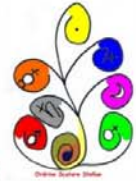


PART TEN:

THE BOOK OF SHADOWS

by ALEX SANDERS



Many books contain the key to the mysteries but opening these books and discovering the key that will open the door to the mysteries is another thing.

Every tradition and every cult has had its book, its bible. Those who have or will have read them will learn to understand the unity of all creeds, despite the difference existing in the ritual of various countries. The Sepher Bereshith of Moshe (Moses) is the Jewish bible, the Book of Zohar is the bible of modern magicians, the Apocalypse and the Gospels form the Christian bible, the legend of Hiram is the bible of Freemasonry, the Odyssey is the bible of the so-called Polytheism in Greece, and the Hindu Vedas are the scriptures of India. We have the Koran of the Moslems and the Witches also have their bible.

The Book of Shadows, the bible of the witches, is one of the most controversial books in modern witchcraft. Many present day witches believe that parts of it have been adapted from the rituals of the Golden Dawn, which was formed in 1888 by MacGregor Mathers, Westcott and Woodman. Others say it was added to by Aleister Crowley and Dion Fortune. Francis King, the author of Ritual Magic in England, states that he has seen letters by Gerald B. Gardner, founder of the Gardnerian witches, commissioning Aleister Crowley to write parts of the Book of Shadows.

The leaders of the Alexandrians, teaching their wisdom and way of life, believe all these things to be true in part, just as the Holy Bible of the Christians is a number of books compiled over the ages by the great patriarchs and teachers of wisdom, added to and subtracted from over the centuries. We have no doubt that many of the origins of our rituals in the Book of Shadows, are less than one hundred years old but, tracing through the modern concept, one can find echoes of latter traditions which mythical, classical, historical and theological research will prove beyond a shadow of doubt to be true. Lines of Virgil, Solon, Plato, the great teachers of Egypt from the Book of the Dead echo across its pages.

Since Alex Sanders has been set up as the King of the Alexandrian witches and teaches the Universal Wisdom, we believe from our practical experience and spiritual visions that the Book of Shadows is another frame work or bible which contains the hidden key of the omniversal frame work and the opening of cosmic consciousness. The book itself is simple in construction and first degree initiates tend to underestimate its utter simplicity.

The initiates first experience of this book is during the first degree initiation when the blindfold and cords have been removed and he is presented with the weapons of a Witch. When he is presented with the sword it is taken off the Book, which is the centre piece of the altar. The Book is closed in front of him and he is shown the cover, on which is written the motto of the Wicca:

Eight words the Wicca rede fulfil: An it harmone - do what you will.

First stipulation that the initiate is made aware of by the High Priestess is to keep a book in his own hand of write, to let brothers and sisters copy what they will but never to let the book out of his hands. 'For if it be found in their hand of write then they may be taken and tortured. Each should guard his own writings and destroy it whenever threatened. Learn as much as you may be heart and when danger is past re-write your book ere it be safe. For this reason, if any die, destroy their book if they have not been able to, for an it be found tis clear proof against thee and you may not be a witch alone.'

The next part of the book tells him never to boast, never to threaten and never say he wishes ill of any.



Next the initiate is warned, properly prepared he must always be, for he must be properly prepared according to the rules of the art otherwise he will never succeed in the work he undertakes. The circle must always be properly cast and purified, he must be purified beforehand by ritual bathing. All weapons used in the magical art must be properly consecrated and all doors must be securely latched so that he never feels in danger that someone may come in while he is working.

The book also tells of the eight ways of working - the eight ways of penetrating to the centre and the opening of a full consciousness and awareness. There are rituals for meditation and for dancing; rites for creating mental images and maintaining the mental image with special chants, and how to make combinations of these rituals, and it again stresses that he must be safe from all outside interruption and from the mental fear of interruption. There are instructions for casting the magic circle, drawing down the power, banishing the power and how to bless and charge working tools, medals and talismans of wood, metal and precious stones.

If one should feel calm and stately, for each ritual that is written in prose there are counterparts in rhyme and verse which really draw the witches together.

Also included are the invocations to the God and Goddess, which are so necessary for the drawing down of the power of the moon onto the priestess, which brings the Goddess into her body so that she may be capable of reading the charge to her people. There are also two festivals for the equinoxes, two for the solstices, four lesser festivals or sabbats and fire festivals in honour of the God that he may illuminate the heart and spirit of his people. There are also purifications for higher degrees.

These are the basic teachings contained in the Book of Shadows and they teach of the things necessary to nature and to life and to the fulfillment of a spiritual progression on Earth for we believe that the Gods of power give a lot of help to man, as man is powerless without the help of the Gods and we should delve into the secrets of the Book of Shadows, also called by its ancient Egyptian name of the Chapters of Coming Forth by Day. "There is no part of us that is not of the Gods", for we are the children of light and our book is the way of wisdom, which is the way of truth.