ongoing process that never ends.

Ultimately, it is up to each individual to daily practice an inner "ritual of renewal," a process whereby their Shadow is continually brought into Light and is assimilated into their Whole or All Self. Each renewing can reduce inhibiting or potentially self-destructive inner aspects, as well as release trapped life energy, for self healing and new expressions of creativity.

Watch carefully the actions of the modern collective — in groups, organizations, institutions, clubs, societies, religions, cults, sports, political parties, businesses, corporations, conferences, summits, congresses, etc. Does the collective strive toward wholeness, or has the Shadow Self taken over, projecting outward the group fears, anxieties, hatreds or guilts? Does the collective preserve individual expression, or does it demand allegiance to a simplistic belief system? What life-affirming goals are espoused by the collective, or is the overriding purpose of the collective to maintain its own existence? A collective of All Selves joined together into One Mind One Heart can transform the world. But Shadow Selves fused into a collective Shadow can only amplify the darkness.

The key to our collective future is not in what we learn, but how we learn it. In most societies, we spend the first half of our lifetime being told what to suppress into our Shadow Self, and the last half trying to retrieve what was lost. True Education should not be focused on conformity to an established system of imposed limitations, but rather in developing the responsibility to wisely exercise individual free will and make choices in all matters of daily living. The right choice can only be made when the full spectrum of possible choices is openly and honestly presented, without imposed bias, prejudice, guilt or fear. And when we can be aware of all of our choices, it follows that we can take responsibility for the kind of world we wish to create.

World peace among nations must first begin with peace exercised within ourselves. The true peace-makers will be those who did not face an outer enemy, but first had the moral courage to face their own shadows inside. Only when a true integration between Light and Dark aspects happens within the individual, then the outward projections onto others of who is "good" and who is "evil" will end. There will be no investment in being worse or better than anyone else, only a taking of responsibility for our own Light and Shadow experiences. The illusion of separation will fall away, and understanding and compassion for one another can be truly exercised to the fullest on a global scale.

(1) Excerpt from Re-Weaving the Global Web of Power — Memories of Ancient Earth Energies and Prophecies of Coming Planetary Transformation by Joseph Robert Jochmans, available from Alma Tara Publishing, P.O. Box 10703, Rock Hill, SC 29731, USA.

Neophyte's Niche

by Donna Stanford-Blake

The Last Article

After Samhain's short article on "The Next Step", I was prepared to stop writing Neophyte's Niche. In fact, I was prepared to take an extended hiatus from the magazine. O.K., I was going to quit. I was not quite prepared, though, for the next issue to be our last. But it is.

I was not going to write anything at all. After all, I felt my last effort explained much of what we are all going through. (You, too!?) But another aspect reared its head and begged to be explored, if only for a short while. As I was scratching its head (a little behind the ears, please), trying to appease its desire to be heard, I realized that this was a perfect topic for an issue dealing with journeying into the underworld.

As a neophyte, I still viewed life as mainly black and white; good/bad, beautiful/ugly, smart/stupid, etc., etc. The biggest challenge in life was to find a way to have all the "positive" attributes all the time. I actually thought that this was the path of enlightenment. The bulk of society seems to be of the same mind-set. Of course, they are not seeking enlightenment, but happiness and success. In some people's minds this is one and the same.

Magick scared me in this regard. I heard about the underworld, the abyss, the dark side. None of these things sounded too pleasant. I actually dragged my little magical tootsies a bit in becoming a practicing magickian because of my fear of black. Not the color but what it stood for. Basically, everything I had been striving to avoid for most of my life; pain, anger, fear, the inner "me" - the negatives. As a more experienced magickian, I now realize what happens when I try to avoid something. It gets thrown in my face again and again until I finally LOOK at it, face it, deal with it, and let it go. Oh.

Slowly it dawned on me the necessity of the dark in balancing the light. One who has truly known pain experiences a more intense joy. And it is not just because of the great contrast in the extremes but something else.

Something a little harder to explain.

The key is "know". We all have experienced pain. Ouch! But how do you deal with it? Take a pill, booze, sleep, escape. Forget the pain. It is gone. Or is it? Another pain. More pills, booze, sleep - runaway! Smaller things hurt more. But it takes a lot more stimulation to feel happy. Life definitely is out of balance. If anyone asked me if I had known pain I would say - YES! But did I? Or was I trying to escape it?

Guilty as charged! In fact, I still try to escape. But what I learned - of course it was not the easy way - was to experience the pain. What does it feel like? Where does it come from? Where does it go? I opened myself to the raw feeling of pain. I had no choice. It was either that or explode. My advice is not to wait until you reach that point - it is not a fun time. But I learned. I felt pain, I saw its colors, its textures, its sound, its odor. I *was* pain for the space of a heartbeat. I knew pain. Then it was gone.

The next blue sky I saw was a miracle. Life came into a sharper, clearer focus. I had stepped into the dark and found the secret to the light.

So often in trying to escape the "dark side" we close ourselves off from all intense experiences - "positive" or "negative". I learned that truly opening myself to pain enabled me to open myself to life. Small things bring me joy. Like a glistening raindrop perfectly balanced on the tip of a pine needle. Or the smell of spring on a blustery March day. Or finding a shiny penny on the sidewalk. I feel sorrow over little things also. The small bird trying to fly - too soon. Or the missed opportunity to say "Hello" to someone feeling down. But I am feeling the whole range of emotions. Not just sadness, fear or anger. I am experiencing the whole of life, I am living consciously.

That is magick. To live life wholly. The dark and the light. To begin to experience the fear and to feel, truly feel the texture of this world - seen and unseen.

The dark doesn't scare me anymore. In fact I kind of like it. It keeps life in perspective. And the light does dazzle in contrast. I have found, though, that I am developing a distinct fondness for gray.

I still have my private underworld to spelunk. Do I look forward to this journey? No, not really. But my work is giving me tools to understand and cope with the demons I might find. After all, I am not afraid of the dark anymore!

DEMONS ARE OUR FRIENDS

by Lon Milo DuQuette

Occasionally I meet a fellow magician who is appalled to discover that now and again I ceremonially conjure up a demon from the Goetia(1) to help me with a specific problem. They find it hard to reconcile such nasty business with my professed dedication to the Great Work and ask why on earth would I want to dabble with “evil spirits.” My answer is very simple yet it seldom satisfies the inquisitor. It is because all my life “evil spirits” have been dabbling with me!

Now, before you call the men in the white coats, I think an explanation is in order. It may even change your opinion of “evil spirits.” Who knows? Before you are through reading this you just might want to whip up one of those little devils yourself.

*O Lord, deliver me from hell's great fear and gloom!
Loose thou my spirit from the larvae of the tomb!
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.(2)*

“I’d like to thank all the little people who made this moment possible.”

I have watched the Academy Awards presentations for over thirty years and I have yet to hear anyone actually mention “little people.” Nevertheless, each year at the podium almost every award winner recites a

litany of behind-the-scenes studio or production personnel whose talents and labor contributed to the success of the film. Artists, writers, technicians, trainers, contractors, sub-contractors — individuals whose names are unfamiliar and whose faces we never see — are recognized for their talents and are allowed for a fleeting moment to bask in the radiance of reflected celebrity. Sometimes, if the awardee is oblivious to the time restraints (or particularly loquacious owing to the inspiration of sincerity-inducing chemicals), he or she will ramble on to thank the agents who represented them, the spouses who supported them, the teachers who spanked them, and the parents who bred them.

Gushing in the warmth of the footlights, it is likely the Oscar winner momentarily forgets that all this ecstasy is the result of a tortuous journey through hell; and that the roster of “little people” so graciously honored would have, if left to their own devices, done nothing to make this moment of glory possible; the parasitic agent, the lecherous casting director, the indifferent foreign studio heads, the jealous co-star, the drunken make-up artist, the writers who went out on strike, the felonious producer and, (if we care to get Freudian) the bloodsucking ex-spouse, the sadistic teacher, and the abusive parent! All these “little people” and their minions just by being themselves could have with equal effort contributed to the star’s ultimate ruin.

Instead, something intervened to focus this scattered legion of raw energy toward one constructive end — some great will, a director or producer, in a position of authority and armed with specific knowledge of who to inspire, who to pay off, who to threaten, who to appease, who to seduce, who to extort, and perhaps even who to destroy to assure that all the “little people” and the little people working under them were all laboring together for the success of the project.

The student of practical occultism

will of course recognize in the above scenario the characteristics of Solomonic magick or Goetia. The movie-making impresario is the conjuring magician operating under the divine authority of the entity holding the purse-strings. The "little people" are demons conjured at his or her command, and the offices, studios, laboratories, and workshops where they toil for their daily bread are the infernal abodes.(3)

It seems deliciously appropriate that Hollywood sub-culture would so ideally reflect the *dramatis personae* of a system of practical occultism considered by many to be black magick. But we need not look further than the circumstances of our own lives to see that we are all enmeshed in a complex web of magical evocations by which we attempt to exercise our will upon the world or the world attempts to exercise its will upon us. In fact, every day each of us plays multiple roles in this conjuration. We are great and powerful magicians to the little-league team we coach, our employees, students, and dogs. Alternately, we are bootlicking demon slaves to judges, employers, police officers, and cats. We plot with Machiavellian cunning to mold the circumstances of our career and love-life, but with glassy-eyed obedience pay for a shyster mechanic's trip to Hawaii.

Obviously, the analogies of everyday magick are infinite. After all, by the broadest definition of the term, magick is the "science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with Will."(4) In the magick of movie-making it is relatively easy for us to trace the hierarchy of labor and the chain-reaction of events set into motion by the director/magician. However, it is more impressive (and a great deal spookier) when things we want done get done through the agency of a chain-reaction we cannot see. This is magick of a more specific nature. To wield this power the magician must be willing to go to hell.

*I bid the night conceive the glittering hemisphere.
Arise, O sun, arise! O moon, shine white & clear!
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.*(5)

What is hell?(6) Chrislemews (Christians, Moslems & Jews) believe it is an environment created by God as a place of separation and torment. Allegedly, the first tenants were the rebellious angels led by Lucifer who were tossed out of heaven for obeying God's prime directive not to worship anyone but him. The story goes God was so pleased with his new creation, Man, that he told the heavenly host to forget

his first order and fall down and worship Adam. Lucifer, not particularly impressed with Adam, figured it was a bad idea and refused (probably thinking God would eventually become bored with his boy-toy and come to his senses). Well, it should be obvious to everybody that the God of the Chrislemews never did come to his senses and his first paranoid act was to kick the brightest and most loyal employees out of the firm. Before he gave them the boot, however, he created a place to send them — a place as far below the earth as earth is below heaven — hell.

Then, (so there would never be any doubt who was the father of the biggest dysfunctional family in the universe) God put Lucifer's crew in charge of the day-to-day maintenance of life on earth. The lord of hell was also given permission to torment and play mind games with humanity until some unspecified date in the future when God would deal out a final round of punishments; among these a special place in hell for former members of the human race, who, during life, did not see the wisdom of this divine plan.

Readers who may not have as yet divined my feelings concerning the Chrislemew spiritual world-view can stop reading now and go on to another article. The rest of you may be asking why, if I hold the doctrine of heaven and hell in such contempt, do I participate in a spiritual exercise apparently based upon it? My answer, to be blunt, is simply this ... because it works.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I do not worship the Chrislemew god. Neither do I believe in their devil, heaven, hell, judgment, or redemption. I do, however, believe that these concepts portray (albeit crudely) certain fundamental truths concerning the nature of human consciousness. For those of us with brains, spines and nervous systems the grotesque elements of the Chrislemew fairy-tale can be very real indeed. Recognized and manipulated with skill they can even contribute to our physical well-being and spiritual enlightenment.

Science tells us that we use only a tiny portion of our brains and if our full potentials were realized we could exercise god-like powers ... perhaps even program our VCRs. Aleister Crowley write "The spirits of the Goetia are portions of the human brain."(7) Each section is endowed with particular powers and dedicated to executing specific tasks. Brain surgeons know that if you stimulate different areas of the brain with an electrical current the patient will react in different ways. Poke here, the left index finger twitches ... poke there, the patient smells burning rubber, or recalls a childhood memory.

Could it be that in the matrix of the untapped recesses of our brains there are little areas that, if properly isolated, stimulated and directed, are capable of performing all manner of wonders? Even more thrilling is the prospect that the brain and nervous system represent only the visible spectrum of vast invisible mind — a universal intelligence encompassing the consciousness of every monad in the cosmos. If this is so, our brains are merely terminals in a great intelligence network; the different areas functioning as keys on a keyboard. Activated with skill they can generate messages and trigger commands to corresponding quadrants of the universal system.

Under this scenario the debate over the objective or subjective reality of the spirits becomes irrelevant. Each magician's microcosmic Goetic spirit Sitri not only corresponds with every other magician's Sitri, but also resonates sympathetically with the great macrocosmic Sitri. As we conjure Sitri to evoke the passions of the girl next door we are also rubbing elbows with the same "enchantment" that draws magnetic negatives to positives, causes atoms to unite to form molecules, and lures Shakti to Shiva.

If a Goetic demon is simply the power and potential of 1/72nd of the human brain, why is it considered an evil spirit? Is it because it punches the time-clock for Lucifer and gets bonuses for making your life miserable? Is it because it hates you because it is stuck in hell while you are free to eat pizza in your Porsche and stay up late and watch Letterman?

Like it or not, we all come hard-wired with a complete set (twelve six-packs)(8) of Goetic demons. Occasionally we unwittingly catch one and put it to work whenever we are forced to discipline ourselves to learn a specific skill or in times of stress when we are required to draw upon extraordinary wit or courage or talent. Most of the time, however, they just run amok at our expense as we allow them to randomly discharge their energy in whichever direction offers the least resistance. They are units of untamed natural force within ourselves that we have ignored, denied or disowned. They surface to work their mischief when our will is ambiguous and our resistance is low. After you have committed an embarrassing act of unbelievable stupidity you are really referring to them when you slap your forehead and scream, "I am my own worst enemy!" As long as they are ignored and uncontrolled they are as dangerous as hungry beasts in an abandoned zoo.

Is it any wonder they are reluctant to be summoned into the triangle? Is it any wonder they try to frighten us into

abandoning the operation by assuming unpleasant and terrifying forms? We have seen fit to be the absentee landlord to this roughneck crew for our entire life, we cannot expect them to be happy to see us the first time we appear at the door demanding that they clean up the place.

Besides being stubborn and scary, Goetic spirits have earned the "evil spirit" reputation because a small (but very noisy) percentage of magicians who involve themselves heavily in Goetic operations becomes quite mad. The cause of this embarrassing phenomena can often be traced to a breach in the formula of Goetic evocation, an imbalance in the fundamental equation. To examine this flaw we must return briefly to Chrislemew archetypes and review some of the attitudes and procedures of traditional evocation.

*Their faces and their shapes are terrible and strange.
These devils by my might to angels I will change.
These nameless horrors I address without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.(9)*

The ancient conjurer stood posed between heaven and hell. He(10) saw himself as the pious and dutiful servant of the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God of the Bible. He aspired through the observance of religious oblations, austerities, and prayer to become worthy to possess the same powers that God vouchsafed to Moses, Aaron, and Joshua. Only by sincerely identifying himself as a conduit for this divine power could he feel empowered to summon and control the denizens of hell. Protected by this shield of righteousness,

"...armed with power from the Supreme Majesty, I do strongly command thee, by Him Who spake and it was done, and unto who all creatures be obedient... by that most mighty and powerful name of God, El, strong and wonderful... Adonai, El, Elohim, Elohi, Ehyeh Ashar Ehyeh, Zabaoth, Elion, Iah, Tetragrammaton, Shaddai, Lord God most High, I do exorcise thee and do powerfully command thee..."(11)

confident in his knowledge of the hierarchical pecking-order of hell,

"...by Beralanensis, Barldachiensis, Paumachia, and Apologiae Sedes; by the most Powerful Princes, genii, Liachidae, and Ministers of the Tartarean Abode; and by the Chief Prince of the Seat of Apologia in the Ninth Legion..."(12)

and intoxicated by babbling a string of wild and exotic "words of power"...

"...Arogorobrao: Sothou: Modorio: Phalarthae: Ooo: Ape!..."(13)

the ancient conjurer operated from a tenuous position of balance. This balance had to be maintained long after the evocation ceremony concluded. If the magician focused too intently either upon micro-managing the details of his demon's service, or upon being the uncompromising instrument of "God's will," the seeds of madness sprouted quite rapidly.

The modern magician must also remain balanced. Sadly, I have witnessed more than one mental casualty on the Goetic battlefield. Once it is discovered how easy it is to call up these critters and how effectively they can be made to do your bidding, it becomes very tempting to call them all up and try to have them do everything for you. More often than not this is a bad idea. You may think you are summoning the cooling winds to refresh your heated brow, when it's embarrassingly obvious to all of your former friends that you're only blowing your mind.

While I certainly do not claim to be the world's greatest Goetic magician, I have practiced the art for nearly twenty years and feel qualified to at least voice my opinion on the subject and perhaps even offer some words of advice. I feel that Goetic evocation can be an important part of a modern magician's arsenal of skills. First and foremost it requires that the magician establish a vital link with a higher consciousness ... call it God, the Holy Guardian Angel, the Higher Self, the Superconscious Mind, or whatever. Secondly, in order to understand its subtleties and wield its power the magician is forced to confront important emotional issues and character defects that left unresolved will continue to hinder his or her spiritual evolution. Even in a clinical setting, such confrontations are seldom pleasant. Finally, equilibrium must be achieved in all aspects of the magician's life, balancing the higher spiritual aspirations against the problems and challenges of everyday living. Properly executed, this is not only powerful magick but a recipe for good mental health.

As far as the evocation technique itself is concerned, I believe it is purely a matter of artistic taste. There are those whose respect for tradition and sense of art demands that every step of the evocation be executed precisely as outlined in the Sloane manuscripts. Traditional evocations are a thrill to behold. The reader who has been lucky enough to witness an evocation conducted by C. (Poke) Runyon in Southern California has seen a master at work.

Personally I do not use the classic versions of the conjurations and constraints, nor do I protect my circle with the various Christmew holy names. I believe for me to identify with mythological characters I do not admire or guard my circle with the names of gods I do not worship would not only be hypocritical but also dangerous. I do, however, acknowledge and incorporate the key elements that make this form of magick work:

- I use the circle and triangle surrounded by words and holy names sacred to me.
- I utilize talismans displaying the spirit's sigil, and the standard pentagrams and hexagrams of Solomon on my vestments.
- I ceremonially bathe and dress.
- I purify, consecrate, banish, and open the temple with appropriate ceremony.
- I induce a trance of righteous authority by the recitation of the *Gnostic Creed* and *Anthem* from Crowley's *Gnostic Mass*.
- I recite a customized version of the *Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia*.(14)
- I conjure in the Enochian language with the First Call and a brief Enochian summons.
- I welcome the spirit upon its appearance.(15)
- I give it a brief, unambiguous order and a time limit for its execution and demand from the spirit an oath that it will be carried out.
- I give it license to depart after I tell it that I will be a kind and generous master as long as it faithfully serves me. I also inform the spirit that if it should prove disobedient I will punish it, and if necessary destroy it.
- I banish and wait until all vestige of a 'spooky' feeling disappears.
- I keep the spirit's sigil in a prepared container and watch for signs of it working on my behalf. If it fails to execute the charge in the prescribed time, I conjure it again and torture its sigil in fire while I remind it of its original

agreement. Failing again I conjure it one more time, destroy its seal completely and never acknowledge its existence again. Note: You will soon run out of spirits if you demand outrageous or unreasonable things. The book outlines what these fellows do. Don't be a complete jerk.

I have discovered it is unwise to evoke a spirit to solve a problem until I am positive I have exhausted all other avenues of resolution. If you want to hurt someone it is much more effective (and far more painful) to just punch them in the nose and take the consequences. Asking a Goetic spirit to do it for you only reveals to the demon that you are a coward and unworthy of faithful service.

I cannot claim that every evocation has been a success. On the contrary, I have had quite a few blow up in my face. In fact these 'failures' have been more instructive than the successes. I confess that on more than one occasion the operation succeeded superbly in bringing out the worst in me and forced me to deal with the unpleasantness on the spot. In the final analysis, that is exactly what is supposed to happen.

*These are the phantoms pale of mine astonished view,
Yet none but I their blasted beauty can renew;
For to the abyss of hell I plunge without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.*(16)

I have been privileged in my life to meet a number of individuals whom I consider to be (by any definition) great magicians. Some are venerable stars in the magical firmament whose names are familiar to many in our subculture. Most, however, are ordinary women and men who have quietly achieved illumination and with great art are proceeding to exercise their wills upon the world. A character trait they all have in common is an almost self-effacing refusal to hide their flaws and shortcomings. In fact, the magick of their lives appears to be built upon their ability to transmute these liabilities into assets. Never veiling their vices in virtuous words, these modern magi seek for truth even in their own naughtiness. They do not run from their demons or attempt to destroy them. Instead, they seize them, one at a time; force them to recognize who is boss; clean them up; give them real energy to eat and real jobs to do.

King Solomon, by tradition the Grand Master of this magical tradition, is said to have built the great temple of God with the organized labor of demons. This lusty and sincere man of God who fearlessly plumbed the infernal

realms for the glory of his deity is indeed an appropriate icon for the magical art that bears his name. I have a feeling that if we were to conjure Solomon to visible appearance today and ask him how he achieved such perfection, the wise wizard would answer by simply telling us all to "Go to hell!"

(1) *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King - Translated into the English Tongue by a Dead Hand and Adorned with Divers Other Matter Germane Delightful to the Wise, the Whole Edited, Verified, Introduced and Commented by Aleister Crowley.* (Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, Boleskine, Foyers, Inverness Scotland 1904). Known as the *Lesser Key of Solomon*, it is the First Book of the Lemegeton (c. 1687). Translated by S. L. MacGregor Mathers (the "Dead Hand" referred to in the full title above) from the British Library Sloane Manuscripts nos. 2731 and 3648. Most recent reprint, New York, NY: Magickal Child Publications, 1992.

(2) *The Magician* [Translated from Eliphaz Levi's version of the famous Hymn] *The Equinox Vol. I* (1). London, Spring 1909. Reprint. (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992).

(3) The reader who has ever visited the San Fernando Valley in the summer knows precisely what hell is.

(4) *Aleister Crowley - Magick in Theory and Practice.* Paris: Lecram Press 1929. Reprint. New York: Magickal Child Publications, 1990.

(5) See footnote #2.

(6) "Helle" (Middle English) "Hel" (Anglo-Saxon) simply means hidden or concealed.

(7) See footnote #1, p. 3.

(8) The seventy-two spirits of the Goetia are allotted in pairs (one for the day, one for the night) to each of the thirty-six decans of the Zodiac. According, it has been suggested that they are the qliphothic remnants of the seventy-two spirits of the Shemhamphorash. There is some doubt that this is true because the spirits of the Shemhamphorash, while also attributed in pairs to the decans, by tradition each represent five degrees of their native decan.

(9) See footnote #2.

(10) My apologies to the gender neutral sensitivities of 20th Century magicians. Even though there is absolutely nothing preventing women from practicing Goetic Evocation, the classic texts generally assumed the conjurer was a man.

(11) See footnote #1 - first conjuration p. 40.

(12) See footnote #1 - first conjuration pp. 39 & 40.

(13) See footnote #1 - *Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia*, p. vii.

(14) From *A Fragment of a Graeco-Egyptian Work upon Magic.* Trans. C.W. Goodwin, 1852.

(15) It is not necessary for you to see the spirit to know that it has arrived. Be sensitive to the "feel" of another consciousness in the room, like when a dog or cat is watching you.

(16) See footnote #2.

THE CRONE STAGE:

Crowning Our Elders

by Brenda E. Kelly

Note: The following is a croning ritual which was performed for three initiates on July 29th, 1995 during the new moon near Lamas. There were over forty strong women participating.

The Journey

The conversation in my head after being asked to coordinate and execute a croning ceremony:

ME: How can I possibly do this? I'm not qualified to do this. I'm not even a "Mother", much less a "Crone". What gives me the right to even THINK I could do this?! I'm not ready. I'm not enough. I'm just me.

GREAT MOTHER (in my head): Oh no, my little love. You are ME.

ME: Well, guess that's that, eh? That's all I need.

GREAT MOTHER: That's all you need. And your Sisters.

ME: But what if nobody wants me to lead them? What if everybody has the same doubts about me that I do? What makes me think that forty women, most of whom I am only acquaintances with, will accept me?

GREAT MOM: Write the ceremony.

Let it speak for you. Then ask the questions, and allow them to be answered. Just write it, then wait and see. Do you trust me?

ME: Yeah. I trust you.

GREAT MOM: That's my girl.

The croning of Judith, Suzanne and Diane was performed on Saturday, July 29th 1995 on the night of the new moon. The ceremony was formed out of a dream I had the night I was given this challenge. After I awoke from it at three a.m., I had to get up and sit at my computer and two hours later, the ceremony was complete. That's not to say it was easy. It hurt to be writing this, it touched a part of me I had stuffed deep down, that I thought I wasn't ready to face. I never had the opportunity to share my spirituality with my mom. She died January 4th 1990. I never got to thank her for helping me to grow into who I am. But this isn't my therapy group. I don't mean to burden you folks with my woes. Let's just say that in a way, this was my gift to her as much as it was for the initiates.

Sure enough, the ceremony was well received. We all managed to keep the ritual contents a secret from the crones for the four weeks we prepared, and they had absolutely no idea what would transpire. Everyone was encouraged to read the ceremony over and find which part appealed to them most. Then it was divided up, and from there it was hoped that the pieces of the ritual would be put into each individual's words. We restructured it together, and in the process we bonded towards our common goal.

By the time we were through and word had spread, we had all ages of women involved and we tried to incorporate the idea of "universal agehood", if you will, with the following words: "All women are mother, all women are maiden, all women are crone. As you listen to our words, hear your own voice, and the voices of all women, of all nations, of all ages. We, the maidens, are here to honor you. We are here to give you birth." This way, it would also include any women there who

had not had a child of her own. It was our hope that everyone would feel welcome and be a part of the sharing that would take place.

In addition, there were several men that had been interested in participating upon first hearing about the ceremony, and then were disappointed upon learning it would be all female. So we worked to find a compromise: That day, the ten or so handsome young men dressed in their best and entertained the lovely initiates until they were called for ritual. They brought juice, long stemmed goblets, grapes and chocolates. They massaged their feet and shoulders, and tried to make them feel honored and flattered. (From what I hear, it was a great success!) They escorted the ladies on their arms to the space and then guarded the front and back of the outdoor area, deflecting passers-by so that they did not linger or accidentally walk through our ritual. We are greatly in their debt for their assistance and energy.

The Ceremony

The maidens cast circle and call quarters before the initiate is brought in. They center and think about why they are all assembled; some words about common purpose are spoken. A maiden is sent to bring the crone in while the other maidens get into their places.

INTRODUCTION, A MAIDEN: When we are born, we are initiated by our parents. When we reach womanhood, we are initiated by our peers. Today, for you who have come here for the rite of passage into crone-hood, it is fitting that you be initiated by your children.

CLEANSING: Two maidens share a bowl of water, salt, and a towel. Together they wash the hands, forehead and feet of the initiate, asking her in their own words to allow the concerns of the day to be rinsed away, her mind to be cleared, her heart to be cleansed, etc.

OUR DEFINITION (read during cleansing), A MAIDEN: Croning (also crowning) - An initiation into the life-stage of wisdom, the final in the Maiden, Mother, Crone cycle. A rite of passage for women of maturity with perspective and/or experience with all three stages. An honoring of a loved one respected as an elder of a tribe, clan or circle of family/friends. An elevation into a position of high authority and rank earned through a woman's accomplishments throughout her lifetime. A reclaiming of the word "Crone" as a wisewoman and the celebration of

menopause and the life that exists, but is often devalued in a patriarchal society, thereafter.

The initiate approaches the "path" of candles leading to the ritual space, where she is greeted by a maiden.

MAIDEN: All women are mother, all women are maiden, all women are crone. As you listen to our words, hear your own voice, and the voices of all women, of all nations, of all ages. We, the maidens, are here to honor you. We are here to give you birth. (Maiden steps aside for initiate to pass.)

A maiden who will be the initiate's guide and at her side throughout the ceremony (who may stand behind the crone during the cleansing), leads the crone by the hand down the aisle to the ritual space. They stop along the way to hear the words of the following maidens.

FIRST: Do you remember me? It was I that you first held in your arms after your first birthing. Me, that cried and cried while you rocked me, cooed to me that I was safe and warm and loved. It was my face you saw once the pain of labor was over. Lady, for that I honor you.

SECOND: Do you remember me? It was I that you taught to walk and talk. You encouraged me to speak my mind freely and to explore the exciting and unknown world around me. My fire of creativity was lit in the safety and shelter of your arms, with your breath helping to keep it alight. Lady, for that I honor you.

THIRD: Do you remember me? In school I was laughed at and teased. I came home afraid and alone. You helped me to be strong. You reminded me to be proud of who I am. You held me when there were tears and cheered me on when there were triumphs. Lady, for that I honor you.

FOURTH: Do you remember me? When my first love broke my heart, you were patient and you understood. You taught me about my cycles and the changes of my body, and with that you eased my fears. You helped me make decisions that I needed your guidance for. Lady, for that I honor you.

FIFTH: Do you remember me? Leaving you for the first time was so hard. Standing alone, making my way, it was never easy. But it was easier knowing you were there to hold my hand when I needed it, just as I hold it now. Lady,

for that I honor you.

When the initiate passes the fifth maiden, she is seated in the center of the circle on a chair, (if more than one initiate is present, they face each other, inward). Then the maidens circle around her.

"THE MAIDEN GODDESS" INVOCATION: I am the Maiden, the birth and initiation of the Goddess. You call me Persephone, Artemis, Kore and the Virgin Athena. The budding flower of womanhood, I am wild and untamed. Call on me for creativity, growth, and playfulness. For no matter where or who you are, I am you and you are me. Blessed be.

"THE MOTHER GODDESS" INVOCATION: I am the Mother, the full bounty of the Goddess. You call me Demeter, Corn Mother, and the Protector Hera. I am the fierce mother, protector of all things young, and I am the healing love only a mother can give. Call on me for healing, love unconditional and guidance. For no matter where or who you are, I am you and you are me. Blessed be.

"THE CRONE GODDESS" INVOCATION: I am the Crone, the winter season of the Goddess. You call me Buffalowomon, Cerridwen, and the midwife Hecate. I am the keeper of the mysteries, guardian of the sacred well and the rejuvenation of the spirit when at the end of the spiral you are returned to my arms. Call on me, the keeper of secrets, for strength, wisdom and rebirth. For no matter where or who you are, I am you and you are me. Blessed be.

MAIDEN: Listen to the voices of your children. All children are your children. We are all Mother, Sister and Daughter in the Goddess:

ALL: One at a time, when it feels right, each maiden will give a blessing or a thanks to any mother or crone figure she has had in her life. It does not need to relate directly to the initiate, although it may.

i.e., **MAIDEN:** When my own mother wasn't there for me, you went out of your way to make me feel welcome in your home, like one of your own daughters.

i.e., **MAIDEN:** Thank you for helping to develop in me the strength and courage I would need to live again once you were gone. I miss you, and I think of you every day. Never forget how much I love you.

Once all maidens have said their piece, and tissues have quietly been passed around the circle as needed, proceed.

DIVIDED AMONG 3-4 MAIDENS: We are taking you on the Journey Inanna took to the underworld, to the dark center. Inanna with smoke for wings, Inanna of the inviting eyes, Inanna whose winged lioness guards the entrance to her Darkness. She is your Dark Twin, your sister, your self. We will walk on a spiral path, going downward into darkness. She is waiting to meet you, not as Death, but as wisdom and change. Know that she is waiting for you. It may be that your meeting will be joyful and full of laughter; it may be painful and full of tears. Be unafraid to face

Inanna in the underworld. If you are ready, as you are approached, stand and accept the challenge of the trial by repeating the words of the maiden before you and accepting the blindfold.

The guardian maiden holds the blindfold in her hand and looks into the crone's eyes.

MAIDEN: I am whole, I am the Goddess, I am not afraid of the Dark.

CRONE: I am whole, I am the Goddess, I am not afraid of the Dark.

While blindfolded, the initiate is led at her own pace, with the guardian maiden's hand in one hand, another maiden's hand in the other, around and around in a procession until somewhat disoriented, while all maidens chant and drum. (We chose "We All Come From The Goddess".) Then she is led away from the chanting to the outside of the circle, where now there stands (is held or propped up) a large mirror. The maidens let go of her hands and she stands on her own.

A MAIDEN: Do you remember me? I gave you birth and held you in my arms when you first laughed. I am the older sister that you imitated, and the younger that

imitated you. I am your Grandmother, with smiling eyes and a kindly face. I am what is sacred and holy in all women. I am all things. This is your trial: To recognize me. Are you ready to face me? Can you look into the face of the Goddess?

CRONE: Yes.

The blindfold is taken from her eyes, and she looks now into her own reflection, a candle held beneath her face by a maiden.

A MAIDEN: Behold! I have been with you from the start. Never have I left you, never forsaken you — even if you did not feel me, I was always there. I am always there. Please repeat the pledge you made to me when you accepted this trial. Look into my eyes. I am whole. I am the Goddess. I am not afraid of the Dark.

CRONE: I am whole. I am the Goddess. I am not afraid of the Dark.

When the Crone has completed the trial, she is brought back to the circle to a cauldron or bowl of water at the center. She is "baptized" three times by the youngest maiden (preferably a child). Some words are spoken by an older maiden to indicate that the rebirth and the journey into wisdom — into the Crone — are now complete.

THE OLDER MAIDEN: You are reborn. You are Goddess.

All hold hands in a circle.

DIVIDED AMONG THE 3-4 MAIDENS OF INANNA'S JOURNEY, OR NEW ONES, IF PREFERRED: Welcome Crones, welcome to your new selves and your new journeys. Our rite has ended. The Circle is opened, but never broken. May the peace of the Goddess be always in our hearts.

ALL: Merry meet, merry part and merry meet again! Blessed be!

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HANGIN' WITH THE ANGEL

by Donald Michael Kraig

I really don't know how it happened.

My parents had retired to a gated community. My step-father was able to golf several times a week. My mother was involved with everything from acting and travel to nearby tourist sites to bowling, learning golf and even aerobic exercise three times a week.

They were both early risers, so I would usually phone and chat with them on the weekends. I would never call after 9:00 pm. But three months ago, for some unknown reason, I accidentally called at 9:30 pm on Wednesday evening. I was surprised at my unconscious error and apologized for waking them up. I said everything was fine, asked how they were, and said I would call again on the weekend. "I love you both," I said. My mother responded by saying that they loved me, too. Those were the last words she ever said to me.

Early the following Saturday my mother had a massive brain hemorrhage. She never regained consciousness.

Actually, she was gone from her body within minutes. The hospital kept her body on machines for two days. When they were removed, her body didn't breathe — the blood in her brain had wiped out the control system for her lungs. Even so, her heart kept pumping for a quarter of an hour. The doctor was amazed at that. "She had some heart," he said.

"Yes, she did," my stepfather quietly agreed, "she really did."

No paper is going to run an obituary on my mother. She was just another old woman who died. I had tried to get her to write her remembrances of family history, as well as her own autobiography, but she always said, "later." Now I wish I had pushed her harder to write the things down.

I still remember some stories she told me about the family history. My great-great grandparents lost virtually everything when they were driven from their tobacco plantation in Russia in front of an antisemitic pogrom. They came to the U.S. by ship with little money. There was an arranged marriage. My great-great grandfather fell in love on the ship with a woman doctor also fleeing antisemitic oppression. My great-great grandmother, infuriated by the romance of her husband and "that woman," ended up in an asylum. My grandmother missed out on becoming a world-famous singer because she took time out to be with my grandfather. Over the past few months my mother was opening the family closet to me, revealing all the fascinating skeletons.

My mother grew up in the 20s and 30s in Chicago. She went to Northwestern University and, to the shock of many, refused to join a sorority. She started a group for non-aligned students (at that time virtually everyone was part of the Greek system) and sponsored the first interracial dance at Northwestern. "It was a total flop," she told me. "Lots of people came but they stayed on opposite sides of the gym and nobody danced."

My favorite story about my mother took place during WWII. She went to the South to be near the army post where my father was stationed. Shortly after she arrived she found she had to take a bus. There was little room on the vehicle, so she walked to the back of the bus and sat next to a bunch of uniformed African-Americans. A hush swept over the bus.

"Ma'am, you'll have to move forward," said the bus driver.

continued on page 51

Force and Fire (and Physics)

by Dr. Richard Kaczynski

Note: I would be remiss if, at this point, I did not acknowledge my debt to Mark A. Kenworthy. 'Twas the summer of '94, driving home with the unique rush that only comes from a long weekend at a pagan festival, that he and I discussed and developed the ideas that I lay before you in this article.

At the dawn of the 20th Century, what visionary published his innovative work which rendered older modes of thinking obsolete and forever changed the way people saw the world, thus paving the way for a new era of enlightenment?

People of differing backgrounds will, unsurprisingly, offer different guesses. Ceremonial magicians — particularly the Thelemic brand — will think of the Great Beast, Aleister Crowley. Artists may instead reference the mad genius of surrealist Salvador Dali. But the person of whom I speak is none other than Albert Einstein who, in 1905, first published his theory of relativity. With the powerful formula: $e=mc^2$, Einstein unveiled the shortcomings of classical Newtonian physics and helped the world think in relativistic terms.

His equation is a simple one: The “e” represents the energy of a physical system, “m” is its mass, and “c” is a constant, the speed of light. Mathematically, it is just a slight twist on the Old Aeon (if I may use the term today to designate Newtonian physics) formula for force: $f=ma$, i.e., force is the product of an object's mass and its acceleration. Nevertheless, Einstein's version has far-reaching implications, not the least of which is

the equation of mass and energy. These implications also extend to magick.

Consider the “m” of Einstein's equation. This is mass or matter. In physics, the three states of matter are solid, liquid and gas. In magick, these are earth, water and air.

What of “e”, energy? Consider a log: large, dense and awkward to lift. As matter, it contains energy. Now consider this same log, blazing in your hearth. After the glow has faded and the embers cooled, the formerly large and dense log fits easily into a small bag. Physics tells us that matter cannot be destroyed, so where did it go? It was converted into energy. Thus, the fourth of the magical elements, fire, can be taken as representing energy.

All that remains is the constant: the speed of light. In magick, the constant, omnipresent force found in all things is that mysterious fifth element, spirit.

Metaphysical Games

At one point or another, everyone plays this game with the four elements: “If earth is attributed to the north and water is attributed to the west, then what's in the northwest? Mud!” (The magician guffaws, either silently to him/herself, or to the stupefied amazement of onlookers.) It may sound silly, but some interesting things begin to happen giving this idea some mileage. Here's one way of looking at the “cross-elements”:

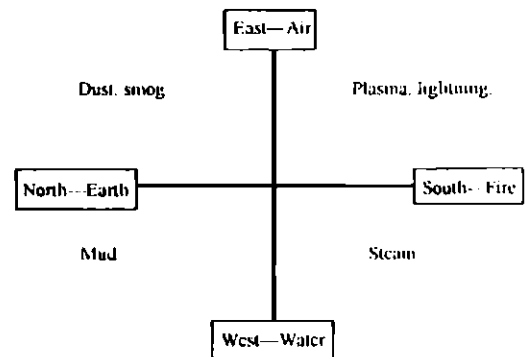


Figure 1

So far, this looks like the same game played out over and over again in the minds of magicians through the ages.

Here comes an interesting twist: Although the four elements bear the familiar names of physical objects, they are idealizations or abstractions, not manifest things. These ideal elements are present in all physical things to greater or lesser degrees: the ground is damp and the seas contain oxygen. This distinction, however, is not the case with the "cross-elements." Indeed, it seems that the elements are not distinct polarities but forces which interact to manifest the "cross-elements." However, these "cross-elements" exist on a different level: not in the ideal world but in the world of physical objects. Although made manifest, all these things show sign of that ubiquitous constant which lies at the center of all creation: Spirit.

Now the diagram in Figure 1 looks a little different (see Figure 2). Now we have three levels of manifestation: 1) Spirit at the center. 2) The interacting forces of the elements at the idealized level. 3) Manifest "cross-elements" at the outer ring.

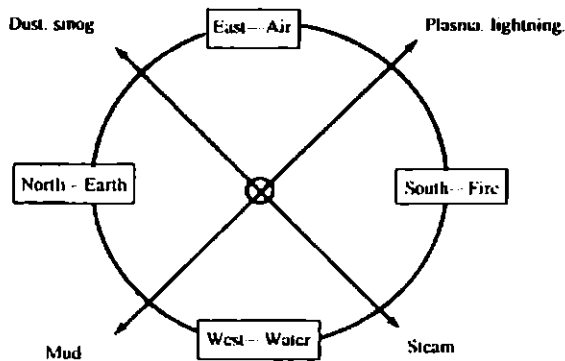


Figure 2

Suddenly, this mental exercise finds some validity. Consider the following passage from *The Cube of Space*:

"The divine intention begins at a point of focus in the form of a particular idea. This idea takes on the same energy form as that of the spiral nebula or the centripetal rotation of a galaxy. This whirling vortical motion is the beginning of the creative process. This process is referred to in the Qabalah as 'the beginning of the whirlings.'" (p. 5)

In other words, starting with an idea, the Divine Mind creates the boundaries of the universe. This concept is not unique to the Kabbalah. In *The Garland of Letters*, we read:

"Pratyaya is mental apprehension... Para-Vak is the Causal Stress which, in terms of Pratyaya, is the Cosmic Ideation... This is the Divine 'Word.' ...Pasyanti Vak is Vak actually going forth as Iksana (Seeing), producing or manifesting..." (p. 1)

This tantric text also teaches how the primal ideation, Pratyaya, results in a stress in the cosmic fabric, resulting in a slow but gradually increasing whirling of energy which takes on greater manifestation as a word (*Vak*), as forces (*tattvas*) and, finally, as gross matter (*sthula*). Similarly, the world of *Genesis* is null and void until the words "Fiat lux" are spoken by the divine. This same unfolding of manifestation can be seen at work in the unfolding of the cardinal, mutable and fixed elements in astrology (see Figure 3).

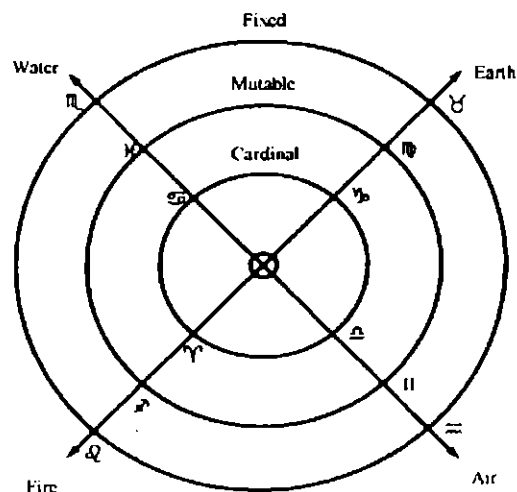


Figure 3

Also of some interest in this connection is the frequent reference to whirlpools in Grant's *Outer Gateways*: Might these whirlpools represent the creation of the world as described in the Kabbalah and the tantras?

But Wait, There's More...

Draw a box around the elemental diagram we've discussed and the result is very similar to an Arabic Astrological chart:

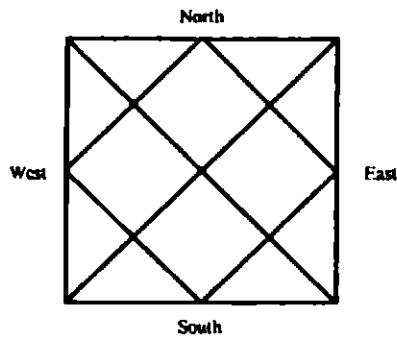


Figure 4

Connecting the same points in a slightly different way produces the unicursal hexagram:

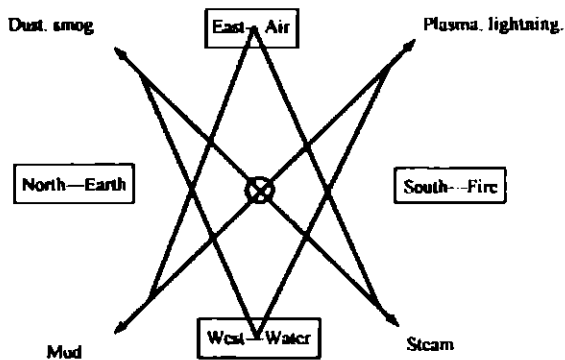


Figure 5

This gets really interesting when attributing the planets to the hexagram. Traditionally, the planets are attributed to the points of a hexagram according to their location on the Tree of Life. But if we go by the meanings implied by the elements and cross-elements, the attributions actually fit the "Corrected Geocentric" model of the Tree which I presented a few columns ago:

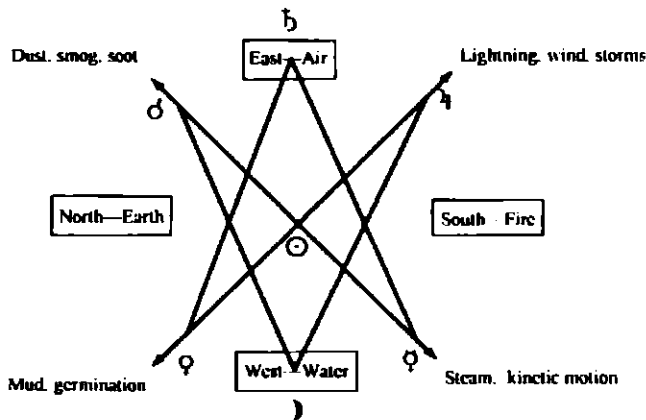


Figure 6

The most interesting thing about this coincidence is that two totally unrelated trains of thought (attributions of the planets to the Tree of Life and the Game of Cross-Elements) should produce results which support each other. This meaning of this I leave to the reader to decipher.



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The Ka of Mrs. Benson

by Chas S. Clifton

I had a rough time with the priestess. She simply was not going to cut me any slack. It was the temple's way or no way: she made that perfectly clear, and she had the Legal Affairs department to back her up. All I had was a piece of paper from the probate court appointing me as "special administrator." That got me into the inner sanctum, all right, but I couldn't take anything out with me but the one sacred scroll mentioned in the appointment letter.

"OK, Brenda," I said, slipping Mrs. Benson's will into my coat pocket — a sincere navy blue blazer as favored by us lector priests.

"If you won't let me close out her account, then I'm not going to cover the overdraft."

Dealing with a deceased person's estate is a lot like the old Egyptian religion. I was raised with the relative simplicity of Christianity: die, and your singular soul goes somewhere, is judged, and, depending on the denominational preferences, ends up in Heaven, Hell, or running laps in Purgatory. But the Egyptians, with their *ba*,

ka, *khu*, *ren*, and the rest, initially were quite beyond me. What were all these multiple souls?

I don't mean to sound like a total environmental determinist, but the climate of Phoenix contributed to my understanding. Driving the rented Ford down one palm-lined street after another, dodging the blazing eye of Ra as I ducked into one financial temple after another, I saw that I was now a minor funerary priest, arranging rituals and transporting texts.

Descending in the elevator from the law firm's office, I thought first of the *ba*, which of all the Egyptians' terms most nearly approximates "soul." "It could take any shape it pleased; and it had the power of passing into heaven and of dwelling with the perfected souls there," wrote the Egyptologist E.A. Wallis Budge.

"Let not be shut in my soul, let not be fettered my shadow, let be opened the way for my soul and for my shadow, may it see the great god," reads Chapter 92 of the *Book of the Dead*. Truly it sails to the West, on the boat made of millions of years, the boat painted hospital green with its levers and cranks.

And the *ba* has sailed on, aided by the red-faced rector of All-Saints-in-the-Desert, where the funeral service was performed under Coptic-style domes. Does anything incorporeal then follow the plastic box of "cremains," carried across desert and mountain in her white Toyota and finally placed in an outdoor columbarium where another grey-haired priest says his prayers and the homeless men, drunk on fortified wine, sleep nearby on the cathedral lawn? I think not.

Does the shade, the *khu*, linger in the silent condominium, wandering among cartons packed by the moving crew and left to sit pending shipment out of state? Perhaps. And the *ren*, the name, is it preserved, mentioned, in the alumni bulletin: "Deaths — Class of 1940"?



But it is the *ka* that grows after death, said Wallis Budge. "It was a subordinate part of the human being during life, but after death it became active; and to it the offerings brought to the tomb by the relatives of the dead were dedicated." (Ancient Egyptians wrote without vowels, and some scholars think the same word was pronounced with the vowel in front: *akh*. Take your pick.)

James Breasted, another famous Egyptologist, said that the *ka* was "intended to guide the fortunes of the individual in *the hereafter*, or it was in the hereafter that he [the *ka*] chiefly if not exclusively had his abode." (The italics are his.)

Here among the Phoenicians — yes, that's the term used in the Valley of the Sun — one's fortunes in the hereafter are largely expressed in financial terms. Thus, even as the mortuary priest was the "servant of the *ka*," whatever is furnished to the *ka* is furnished even also to the deceased.

"O *ka*, may you eat and drink. I have paid your bills. The air conditioning cools the condominium when Ra is at his height. O *ka*, I have put a new muffler and tires on the Toyota."

For the *ka* indeed lives if it is fed with offerings, and these offerings I have made. The financial priests too have made them, the priests of Vanguard, Invesco, Fidelity, the stock priests and the bond priests feed the *ka*, and it lives. It has life, it has existence, it pays taxes. A pyramid, a shrine of paper, was built for it; it eats and it drinks. Its dwelling is in the room of steel; it is met with homage. There the vault priestess guards it; Thoth is its recorder.

Bureaucrats of the hereafter, the ancient Egyptians prepared for death during life. "I was one who foresaw at the time when he was strong, who kept in mind his dying at the time when he was strong," wrote the priest Petharpokrates.

They planned for immortality; we read *Modern Manwry*, clipping articles on estate planning and wills. The *ka* is fed with offerings; a new bank account is opened in its

name.

But pious wishes may be overturned, and such may be the *ka*'s own fate. No matter that the tomb inscriptions proclaim that no doer of evil deeds has the power to destroy the "favorite place [the tomb] of [Name] among those who live in this land for ever and ever."

No, think rather of nineteenth-century archaeologists discovering the plundered tomb of the pharaoh Unas: "the paving stones had been pulled up in the vain attempt to find buried treasure; the mummy had been broken to pieces, and nothing remained of it except the right arm, a tibia, and some fragments of the skull and body," wrote Wallis Budge.

Even so, at some time the dwelling of the *ka* will be plundered, sacred writings burnt and precious objects dispersed to new owners. Bank accounts are closed, stock-ownership transferred: where then is the dwelling of the *ka*?

When the lawyer-priests have collected their fees, they move on to new clients. When the executor has paid the bills, paid off the heirs, and closed the accounts, then the *ka* is no more. Only a box of files remains — in dead storage.

"It [the *ka*] was a subordinate part of the human being during life, but after death it became active; and to it the offerings brought to the tomb by the relatives of the dead were dedicated."



ON DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY: Two Reviews

by Paul B. Rucker

My friends and I have often commented that the work of building a Pagan culture today entails at some point an epistemology: a seeking-out of "how we know what we know." An epistemology enables us to grasp the origin, nature, and limits of our knowledge; applied culturally such a tool enables us to construct a foundation of cultural knowledge. To that end, I would like to introduce Depth Psychology to those magickal folk who are not yet aware of this arena of "psychological polytheism." This is a psychology "rooted not in science but in aesthetics and imagination," whose objective is to convey a poetic view of experience as something generated by and for the soul. Depth Psychology is also called Archetypal Psychology, from the Greek *archai*, "the basic elements out of which experience is made."

Consciousness is considered to have multiple points of view in every person, different archetypal personas reflecting different impulses at different times. These archetypes are dealt with as gods and goddesses; with myth and poetry as the avenue of the soul's expression. Above all, the aim of Archetypal Psychology is not to decode one's inner mysteries, but to deepen them so that subtlety and nuance are increased, and to cultivate the capacity for paradox, which supports creative activity.

I believe that Pagan culture and spirituality must not only be externally directed, seeing the Gods and Goddesses outside us, as presences to be invoked, and whose stories are the gifts of our ancestors; but also as inner realities which can be experienced in a unique way, which at times redirect attention from our egos to other equally imperative movements of the soul. When the inner experience is brought out in the form of art, ritual, and other acts of culture-making, the public experience of everyone enjoys the result of the archetypal contact. Depth Psychology can supplement our cultural enrichment as Pagans. (To illustrate this point, I especially recommend the work of Ginette Paris: *Pagan Meditations and Pagan Grace*.)

Below are reviewed two books that relate to the topic of this issue of MEZLIM. James Hillman, the author of *The Dream and the Underworld*, is often considered to be "the father of Archetypal Psychology," for it is his visionary essays that have defined Archetypal Psychology: it is separate from predecessors like Jung, with its roots in Neoplatonic Renaissance psychology; it seeks not so much to cure as to express the "pathologies of the soul." Thomas Moore, friend and student of Hillman, as well as the editor of *A Blue Fire* (an introductory sample of Hillman's writings), is famous today for *The*

Care of the Soul; yet an earlier work of his, *Dark Eros: The Imagination of Sadism*, speaks more directly to the Underworld task of recognizing the shadow side of archetypal desire.

THE DREAM AND THE UNDERWORLD

by James Hillman

Harper and Row

ISBN 0-06-090682-0 pbk.

"Whatever we work on begins to matter to us. Work makes matter, and psychic work makes the psyche matter. / We may thus gain earth not only by working the earth of Demeter, the agricultural fantasy of returning to the soil as diggers, being natural. We may become earthy also through Ge, working upon one's fate, the retributive justice connected with ancestral sins, the limitations of nature visited congenitally upon one through the specific geographical and historical locus of one's home, place of attachments, first home ground. / There is a third way of making matter, and this is through *chthon*, working into cold dead depths of the psyche, the underworld of night and dreams and ghosts, and the incurable changeless essence of character imaged in our chthonic complexes. This is the deep home ground, the House of Hades." (pp. 136-137)

Through the structural model suggested above, Hillman takes us on a descent to Hades, stating that there is a downward pull in the psyche itself that seeks to speak in the language of the night: a language of *eidola*, images (from *eidos*, "ideational forms and shapes"; related to Hades, *Aidoneus*). This gravity of the soul compelled to seek Hades as its *telos*, its final end (meaning Hades as Death in particular and as all forms of ending in general), and on its journey, experience the perverse aspect of itself which requires that images be deformed as well as balanced. The dreaming psyche also resists the "dayworld" ego's attempts to twist its experience to the waking ego's ends: via "interpretation" or by merely dismissing dreams as "day-residue." Dreaming is the psyche speaking to itself in the underworld, undergoing the activity of soul-making, which as an imaginative activity, requires crafting.

Thus, for example, an attraction to the deformed, the wounded, the terrifying or the neurotic in the dreaming psyche reflects the necessary work of destruction that accompanies the act of creation: *opus contra naturam*, "a work against nature," undertaken in the service of a greater nature. By invoking this premise from alchemy, Hillman declares the dream an imaginative product as well as a natural phenomenon. Its downward pull is towards the hidden libido, the vitality of the underworld, and its wisdom: "Beyond Hades as destroyer and lover, however, there is Hades of incomparable intelligence. Work with dreams is to get at this hidden intelligence, to communicate with the God in the dream." (p. 131)

Of particular interest to Pagans who are working with the myth of Persephone in ritual might be the hidden aspects of the story as a psychological process: Hillman sees all the players in this story, including the dark *angelos* Hekate, the witness, as elements of the psyche enacting a transformation of "dayworld" ego consciousness. We tend to romanticize Persephone, or "the Kore," as she is known before her descent. "Kore" means "maiden" with the connotation of "daughter," but is actually a role rather than a proper name. Her

provenance was not only the giving of life but the dealing of death.

Hillman constantly seeks not "integration" of the psyche's components, but plurality: which means honoring the different emotional territories in which the soul expresses itself. Thus the summerland of content is a place the soul can be, and so is the private wilderness of solitude, or the intimate hearth of romantic love. By this token, death, decay, sickness, and neurosis are also things in themselves and not, as the waking ego would have it, "problems to be solved." The soul requires experiences in all of its territories.

The underworld perspective "takes the image as all there is — everything else has vanished and cannot be introduced into the underworld until it becomes like the underworld. We cannot see the soul until we experience it, and we cannot understand the dream until we enter it. / Becoming the same as what we are dealing with is the homeopathic mode of healing. It requires the feeling for likeness, a sense of kinship with what is taking place..." (p. 80) This is also a fundamental requirement for changing consciousness in the magical mode. Ritual works when we become like or identify with whatever archetypal realm we declare to be our central focus: "sympathetic magick." However, our heritage of monotheistic and patriarchal conditioning causes us to be reticent about identifying with shadow, darkness, gravity, or for that matter, with the soul in its wounded aspect. Yet our power lives there, and it is to the land of the dead we must go to claim it.

"That the dream is like a shadow play, a mask, further connects it with the underworld. One of death's most ancient visibilities was in the shape of a masked dancer." (p. 103) Hillman uses the image of death as the dancer to connect dream and death to carnival in the last section of *The Dream and the Underworld*, which is called "Praxis" ("Practice"). Here he ventures as close as he feels is appropriate to interpretation of dream symbols, with the headings "roundness and circles, mandalas," "ceremonial eating and food," "revelry and music, carnival, circus, clown, upside down," and "doors and gates," having the most relevance to creating and critiquing Pagan rituals of the underworld.

It is not possible in this brief overview to convey the richness of Hillman's concepts, but it is perhaps sufficient to suggest that studying his work is bound to deepen our Pagan experience through applying a new perspective to its practice. The index of our cultural understanding of what we are doing will likewise be increased: I believe that modern Paganism is putting into practice much of what Archetypal Psychology asks us to consider. *The Dream and the Underworld* will make a fine introduction to the field.

DARK EROS: The Imagination of Sadism

by Thomas Moore
Spring Publications, Inc.
ISBN 0-88214-365-4

reviewed by Paul B. Rucker

Because Thomas Moore uses the writings of the Marquis de Sade to create a frame of reference for examining the underworld or

shadow aspect of desire, many people who are unacquainted with Sade save by reputation or extracts will be repulsed by the subject. Let me state that this review is not an encouragement to read Sade but rather to learn from Moore's revisioning of Sade. Moore begins with the premise that as sexuality remains the "raw material" of our most potent mythologies today, so the Marquis de Sade created a body of work expressing the underworld aspect of this mythology, and that this is the spirit in which he must be examined: as a mythographer, a confessor speaking for rejected aspects of soul — not as a social critic using fiction to proclaim a literal reformation of culture. There is a strong difference, as Moore points out, between imagining ugliness and perpetrating it; in fact, this book makes a strong case for the imagination of Sadeian elements as a means of circumventing the sadism that occurs when the Sadeian shadow remains unacknowledged. (This is of course quite different from a claim such as "pornography causes violence," etc.)

"For the Gods and Goddesses of Greek mythology, incest, parricide, theft, mass murder, clever sexual connections, and exotic ceremonies are the order of the day. The comparisons to Sade are so striking that one is led more to consider Sade as mythological than mythology as Sadeian, although both are true." (p. 11) For example, the birth of Aphrodite came from a sadistic act: the castration of her father Ouranos. Moore stresses that Eros itself, a primordial creative power in Hesiod, originates from Chaos and remains close to Night, Tartarus, and Erebus, thus psychologically "[e]rotic experience originates in this gloomy place in the soul." (p. 23)

The story of Eros and Psyche contains many Sadeian themes: the loss, the torture, the initiation of Psyche "looking for love but finding only cruel demands," much like Sade's virginal heroine Justine. "Sade's writing represents that moment in the soul's initiation when it captures the secret of an underworld aesthetic. Persephone is sometimes pictured in monstrous form, with fangs and gorgon-like eyes, not unlike Kali of India. But this, in the underworld, is beauty. Psyche is initiated into the Sadeian aesthetics where ugliness is beauty and where whips, chains, black leather, stiletto heels, brass studs, and technologies of torture have definite appeal. The soul truly finds pleasure in those objects which serve the warrior." (pp. 27-28)

Innocence exerts a magnetism unbeknownst to it, attracting its corrupting shadow through aggression or cruelty to challenge its stance; exposing each to the tempering influence of the other. The single-pointed innocence of a symbolic heroine such as Justine, who is subjected to so many tortures and humiliations, is compared by Moore to monotheistic or single-pointed views of life, especially those that reject its shadow aspect. We tend to identify so readily with the innocent that we overlook the Sadeian authority within, that accepts or dispenses cruelty — otherwise known as "the harsh realities of life." Yet this corruption of innocence liberates the imagination: libertinage inculcates the soul's natural polytheism.

"The Sadeian necessities of life can also be camouflaged by scapegoating, so that we see libertinage only in criminals or in political enemies. Paradoxically, when we scapegoat or project the Sadeian elements on others, we enter into our own sadism." (p. 74) When a repressed Sadeian trait comes out in society, we find true sadism as expressed in prisons, schools, courts, police departments, etc. Such places uphold the ideals of "innocence" while maintaining sadistic avenues for their enforcement.

LETTERS

Dear Mezlim Editors:

I'm struggling here, folks. How do I say good-bye to you? *Mezlim* has had such a profound influence on my magickal path that I consider it one of my life companions. Your publication has been a portal for me and I do not want to say good-bye to it! I have such an attachment to my *Mezlim* periodically arriving at my doorstep, that I am acknowledging the need to grieve its departure - like I would the loss of anything that I loved. As part of my grieving, I am offering to you in gratitude, a litany of memories of how *Mezlim* has "sparked the divine" in this humble practitioner's life:

- In 1992 I was given some back issues of *Mezlim* by a dear friend and priestess. I was immediately impressed with the artwork, layout and design - such a refreshing change from the usual pagan 'zine of the time - and by the depth and sincerity of the articles within. Your pages were full of sane (apparently) and intelligent practitioners writing about the theory and practice of magick today. Magick was suddenly alive for me. Some indelible impressions left on the psyche of this budding magickian by *Mezlim* include — the touching and beautiful description of the virgin/whore dynamic in the "Sacred Prostitution" issue; the diversity of perspectives of death/rebirth in your "Initiations" issue (also my favorite cover); the first mature analysis of pagan festivals in "Gatherings"; my first glimpse beyond the veil of "teacher" by articles in your "Priest/Priestess" issue; a sober (and predictive) approach to the sacredness of physical adornment in your "Body Art" issue. These are just what I recall from memory - without my back issues handy! Each cover is ingrained in my mind - opening a doorway to the treasure within. I can call it back up in a moment. Thank you for each timeless gem.

- The columns. Donna's "Niche" always seemed to reflect (on some level) exactly what was going on with my own development at the time. Her words consistently rang true and have helped me in times when I felt alone when working through a magickal conundrum. Dr. Richard's "Heretic's Corner" has been a pure joy. Every installment is a raucous romp through the land of Hod as he takes us along the circuitous route of the ceremonialist's mind. And, of course — "Moon Puppies" by Catherine Cartwright-Jones makes me laugh. And laugh. I laugh so hard my heart expands. No gift is better than that.

We Pagans tend to look for the sacred only in places that "feel good" — for instance, choosing to celebrate Earth as the bountiful mother while not actively honoring Earth as destroyer. I have been to many rituals stressing the former, but none where the latter is the central focus. (Again, to respect the Sadeian element is not equivalent to invoking it; but I think many Pagans think it is, which is why they avoid this work. Paradoxically, this strengthens the Sadeian shadow: coldness, isolation, apathy, obsession with the distribution of power and hierarchy.) The fertile and affectionately erotic aspect of our connection with the World Soul has its cold and removed side.

Moore places Sade in the sphere of Saturn, an influence of death, abstraction, filth, constriction, and construction. The Saturnine influence depresses and creates emotional coldness and distance — opposed to the tender and attractive charms of a sphere such as Venus, which is one reason why Sade offends. Yet both are stations in the soul's journey. We engage in Sadeian rituals of isolation by going off alone, avoiding contact, creating sacred space. We constantly engage in the power dialectic of dominance and submission in Sadeian relationships such as teacher-student, parent-child, individual and group. In every situation where we create a psychological container to shield the outpourings of our hidden selves (such as therapy), we are protecting ourselves from the "contamination" of "normal" values in a Sadeian fashion. And conditions of unusual restriction can cause unusual creative adaptations, as in the writings of Genet and many persons who have discovered their creativity while incarcerated. "Necessity is the mother of invention."

Pagan culture stands to benefit from cultivating a Sadeian perspective in that we might cease to unconsciously project a shadow at "Them" who are persecuting "Us" and "ruining the Earth" and "denying our freedom," to recognizing how we ourselves jail each other and turn the key within the lock. Occulture is particularly Sadeian when it emphasizes a poisonous secrecy, or when flagrant abuses of "rank" take place. Gossip, isolation, apathy, and various other dysfunctions of Pagan culture are part of its unexamined shadow. Could our difficulty in establishing material foundations, such as community centers and temples, and social service programs, and so on, be the reflection of a coldhearted disinterest in crossing the boundaries of opinion and action, to lend our substance at all? Is this perhaps a natural attitude, appropriate in its place?

I have no answers here for these questions, but I raise them to illustrate what a Sadeian critique can summon. Although it may be hard reading for those of us who are used to "Happy Talk," I deeply recommend *Dark Eros* to strengthen our cultural dialectic and our knowledge of our own motives in general.

• My absolute favorite - the rituals. From Tath Zal's "Burn Your Barbie" ceremony to the complete text of the establishment of a Cabal, *Mezlim* has consistently been a ritualist's wet dream. Ritual is our artform; our medium for the expression of our spiritual longings, our desires, our manifestation of etheric impulses. It is the who, how, what, why and where of modern neopaganism. It is our conscious, intentional expressions of our will. It is our Love. From the very beginning, *Mezlim* has offered its body (the words and art of its pages) on the altar of our craft, allowing practitioners to share rituals with each other in an honest and supportive environment. Do you realize how rare this was? What a bold step this was for you to take in the movement? To say - "here are our rituals - use them, adapt them, make them live" - without fear took a great deal of courage and finesse. Some of us out here felt those sparks and (in this vessel at least) a fire was kindled. Which leads me to my final sharing.

• LumensGate. *Mezlim* brought LumensGate into my life. What can I say? In 1993 I thought I would first attend a "small, quiet gathering" to prepare myself for the giant festival I was planning to go to the following month. LumensGate was accessible and sounded intriguing, so I thought I would check it out, to "ease" myself into the pagan gathering scene. What I had "eased" myself into was, of course, a prime seat on the Celestial Bonfire Drumming Magick Dancing Energy Sparkle Pentagram Hexagram Roller Coaster of New Aeon Current. Whoopee!!!!!! Nearly three years later, I am finally able to begin to understand and (barely) articulate what it all means. LumensGate (via *Mezlim*) has brought me — Sheya, the rich magickal discipline I am privileged to practice; an extended family of fellow pagan questers; my first opportunities to participate in group ritual as an integral contributor and oh, so many *herms* along the path of my spiritual journey. *Mezlim* has given me directly — the "Sphere of Spheres" ritual by Barak to begin work towards a community of my own and the encouragement to publish my own writing in its pages which, thanks to the patience of the editors, I did in last years' Beltane issue.

No wonder I cannot say good-bye. Sharing these memories has certainly aided my grieving process, as I thought it would; and I hope I have given you a small token of my heartfelt appreciation — knowing your efforts sparked such a bright flame in me. I know there have been many (perhaps hundreds) of others whom you have touched over the years, not all of whom have been as fortunate as myself to be able to work with you and discover personally that you "walk the talk" of living in magickal awareness. It's been a privilege to meet you through these pages.

So, as *Mezlim* rides off into the sunset of the Land of Amenti, I am reminded of my personal experiences with the "Underworld" this past year. The Druidic grove I work with spent our autumnal equinox re-enacting the Rites of Eleusis (featuring the Hymn to Demeter) and sponsored a "trip to the Ygdrasil" to interact with the Norms for our Samhain ritual this year. As one of the priestesses in both of these rites, I have spent a lot of time recently in the time-space-place we call the Underworld. I have returned now at Yuletide with this insight — that even though we travel "over there" or "under there" to get to the Underworld, it exists within us. It is a place of awareness that we can travel to at will, just like the other "states of consciousness" we magickians like to visit. Energy never dies. It is simply (or not so simply) re-formed into another manifestation. Farewell, then, to the energy that was *Mezlim*. I ask for the boon that I remember and recognize you in the next form that you may take.

Kenneth Deigh and Keter Elan - thank you for gifts bestowed through these pages.

Namaste,

Diana Paar (Ariadne)

Dear Editor:

Enclosed is my submission package for the farewell issue of MEZLIM. I earnestly hope you resonate with and have room for all our last minute submissions. (And, that your layout schedule proceeds smoothly.)

Let me tell you how proud I have been to contribute to your magazine, which has always been a pioneer of aesthetic and textual standards in the occult literary scene. Everyone acquainted with MEZLIM in Minneapolis will be sorry to see it go (many were not aware that its support was ebbing).

I personally hope we will learn from its example to adhere to higher cultural standards and also to remember that we must be worth something to have had a fine magazine like that to speak for us for the last six years.

You and the entire staff of MEZLIM can be proud for the rest of your lives of this achievement and I wish you well in the future.

Blessed Be,

Paul B. Rucker

REVIEWS

Alchemical Works: Eirenaeus Philalethes Compiled

Edited by S. Merrow Broddle

from Cinnabar

P.O. Box 1930

Boulder, Colorado 80306

pp. 570, hardcover, \$60

reviewed by Mark Stavish, M.A.

Looking for a little late night alchemical reading? Well, then you've come to the right place. How about enough reading for, oh say, the next 40 nights? Better still. *Alchemical Works: Eirenaeus Philalethes Compiled* is not only a mouthful, it is also an alchemical month's worth of some heavy duty reading on the laboratory aspects of the Great Work by one of the 17th century's leading exponents of the Art.

As the introduction suggests, over 300 years after the first publications of Philalethes, the identity of this near mythological adept is still unknown. Philalethes is the latinization of the Greek phrase for "Lover of Truth," and if he is judged by what he was written, which according to his prefaces suggest kindness, modesty, and a philanthropic attitude — the reputed hallmarks of spiritual attainment, it is a fitting name. Legendary for having achieved the Philosopher's Stone at the age of 23, in 1645, his additional pseudonyms describe him as a Citizen of the Cosmos, or *Cosmopolita*, by which he is best known.

An associate of Boyle, Starkey, and other lesser and some well known alchemists and pseudo-alchemists, Philalethes's writings were the basis for Isaac Newton's experiments in alchemy, particularly his search for Philosophic Mercury in 1675. In addition, Philalethes is best known for putting forth the idea of *metallic seed* which was "diffused throughout the metal, and contained in all its smallest parts..." an idea similar to today's atomic theory.

Included in this volume are all of Philalethes' works

available in English, indexed, and complete with the original format being preserved. A partial look at the contents show: The Marrow of Alchemy, parts 1 and 2; Ripley Revived; An Exposition upon the First Six Gates of Sir George Ripley's Compound of Alchemie; Experiment for the Preparation of the Sophick Mercury; By Luna, and the Antimonial-Stellate-Regulus of Mars, for the Philosopher's Stone; A Breviary of Alchemy; and more for a total of 17 tracts being reproduced.

However, don't expect to be able to just pick up this book, head to your basement with a chemistry kit and make Star Regulus or Ignis-Aqua. Like all Philosophers of the Hermetic Arts and Sciences, this one too writes in what his modern equivalent, Fulcanelli, calls the "language of the birds". Like any language, symbolic language is clear to those who know its definitions, grammar, and syntax, but is meaningless to anyone who hasn't done the Work in order to understand. But don't fear, there is help.

While there may not yet be a Yellow Pages for Alchemists, some preliminary reading in the field will help clear away many of the obscurities presented in Philalethes' works. Several introductory books on the actual laboratory techniques of alchemy do exist along with suggestions for practical experiments in the field. *The Alchemist's Handbook* by Frater Alberus; Manfred Junius' *Practical Handbook of Plant Alchemy*; *In Pursuit of Gold, Alchemy Today in Theory and Practice* by Lapidus; and *Gold of a Thousand Mornings* by Armand Barbault are all more valuable in conjunction with *Alchemical Works: Eirenaeus Philalethes Compiled* for the aspiring practical alchemist than a dozen psychological analyses of the text.

So, if you are looking for an authentic alchemical text to guide you, complete with references and historical background to give it weight, then *Alchemical Works* is one of the best buys for the money. It is an expensive book, \$60, but is loaded with what is considered by the publisher to be the essential readings on the subject of alchemy by one who is said to have made The Stone, and completed the Great Work.

A note about the publisher by the way, in the true spirit of hermeticism he has included the following statement on the dust-jacket: "This work was commissioned by a scholar of The Art who lovingly guided the stringent accuracy of the detailed restoration and publication of the material contained within. Consistent with the Hermetic Tradition, he wishes to remain - Anonymous." Could it be? Nah...

O Mother Sun! A View of the Cosmic Feminine

Patricia Monaghan
from The Crossing Press
Freedom, CA 95019
softcover, \$12.95

reviewed by Kenneth Deigh

This is an important book for our Magickal/Pagan community, for a number of reasons.

First, *O Mother Sun!* addresses the accepted duality of a male/female universe, in which the masculine is solar and light oriented, while the feminine is lunar and dark. This is a dichotomy that has damaged the spirit of our society in many ways, and needs to be challenged.

Second, unlike all too many pagan writings of the past few decades, it is solid scholarly work. Such scholarship is sadly lacking within our community, so this is a strong step in a positive direction; it also offers the wider world a view of paganism that is clear, competent and ready to stand on its own. This goes a big step beyond the "Wishful thinking as history" that has plagued the pagan community, and even parts of the academic Anthropological community as well.

With the limited space I have here, I can only encourage you to purchase and read this book, because it is important to every intelligent pagan everywhere. It is essential that we move beyond the cosmic stereotypes that hold us hostage to an unforgiving archetype of separation, where men are men, women are women and ne'r the twain shall meet.

O Mother Sun! offers a new archetype. Drawn from existing and historical cultural lore, Monaghan has given us a world where you don't have to be a man to be solar, or a woman to be lunar.

O Mother Sun! is not light and airy reading, and it offers no simplistic answers to the challenges we face as human beings and as pagans. A substantial meal often takes more time to digest than junk food, but it is worth the effort.

Hangin' With The Angel

continued from page 40

"Oh, that's okay," my mother replied. "Let's go."

"You don't understand, ma'am. You have to move up to the front of the bus."

He was right. My mother really didn't understand the politics of the situation. "I'm fine here," she replied.

"Ma'am, I can't drive with you in the back. You'll have to move forward or get off the bus."

"But why?" asked my mother.

"Ma'am, the back of the bus is for the Negroes. The front is for nice white folk like yourself," the bus driver told her.

My mother was furious. "If these men are good enough to fight and die for our country, they're good enough to sit next to me."

The driver would have none of it. "Ma'am, either move to the front or get off of the bus," he said. She pushed her way to the door and left the bus. The Black soldiers had said nothing during the entire scene. But, silently, they all left with her.

No, you won't read about my mother in any newspaper obituaries. Perhaps she should have been.

Yes, I was furious. I hit walls. I cried. I laughed through my tears as I remembered a scene in *Married With Children* where Al moans to the Angel of Death, "Why me? Why don't you take someone useless like Michael Bolton?" But no matter what I did, no matter how I tried to cover up the pain and anger and rage and sorrow, the Angel of Death and I hung together. I tried to write and my words sounded terrible. I tried to read and I couldn't concentrate. I hibernated in the peaceful folds of the Angel's wings, the wings of the Angel of Death.

The funeral, as with all Jewish funerals, was brief. It is interesting that the Jewish funeral liturgy does not focus on loss and death. Rather, like most Jewish rituals, it is an adoration of God. The Rabbi added that we should be grateful that my mother influenced our lives and would live within our memories blah, blah, blah.

For those who know me, I have long admitted that I

internalize my problems — I don't dump on people. Some have seen this as a coldness on my part, but after doing everything from volunteering as a trained telephone hotline counselor to giving thousands of Tarot readings, I've always felt that nobody needed me to dump on them. I wanted to be by myself. I wanted to hang with the Angel of Death.

No, I didn't hide my mother's death from my friends. I called and told many of them. "Do you need me?" they asked, offering condolences.

"No, I'm okay," I replied. There was nothing they could do. I just wanted to hang. Hang with the Angel of Death.

For months, now, I've been in a funk. I've just started writing again and catching up on mail which had formed a big pile. Friends have offered me wonderful advice on how to get through this phase in my life: Try something new. Write a letter to your mother. Read some books. Communicate with her in seances. Do some more exercises. Go on a shamanic journey and learn what your power animals have to say. Keep a diary of your feelings. They're all good ideas. But I didn't follow any of them. I didn't want to. I just wanted to hang with the Angel of Death.

So me and the Angel have been hangin'. I've learned a great deal about Her. She demands your attention at the damndest times. You think you've forgotten Her, dumped Her like a bad bowl of chili, only to have Her come back and rip into your heart and soul. "I'm always here. You will pay attention to me when I want you to. I don't care what you're doing."

It doesn't matter what I'm involved with. Suddenly, the Angel sweeps her wings over me and I'm in a state of no control — I can't think. I can't act.

The Angel is not like humans. She has no heart, no soul. She simply is. She simply does what is in Her nature. And Her nature is to control. Her wings seem comfortable, safe. But as long as we live, Her comfort is a lie, the safety She offers an illusion. Sooner or later Her wings must spread. When they do, we are no longer surrounded by the safety which seems to be in the shadows of Her wings as we push our way out and are again confronted with the hard light of reality. Her peaceful smile is unceasing.

Eventually we each must deal with Her, must meet Her face to face. For each of us She has a lesson. What is it? Well, I think She sings in a different voice to each person. To me, Her message is simple. The Angel of Death is not someone or something "over there." She is here. Here constantly.

She is a curse that takes our friends and loved ones from us. She is a blessing that removes all pain and suffering. Like Kali in Her most destructive aspect, She slices through life. But She also makes way for new life. Without Her we would soon strangle on ourselves as we crowd the planet.

To me, She always smiles. Not the smile of happiness and joy — She only does what She must and there can be no joy in that. Nor is it a smile of viciousness, or satisfaction in destruction. It is more like the enigmatic smile of the Mona Lisa, a smile that betells of a deep knowing and mysterious secrets.

She is always there, waiting, waiting. She easily, all too easily, welcomes us. Too soon She welcomes those whom we love into Her peaceful embrace.

When I see Her, She is not an ugly hag, no Baba Yaga is She. She is beauty and has the sensuality of relaxation and peace. She welcomes. She gives us a choice:

A) We can accept Her welcome — either in that final, physical release of this lifetime, or an eternal (or at least seemingly so) funk of depression, anger and isolation while we live on this plane. Alternatively,

B) we can push Her away, run from Her welcoming wings and the peace She both offers and delivers.

Perhaps one of the important aspects of life is determining just when we will allow Her to soothe our hearts, souls and spirits in final, physical rest. We can choose (or be forced into a situation where we have no choice) to permanently hang with Her. We can just hang temporarily as victims of a heartless God who has taken from us what we most love. Or we can move away, out of Her control, afar from her pleasant kisses. To do so means we must face the light, face life, and, most frighteningly, face ourselves.

If we take that path, we come back into the world. Once again we face the pain, sorrow and horror we sought to escape. Perhaps that's the key. We are all Bodhisattvas and have given up the peace of communing with the Divine in order to suffer and share with everyone else.

As you can see, I've started to write again. I'm starting to feel better. I'm seeing my friends. The pain of loss is converting to the delightful melancholy of remembrance. But the Angel of Death is right here, right over my shoulder. I feel Her breath on the back of my neck and my dreams tell of how easy it would be to fall back into Her embrace. And even though I fight to move on, to move ahead, to step forward,

She still wears her enigma of a smile. She knows that sooner or later, no matter how hard I fight, I will come to Her. Sooner or later we will all come to Her.

There are those who come to this realization and sink into the depths of fear and despair. Not I. For knowing that we all shall eventually vacate our physical vehicles to Her can bring meaning to our lives. We must make each second count. We must make each second valuable. That may be writing so that others may think about our words, playing music, dancing, playing with children, teaching a class, watching a baby, making love or drifting in the arms of morpheus. Every second has meaning.

So, with this article, I hereby say to the Angel of Death, "Good bye, sweetheart. See ya later. Come again some other time. I'm choosing life. I choose to taste the air and the water of physical existence. I'm sorry, but I choose not to hang with you any more."

The Angel cares not what I do. She will always be there. One day I will embrace Her. Until then, She will simply be in the back of my mind and, I hope, out of sight. Even so, as I try to make every minute valuable, I will always know one thing:

She smiles.

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