

# **Pneumagrammaton:**

*Rituals of the Open Source Golden Dawn as syntax and grammar for the Subtle Body's realization and instantiation of the Logos.*

THESIS:

**In this paper I will show that the rituals of the Open Source Order of the Golden Dawn constitute a means by which an imaginal and energetic grammar and syntax is “written” into the subtle body of the adept through a combination of visual, auditory, and somatic cues. The psychodrama of OSOGD rituals help encode facets of an imaginal language into the mind, body, and “Sphere of sensation” of the initiate, and thus empowers the magician to use this language as a means to produce willed acts of change. In turn, this “writing” of the subtle body provides the aspiring adept with the tools and methods to eventually replicate this writing in their own acts of initiation. By giving the magician a visual language encoded in metaphors, and the ability to write through ritual, the magus is empowered to shape and design the world beautifully through the imagination in accordance with his/her will as he develops on the path of adept hood.**

## INTRODUCTION – SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman—a rope over an abyss... What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end: what can be loved in man is that he is an *overture* and a *going under*...

Nietzsche

The human condition, the blood, turmoil, and rage of the ages washes over the planet like a red tide. We wander in darkness, our limbs weary from the war in the heaven of our own minds fragmentation. The metaphors abound: the veil of tears, the trance of sorrow, and the world of dust. Whether we speak of Plato's primal forgetfulness born of the soul's descent into matter, or Gurdjieff's notion of the somnambulistic slumber of those yet to become human, one thing is clear: we are less than what we could be, and we dwell in our own self begotten chains of forgetfulness, and folly.

Yet, deep in the human heart dwells a hunger. The soul yearns to be free, to express itself, and like its progenitor, to create in its own image. This path of emancipation and empowerment, where both magick and mysticism meet coequally in the formula  $0=2$  is the path of Thelemic adepthood.

But this path to liberty, emancipation, and awakening is not an easy, one. Undeterred by the ardors of the path, intrepid, unconquerable, and adventurous souls have trodden the heroic routes before us, and left guideposts and signs for those who wish to lift themselves above the muck and mire towards the supernal starry canopy of heaven in the hopes of bringing the kingdom down to earth.

The magi of the west, the Siddhas, of the east, the saints and bodhisattvas, are the shoulders upon which we stand. They, in turn, stand on the other side of the veil as the order of the Silver Star, coaching and encouraging man's ascension towards his great destiny. The Open Source Order of the Golden Dawn is heir to this perennial tradition of adepthood, and provides a path of awakening and empowerment for those who choose to follow it.

## **DIAGNOSING THE SOULS AILMENT – BROKEN NARRATIVES**

To Paraphrase, William James who once said that all religious traditions offer two things: “diagnoses and deliverance.” This diagnostics of the soul and, the offering of deliverance from its plight, lie at the heart of the perennial tradition from which OSOGD draws its sources.

In the East, the Tantric doctrine of the Gunas and Tattwas, gives us the idea that all of creation consists of three primary forces (Satva: light, clarity, spiritual; Rajas: active, energetic, dynamic; and Tamas: slow, inertial, dark). Paralleled in Hermeticism by the concepts of Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt, these three strands combine and intercombine to provide the basic substrate to all forms of maya, or divine creation. In turn, these strands express themselves through the five elements (Tattwas) Air, Fire, Earth, and Water, which combine to lend shape and form to the things of the world. (Evola 1968).

This perennial tradition, shared between East and West through pan Hellenic trade routes (McEvelley 2002), lays at the foundation for the ontology and cosmology of the ancient world. According to this doctrine, souls which incarnate into the world carry the strands of past life action, (Karma) which creates particular forms of incarnational experience through the gunas and tattwas. These, in turn, veil the purity of awareness through various kleshas (emotional obscurations) built on the karmically based memory traces of past life actions (Samskaras).

As a result, the individual becomes further and further removed from its divine origin, and becomes buried in the partiality and particularity of conditions associated with its own instantiation of the Tattwas and kleshas. These come to occlude the essence of reality, and form the limits and conditions of one's life in relationship to matter, space and time.

These limits, both a blessing, and a curse, are the material, and fodder with which the aspiring adept must struggle. The OSOGD, heir to the perennial tradition as articulated through the ontology and practice of Iamblichus Theurgy as well as Eastern Tantra, shares this diagnostic of the soul's condition.

Iamblichus, drawing from the Neoplatonic cosmology, posited that as the soul descends into matter, it becomes ensconced and tainted by worldly elements and phenomenon. This results in the soul losing its original wholeness, clarity, and unity, in place of a fragmented, dispersed, and chaotic incoherence. The process of embodiment thus leads to a state of forgetfulness wherein the world and its realities come to take precedence over spiritual luminosity. This creates confusion, bewilderment, and numbness in a soul cut off from its source of clarity.

Contrary to his dualistic mentors like Porphyry who viewed the flesh and embodiment as corrupting the soul's purity, Iamblichus looked to physical embodiment, honed through the practice of Theurgy, as the method by which man could liberate himself from these shackles, and become a co-creator with the divine.

Paralleling the Tantric idea of “Jivan Mukti” or liberation while living, Iamblicheus saw theurgic rites as a way to align with divine principles while dwelling in the flesh. Iamblichean theurgy is thus based on full participation and engagement with the world, because,

One’s attitude to the body and matter, then, would be an index of the degree and manner of one’s participation in the Demiurge; more specifically, Iamblichus held that the worship of embodied souls was determined precisely by their degree of material involvement. (Shaw 1995: 24).

The paradox here is that one’s ability to become a co creator with the demiurge as an illuminated soul is directly related to how engaged you are with the world.

This emphasis on worldly embodiment and physical participation with the world is also central to Thelemic magick.

In Thelemic magick you can’t run from the world to the mountains, but rather must come down, participate, and prove yourself. Crowley’s essay, the “Danger of Mysticism” highlights this point clearly:

The Magician is not nearly so liable to fall into this fearful mire of pride as the mystic; he is occupied with things outside himself, and can correct his pride. Indeed, he is constantly being corrected by Nature. He, the Great One, cannot run a mile in four minutes! The mystic is solitary and shut up, lacks wholesome combat. We are all schoolboys, and the football field is a perfect prophylactic of swelled head. (Crowley 1927).

Yet, it is not just physical participation with the world that provides a means of egress from the limits of the human condition in theurgy. As a theurgist, one must undertake rituals and rites that yoke one to the divine logos of the demiurge, while one is actively living in the world. This is the

Western version of the Tantric idea of “being in the world but not of the world” as a householder.

For Iamblichus,

the blessing of embodiment as portrayed in the *Timaeus* was available to the particular soul only by imitating the activity of the Demiurge, and thus was possible only through theurgic rites...By entering into the community of gods as one of its bodies of light, the embodied soul was no longer alienated by matter nor passionately drawn to it. Embodiment was transformed from the psychic chaos of suffering into a cosmos, an adornment of the divine. (Shaw 1995: 54)

This state, neither averse to the world, nor bound to it, parallels the yogic state of Jivan Mukti (liberated while living). This path of self-cultivation rests centrally on the art of invocation that lays at heart of the Golden Dawn system. Here one seeks the reclamation of the soul's original wholeness through the gathering, and concrescence of elements and facets of the divine totality into oneself via the art of theurgic ritual.

## **GOD'S SIGNATURES – THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THE DIVINE**

The heart of this approach rests on the concept of divine signatures, or Sunthema. Just as facets of a hologram contain all of the pieces of the whole, the world of incarnation holds pieces, or facets of the divine emanation. The task for the theurgist is to find these tokens, or signatures, and conduct rituals, which help cure the imbalances of incarnation whereby the soul, has become fragmented or partial relative to its divine origin because of its descent into matter.

For Iamblichus, the soul could be elevated back to its supernal place of wholeness by gathering these tokens, signatures, or signs of the divine wholeness that the soul had lost through its imbalanced partiality of physical incarnation. These signatures,

Were pure specimens of divine presence in matter, and for souls suffering a specific imbalance within the administration of a divine being, the objects that bore its symbol/sunthema become homeopathic antidotes if handled in a ritually appropriate manner. (Shaw 1995: 48).

A supreme example of these Sunthema could be seen in the image of the sun. The qualities of the sun, itself an expression of the divine, was thought to be found in a corresponding variety of material artifacts thought to have a sympathetic relationship to its qualities.

According to this notion, Heliotrope, the cock, and gold, all became identified as corresponding with the sun. (Shaw 1995: 49)  
Theurgists who sought to align with the solar principle, and thus yoke

themselves to their divine origin, would thus seek these tokens out as a central element of their work and create rites of alignment by which the solar principle was invoked as a means of moving the soul closer to wholeness the sun represents.

*Loosing the ratios and proportions*

In the Soul becoming “partial” or “fragmented” its subsequently looses its relationship to the divine principles and ratios that govern the order of the cosmos. Though it is impossible to completely sever a soul from the whole because,

Every human soul carried the divine ratios (logoi) established by the Demiurge, its “measure of coherence” were no longer uniformly preserved but were broken apart into divisions of time.” (Shaw 1995: 73)

In essence, not every soul is as focused, or coherent around divine principles, as others, and each soul experiences the world chaotically in proportion to its lack of integration and coherence with these principles.

For Iamblichus, the sphere is used as an analogy for divine perfection. As the soul undergoes experiences from choices, and acts in the world, it absorbs them in its essence. As a result, “Like a sponge, the soul loses nothing of its being but simply become rarefied, or densified.” (Shaw 1995: 104) This results in a distortion in the contours of the soul. It gains a “Shape” contorted relative to its density and specificity based on its choices. The process of Theurgy helps reclaim original wholeness by rarifying and “smoothing” these contours of the soul.

This increasing rarity, or density of the soul produces a gradient of souls relative to their level of attainment. The resultant “hierarchy of souls” is foundational to Iamblichan Theurgy, (Shaw 1995: 22) and is paralleled in many initiatory traditions that speak to levels of advancement and attainment along the path. Tantrics themselves make the distinction between animals (Pashu), aspiring adepts (Viria), and attained ones (Deviya.) (Evola 1968:52). This hierarchy reflects the varying states of awakening, and integration along the path of return.

Like Tantric Yoga, the world in Iamblichan theurgy is a holographic microcosm of the macrocosm of divine principle; the whole is contained within the parts. Through ritual and contemplative mediation, the theurgist seeks to rise above the veils of illusion and attain supra mental realization while fully embodied in the world.

## **DIVINE PERFECTABILITY – TOWARDS THE PERFECT WORD**

The loss of divine ratios (logoi) and the sphericity of the soul through the process of incarnation and embodied choices are the material conditions the Theurgist must work with. With knowledge of this condition, a goal exists for the emancipation from this limited state into the realm of Gnostic illumination. The palette upon which this great work rests is the body and its expressions in the realm of the language and imagination. For by “Words and Images” are all powers awoken and reawaken.

Fundamental to this process, is the belief in the possibility of a divine attainment, or realization of a “Man of light” whose theurgic work has raised him above the folly and limitations mentioned above. Here we have an anthropology of adept ship from which we realize that,

There (is) the outer man of flesh subject to the Elements, to planetary influences, and to Fate.... and there is the man of light, the hidden spiritual man, the opposite pole to the corporeal man:  
*phos.* (Corbin 1971:14)

This “man of light” is a realized state born of the purification and cultivation of the self in relationship to the elements and influences that have come to bind and determine the fate of the carnal man. The archetype of perfectible nature rests at the heart of the hermetic enterprise. Here we have the essence of the path of attainment, upon which the OSOGD rests,

The first thing you have to do in relation to yourself, is to mediate attentively on the spirit entity, (Your angel) which rules you and which is associate with your star – namely your Perfect Nature....  
When the microcosm which is man becomes perfect in nature, his

soul is then the homologue of the sun stationed in the Heaven, whose rays shed light on all horizons.” (Picatrix quoted in Corbine 1974: 18)

The hermetic project on which OSOGD’s rests is oriented to the reclamation of the balance and integrity with the fundamental elements which makes up man’s nature.” In turn, this balancing is meant to bring one into relationship with one’s “Perfect Nature” which is represented by one’s own unique, distinct, and particular angel that reflects a person’s particular instantiation of the divine into the world.

### **LANGUAGE OF LIGHT – THE ORIGINAL GRAMMAR**

Just as the divine logos instantiates itself in space and time through the creative productions of the cosmos, man as a microcosm of the whole produces things from himself that reflect his own state of being.

More often than not, man’s disconnection from divine wholeness leads to creative productions in the world that reflect that partiality. Through the expressive tools of speech and writing, through the vehicles of word and Image, man produces the plurality of cultural schemes and artifacts that reflect the state of his soul’s integration and understanding. More profoundly integrated and realized souls produce accordingly, and the opposite holds as well.

In Vedantic thought there is the differentiation of “Rupa and Nama, or the “Name and Form” of objects in the sphere of space and time. Vedanta makes the caveat early on that one must not confuse Nama and Rupa, or the “Map and

territory” for in so doing, error emerges. On a deeper level Vedantic Linguistics articulates the notion of “Arupa” or the formless realm of pattern that lends shape to form. According to Linguistic Theorist Benjamin Whorf,

*Arupa* is a realm of patterns that can be “actualized” in space and time in the materials of the lower planes, but are themselves indifferent to space and time. Such patterns are not like the meaning of words, but they are somewhat like the way meaning appears in sentences. They are not like individual sentences, but like SCHEMES of sentences and designs of sentence structures...the *Arupa* level of the “mental” plane may be contacted directly in an expansion of consciousness. (Whorf 1956: 253-254).

These higher-level realms of “Metapatterns” are essentially the same as the realm of the Platonic Arche, or forms upon which the very foundation of the Universe rests. Whether we use the Kabbalistic Model of Briatic Archetypes, or the scientific notion of metapatterns of a Metaverse (Volk 1995, Lazlo 2003) the idea remains the same: there is a realm of higher level “Noetic” form and pattern that man can tap and access, which in turn can lend shape to his own creative productions.

These noetic patterns (words and images) have distinct mathematical properties that are expressed in a series of geometric relationships. These patterns provide the underlying architecture of the very essence of nature (Schneider 1994).

The rituals of the Golden Dawn can be seen as a way to help the initiate both to understand this essential “pattern language” (Alexander 1977) of nature, and to internalize these patterns into one’s very being. In so doing, one seeks to align the relationship of one’s own microcosm with the macrocosm through a

process of linguistic and geometric rectification via a visual language articulated in the symbolic rituals and processes of the Golden Dawn system. This is the essence of the Theurgic project for according to Iamblichus,

The soul exists in ratios common with all mathematics, possessing, on the one hand, the power of discerning them, and on the other hand, the power of generating and producing the incorporeal measures themselves, and with these measures the soul has the capacity to fit together the generation and completion of forms in matter by means of images, proceeding from the invisible to the visible, and joining together the things outside with those inside. In view of all of this, in brief, the definition of the soul contains in itself the sum total of mathematical reality.” (Iamblichus quoted in Shaw 1995: 193).

Most of man’s production is Profane. Cut off from this zone of higher-level insight, he articulates his world from the place of lower vibration consciousness. Our “code” is faulty, and the profane logos we articulate is but a Shell of the original Logos that it imitates because,

As man descended and became further sunk into materiality, the soul of the letters was progressively extinguished and while language grew in words, it shrunk in terms of spiritual force...the teachings of the Elohim, which are also those of the Rosy-Cross, have never been lost. (Krum Heller 1995: 52).

From a Hermetic POV, the path of attainment is intimately tied to a reacquaintance with the supreme power of language. This is not the profane language of man, however, for this is a,

Language full of truth, of strength, of pristine purity, or reason, and also of light...and its characters...are both fitting and invariable. In every work of Nature, of all about us, one may find these invariable characters. This language of light, essential a primordial, possesses different branches containing the Divine, the spiritual, and the Physical. From these come the language of light, the language of spirit, and natural language.” (Krum-Heller 2005: 44).

The golden dawn rituals might be seen in terms of an attempt to reorient the initiate to this primal language by creating a series of interpretive mediums in the symbols and frameworks of the GD syntax and grammar. To understand, and master, this language, we must “pass through initiation, in order to understand this divine light, and to know how to utilize it consciously. God manifests himself as God, via language and writing” (Krum-Heller 2005:58).

At the other end of the Hall, in the East sits the Hierophant who transmits the light of the Gnosis to the brethren. Ra Hoor Khuit having taken his seat in the East at the Equinox of the Gods comes to proclaim a New Word, The Word of the Aeon. For as the Divine Child, the reconciled Integral Androgyne,

Horus is, then the power of the Logos, the spermatic energy, the synthesis of the pleroma. A part of Horus lives and indwells the human embryo, which later, will manifest with speech and become the Word. (Krum Heller 2005: 64)

But becoming this word is not a given, but is rather an attained state. The Hierophant points to the goal and offers a higher example for the initiate to strive towards in their own process of rectification with the logos. The initiate must walk the path of Adept hood to reclaim this originary Logos, and one day potentially their own “Word” as a Magus.

To rectify man’s displacement from the divine logos requires a rectification of language in way that involves all the faculties of the human being. To understand how the Golden Dawn Rituals accomplish this, we must understand the importance of the imaginal realm, and how this, in turn, lends

shape to the subtle “body of light” that acts as the mediating zone between the microcosm and the macrocosm within which rests these ordinary patterns of the cosmic logos reside.

## THE IMAGINAL - THE TEXT OF MAGICK

According to scholar Henri Corbin, a world exists between the realm of material reality and the divine (Corbine, Bloom, & Manheim 1998). Called the “Mundus Imaginalis” or world of images, this realm is not merely a zone of fantasy, or escapist flights from reality. Instead the imagination is seen here as,

the organ that permits the transmutation of internal spiritual states into external states, into vision-events symbolizing with those internal states. It is by means of this transmutation that all progression in spiritual space is accomplished, or, rather, this transmutation is itself what spatializes that space, what causes space, proximity, distance, and remoteness to be there.

(Corbin, Mundus Imaginalis)

Corbin’s definition of Mundus Imaginalis, or the imaginal world in the Islamic Sufism of Ibn Arabi is analogous to the Yetsiratic realm of the Kabbalah, wherein one develops the spheres of the creative imagination through path workings, developing god forms, and others forms of creative visualization. In so doing, one’ learns to navigate the spaces between the formless and noetic realms of archetypic Briah, and the tangible Assiatic world of material reality.

The rituals and magick of the Golden Dawn are heavily oriented towards the creation of and maintenance of these interior landscapes of the mundus imaginalis as means of active mediation and communication between higher formless realms of noetic pattern, and the world of everyday reality. Like the Tibetan Yoga’s which work towards the building up of detailed mindscapes involving deities, yantras, and other sacred imagery, (Hopkins 1981, Bromage 1952, Chang 1963) GD magick is focused on honing the imagination as the

gateway to the higher realms, as well as a way to transmit that gnosis into the world of physical reality.

Imagination, alongside Will, is the definitive force for the aspiring adept. Like the Surrealists, hermetic magicians see the creative imagination as the primary faculty of the mind,

the imagination is an omnipotent power that, dwelling within the mental depths, must be brought to the surface through the dream, through free association, through automatic writing, and through madness itself; and the image, once surfaced, is thrust into the reality with all the shock and clash of a dream revelation. Reality, to the surrealist, becomes, in Eluard's words "alive, and perpetually moving" (Beyer 1973: 87).

For the hermetic magician the imagination is not reduced to the fantastical, but is rather seen as an active, and productive force. The visions and ideas created by the magus are the seeds of tangible, real world change. If given coherence and the force of Will to back them up. There is a "Power of actualization" hidden in the image. (Beyer 1973: 87).

The ability to create in one's mind's eye, and then move that image in the world of form is the essence of the Magician's work of bringing change about in conformity with Will. Never the passive receiver of the real, the magician works to actively shape it in accord with his Intent relative to the conditions and circumstances he is working with. The imagination is an embodied activity that lends shape to the physical form,

We have to conceive of these processes not as the immaterial phantoms we readily take fantasy-pictures to be, but as something corporeal...The *imaginatio*, or act of imagining, is thus a physical activity that can be fitted into the cycle of material change, that brings these about. (Jung quoted in Beyer 1973: 89).

It is the ability to firmly stand beyond one's visions, and to generate the committed confidence and one pointed ness of attention to them, that moves them from the realm of the mind into the world of physical reality. Desire and passion are the fuel that feeds this fire of change, and helps the magician transmute his or her visions into actualities

Imagination is seen here as an active, and productive tool for tapping deeper realms of knowledge and insight. This kind of active imaginal,

Does not create from nothing, rather it "recalls" images and associations from the collective unconscious of the race.

Imagination depends on memory...A part of the teachings of Hermes Tismegisustus consisted of 'interiorizing' the world in our mens, from whence the 'arts of memory' cultivate in the light of magic, during and after the renaissance. (Faivre quotes in Magee 2001:46)

The building up of these interior landscapes through the memorization of correspondences in the knowledge lectures, the pedagogical learning's in the rituals themselves, and the intense layering of symbolism combined with the geometry and design of the hall all work to create an interior landscape in the imagination. This, in turn, helps the initiate orient and access higher realms of noetic information uncompressible from a mundane point of view. These "Akashic Records" and Metapatterns are the noetic content of the logos the magician taps through the imaginal interface of the Golden Dawn language.

In essence, one develops a hermetic vocabulary that provides a mediating and interpretive (Hermeneutic) zone wherein the formless and mysterious realms of transpersonal logos can be engaged and comprehended within a framework

intelligible to the human mind. One learns to read and write to the metaverse and dwell in the interzone between the worlds that is the liminal space in which the magician is most at home.

### *Form and Formlessness: Nonreification*

Yet, the Thelemic magician and mystic must never reify the image, or lose perspective relative to the ground of being from which these images derive and are shaped into being for “Pure Will, Unassuaged of Purpose, and Delivered of the Lust of result,” Is everyway perfect. The perfect and the perfect are one perfect, and not two, nay are none!” (Liber AI)

The 0=2 formula of Thelemic magick posits a profound relationship between the form of the image, and the formless ground of nonduality from which all form derives. The equation of the 0 of sunyata with the duality of 2 expresses a profound idea held in common between Tantra and Kabbalah. Here Nirvana is in Samsara, and Kether in Malkuth, “but of a different order.”

The Magician and Mystic who understand this relationship between the ground of emptiness, and the font of the imaginal dwells in an important place of spiritual understanding. Here the yogi and magus meet for,

The yogin shares with the renaissance magus a self consciousness and literate tradition, a sense of a system of metaphysics, and a belief in magic, but where the magus breaks the boundary between the image and object by hypostatizing the image, the yogin break the boundary by dereifying the object, systematically, of emptying every descriptions of its reference to a real entity, Nagarunja applies this process of metaphysical “emptying” to every concept of “real existence...Thus public reality and the divine image, a

magical illusion and a dream, have no real existence, but they all occur and have real effects, and have haven no real nonexistence...The divine reality and the public non reality interpenetrate at every point, and both the magic and salvation are made possible by the same premise: "There is not the slightest difference between this world and nirvana," says Nagarjuna. "The limit of nirvana is the limit of the world: not the sublets something is ever found between them." (Beyer 1973: 91-92)

Just as the Tibetan Monks who create intricate and beautifully detailed mandalas in the Kalachakra working then blow them away demonstrating impermanence and dependent origination of all phenomenon, so the magician who understands the play (Lila) of Maya does not attach to the images or forms he creates.

Rather, the magician who comes from a place of illuminated insight works to use his creative and productive power in alignment with divine principles to move his own sphere of the entirety of creation towards awakening and realization of the underlying Love, Bliss, and intelligence beyond the particularities of dualistic form.

Working for the "Complete liberation and supreme enlightenment of all beings pervading space and time," The magician who understands these dynamics strives to use the things of the worlds as vehicles for awakening. For as in Tantra, the magician understands that in the Kali Yuga, "We rise by the same things which can make us fall." Both working with images, and not reifying them, is the keys to this fine act of balance and equilibrium "Which is the basis of the work."

## THE SUBTLE BODY – THE WORD MADE FLESH

But it is not just merely the cultivation of the imagination that provides access to the logos and higher spheres of noetic insight Iamblichus spoke of. Some medium, or interface must exist for the transfer between the macrocosm and microcosm. Some point of contact must exist between the locus of the magician's own mind and vision, and the larger universe.

Beyond the imagination, exists the subtle sphere of the radiant body of light in which the imaginal is both instantiated, and which provides the interface between the personhood of the magician, and the larger macrocosm in which he operates. This body,

is called by various authors the astral double, body of light, body of fire, fire body, scine-aeca and numberless other names, is naturally fitted to perceive objects of its own class-in particular, the phantoms of the Astral Plan. (Crowley 1994: 242).

Crowley felt the cultivation of this body of light to be one of the most important facets of the magickal path. He writes, “ You should endeavor to the utmost to develop and fortify this Body of Light. The best and simplest way to do this is to use it constantly, to exercise it in every way.” (Crowley 1994: 245) It is only through the cultivation, refinement, purification, and strengthening of this subtle body that one is able to directly access and experience realms increasingly refined, rarefied, and meaningful.

Numerous definitions for this subtle body of light exist in the spiritual literatures around the world. Though the number and details of these bodies differ, one of the most direct and useful frameworks divides these bodies into three: the gross physical body, the energetic body, and the causal body. In this tradition,

The Buddha is viewed as having three bodies: “Nirmanakaya” (body of transformation), “Sambhogakaya” (body of enjoyment), and “Dharmakaya” (body of reality.) In Hinduism gross, subtle, and causal bodies offer a partial correspondence. The crucial consideration in the present context is that in order to get to the higher bodies, and the level of awareness and function that they incorporate, you must activate and utilize the energy body.” (Mann and Short 1990: 34)

The key point here is that the medium between the physical body and the higher casual body that interfaces directly with the universe is the energetic body. The Golden Dawn rituals provide means to develop this body through the visualization of god forms, meditational breath work, the middle pillar, and a variety of other tools.

The two foundational texts for Crowley’ A:A (Liber E and Liber O) both are focused on ways to cultivate this body of light. Liber E that articulates the basics of Yoga provides the means by which the magician can refine their physical and pranic body, while simultaneously learning to focus the mind through various raja yoga techniques. The development of the energetic body through physical yoga coupled with pranayama leads to a strengthening of the energetic body by enhancing the prana, pneuma, or chi that is the energetic medium for the magicians imaginal constructs.

The stronger the body of light, and the more focused and coherent the mind, the greater the impact and efficacy of the Magicians' willed intentions on the world

Liber O, on the other hand, provides a variety of mental and imaginal tools in the form of the pentagram and hexagram rituals of the Golden Dawn which helps the magician both write to and interpretively read the resonant information he engages with when invoking, divining, or traveling on the planes of the metaverse.

In all cases, one must develop this body of light, remove impurities, and integrate it as one works forward on the path of hermetic magick. As one develops the body of light, integrates the symbol sets of the Golden Dawn Magickal vocabulary, and creates internal coherence around this imaginal and energetic grammar, one's ability to affect the macrocosm grows accordingly.

In essence, by making oneself an integrative unity, one develops oneself as a coherent quantum field (Lazlo 2003). The more integrated and unified all facets of one's being are relative to this field, the more impact one's being has in the world. Like the unity of a coherent field of light in a laser beam, the magician with focused and integrated mind and body of light is able to project his Will into the world to effect change with greater efficacy. Furthermore, the light this radiant body gives off can potentially become like the light of a blazing radiant star illuminating the canopy of heaven with quantum fires of the Sun.

The quantum coherence a magician radiates produces subsequent entrainment with other quantum fields around them, resulting in the production of a harmonious alignment in one's environment whose fruits are grace and beauty.

This production of beauty is an act of Love, for “the Magus hath power upon the Mother both directly and through love. And the Magus is Love, and bindeth together That and This in His Conjunction.” (Crowley Liber B vel Magi sub Figura I).

## **REBUILDING THE TEMPLE: RECLAIMING THE LOGOS**

To initiate is to start and engage a process that implies fruition. But what is the fruition of the path of attainment in the OSOGD? There are basically two platforms that we can speak of. The first involves moving the initiate through the elemental grades in effort to support their psychological and energetic rectification with the elements. Here they undergo the Iamblichian theurgic process of gathering the “Sunthema” of divine in the forms of Earth, Air, Water, and Fire, which helps them integrate and balance their imaginal and energetic bodies.

Once this basic preparatory work is undergone, the magician now stands at the threshold, or Veil of Paroketh that represents a leap from the worldly, and mundane state of affairs into the realm of the transpersonal gnosis.

Here the magician crosses over into the second order where their work becomes focused on the primary goal of the GD system. An ordeal of rectification and final integration of the elements through work of the portal prepares the initiate for the descent of grace and the attainment of Knowledge and Conversation with their Holy Guardian Angel. This awakening to the voice of the soul henceforth provides the orientative guidance and is the adept’s platform for all future magickal work.

From there on out, the magician is exhorted to know their HGA, and put its work into practice. From that point on, the magician as a “Man of Light” will undergo future tests, trials and ordeals through the grades until facing the great

task of “Crossing the abyss.” This profound state, well along the magickal path, implies an integrated and robust selfhood build like a pyramid out of the four elements and crowned with the quintessence of spirit.

At that point, the magician must take a Kierkegaardian “Leap of Faith” into void of the unknown beyond the dualistic realm of the mind’s definitions. Here at the edge of the Miraculous and Madness, the magician’s greatest task awaits. The outcome of that great ordeal imply either a return as a divinely empowered light bearer to guide other souls forward, or the infernal folly of the Black Brothers who seek to stifle and slow the evolutionary process for their own selfish benefit.

The Divine seeks to actualize itself through us, and into the world, for “All of these spirits are “Contained” within God as *Ungrund*, in potentia. (Boehme quoted in Magee 2001: 40). This potentia seeks realization through human embodiment. Just as the angels long for the human experience of corporality, the divine requires man to instantiate itself into the world. In essence,

The products of God, including God’s wisdom, *must* take sensuous form....it is through human speech, human thought, that God achieves his highest and most consummate self knowledge, for we are the beings who in thought and speech can reflect on the whole of the cycle of creation. As Arthuer Versulis states, “Ultimately, God comprehends himself through man.” (Magee 2001: 43-44).

But the divine can only do this through us to the proportion of our capacity tied directly through the refinement of initiation. The strength and integrity of the pyramid the magician has built through the grades is the foundational vehicle and means by which the higher insights derived through these transpersonal inputs from the divine can then be instantiated in the world. In effect, God can only work

his way through us in direct proportion to how well we've prepared ourselves as instruments for this cocreative process.

This yearning for the divine, and the path of ascent the adept walks is the heart of the human spirits potentia for,

True magic is not a being, but the desiring spirit of the being....Magic is the greatest secrecy, for it is above Nature, and makes Nature after the form of its Will....it is in the desire the will striving towards the heart of God. (Boehme quoted in Magee: 2001:42).

In this striving towards the "Heart of God" the initiate must learn many things, and internalize many teachings on the pathway towards the reclamation of the divine logos. In effect, one "rewrites" oneself to know the book of life, and the divine word at the heart of the Cosmos, and then become a co creative author of evolutionary change in alignment with divine principle.

In the elemental grades of the Golden Dawn, the aspiring adept is gathering the tools, codes, and insights upon which this pyramid of self is built, and learns the imaginal and energetic grammar within which this art and science of evolutionary change operates.

## **THE GD RITUALS: Encoding the Divine Logoi into the Imagination and the Body of Light**

Though all of these rituals have their own particular grips, signs, tokens, badges of admission, and set design, the most fascinating element of these rituals are the key messages and subtle transmission to the body of light and imagination they convey to the initiate.

The rituals of the Golden Dawn each produce a different impact on the imagination and subtle body of the initiate. The Hall itself, designed in according with exacting ratio between the dais, the officers, and the initiate, as well as the energetic lines of force and god forms that project them, all create a subtle geometric and energetic architecture in which the sphere of sensation of the initiate is “zapped” as they make the rounds and rotations through the rituals. In turn, the colors, imagery, and didactic lectures all imprint themselves on the mind and imagination of the initiate creating a vocabulary, and internal grammar that gradual weaves them more tightly in the GD system and vocabulary.

Each of these rites contains its own set of archetypal messages meant to help reorient the initiate to the divine logois, and to reconcile and reintegrate the initiate with the various elemental daemons that constitute their very nature. These rites use somatic, visual, and auditory messages to create a psychodrama, and a “Pneamagrammaton” by which the codes and meanings of divine principles are conveyed to the individual. Through the rituals, purification’s and didactic messages, the imagination, and sphere of sensation of the candidate is rewritten

with the hermetic code of the Order of the Golden Dawn, which provides the aspiring magician with tools to both write and read the divine logos of the metaverse.

### **NEOPHYTE:**

As the basis of all GD rituals, the neophyte rituals contains core elements of all of the other rituals, and provides the basic grammar and syntax of GD style magick. Here the initiate is introduced to the sacred geometry of the hall with the equal armed cross of force being projected from the dais between the cubicle altar and the stolistes and dadochous. The balance between the Light and Darkness seen in the Hierophant Hierus creates the charged polarity form darkness to light through which the initiate must walk in their pathway towards the divine.

The course and unrefined nature of the initiate, unpurified and unconsecrated must be sanctified by water and fire and made a clean vessel for the descent of light the Hierophant will bring from the supernals later on. Meeting a series of challenges along the pathway of the sun, finding their own nature as a hindrance, being bound in the arms of materiality, the initiate is a slow tepid and Tamasic entity that needs the Rasajic energy, and sativic purity of the Hierophant who comes with light to bring them forward on the path of return. The initiate is “zapped” by the hierophant and the officers under the banner of LVX, and under the sacred geometry of the tetrahedron, thus yoking their subtle body to universal architecture and sacred geometry that underlies the cosmos. In turn they are called from their profane state to the “gentle beauty and healing light” of LVX that lights

the canopy of heaven. Here their subtle body is made a suitable vessel for divine logoi that will provide further guidance for them along the path of ascension.

In this ritual the Neophyte learns of the powers inherent in circulation with the sun, the powers of projection of their will with the sign of the enterer, and the stilling of that force with the sign of silence. The sanctity of their will as the guiding light, and the officers as mentors on the path, all provide the initiate with balancing archetypes, and reference points for their own process of reclamation of the souls divine logoi. Here the initiate is made a fit receptacle for the light, which will later be analyzed into its component parts as it has been refracted through the veil of the tattwas. The initiate is ready now to reclaim other facets of their soul, and deepen the hermetic grammar and syntax as their imagination and subtle body is rewired with the egregores of the HOGD.

### **ZELATOR:**

Now a fit talisman for the light in its variation, the initiate of the Neophyte of the GD stands prepared for the ascent up the Tree and the reclamation and rectification with the divine sunthema associated with the elements. The first elemental grade on the path, associated rightly with earth, begins the initiates process of rectifying their souls with these facets of the divine in a way that brings both empowerment, and equilibrium relative to these qualities.

The Earth tablet is invoked, and the hall is filled with the spirit of the earthly daimons whom the initiate must reconcile with and integrate in order to move forward on their path. Here the initiate is shown the folly of one-sidedness.

Neither can the initiate rely on the path of mercy, nor the path of severity in their journey up the tree. Balance and “Equilibrium” truly is the basis of the work, and here it is made explicit. Here the candidate is introduced to the archetypal idea known as the “Law of Three otherwise known as the Hermetic “Law of the Triangle” (Magee 2001: 108-109) by which the third order reconciliation of opposites is shown as the path towards divine realization.

Only the middle way along the middle pillar with reconciliatory and integrative power can provide the proper course for progress. At this stage the initiate is shown clearly how weakness can take the form of too much kindness and too much harshness. It’s rightly so that zelator provides the initiate with grounding in the body as the beginning basis of their further work.

The lesson here is that the initiate, empowered by the energy of the hierophant in the neophyte ritual, can only progress further up the tree by having a firm foundation in the material world. This grounding in the physical is a wise lesson, and one that bears repeating often as the process of ascension continues. One never leaves a grade behind, but like an onion, merely envelops the previous layers in additional spheres that create expansion and refinement on the insights and truths learned prior.

## **THEORICUS**

Having the fire of the supernals brought to them to initiate their process in neophyte, and the grounding and equilibration brought in Zelator, the initiate now stands ready to learn some of the more detailed lessons of the hermetic art. The

powers of Air are invoked, and the initiate stands ready to have their imagination and sphere of sensation encoded with the lessons and meanings associated with the grade. Associated with Air, the intellect, and the mind, the Theoricus ritual is the quintessential ritual of hermetic magick.

Here the initiate meets the “Four Kerubs” of the revelation of Saint John in the form of the man, the eagle, the lion, and the Bull. Receiving a blessing by each of these representations of the four elements, the initiate comes to understand the divine quaternity of earth, air, water, and fire, as they correspond to the four powers of the Sphinx: To Keep Silent, To Know, To Dare, and To Will. All of these, in turn, are reconciled by the Sphinx who stands at the center as the “Synthesis of the elemental forces, I am also the symbol of man, I am life, and I am death, I am the child of the night of time.” Here the adept is introduced to, and purified by the elements and their Ruach, or mind, is made ready to receive the intense download of theoretic information that will provide the foundation for their further hermetic studies. At this level, the introduction to the 4 elements, as well as the additional material, is theoretical. This grade teaches you to be studious, to hone the memory, and be an active learner, without which, all further efforts of hermetic studies are useless.

## **PRACTICUS**

Where Theoricus provided the initiate with a great expansion of their mental sphere, its in the realm of Practicus that the emotional body will be tested. With the invocation of Gabriel and the watchtower of Water, the Daemons of that

element are summoned to key the initiatory space with the codes and logoi necessary for the initiate's further integration. Paradoxically this sphere associated with water is the place where the initiate encounters the forces of the primeval creative fire that drive the cosmos. Here the archetypal lesson of all opposites containing the seed of the other is clearly communicated. In this grade ritual the initiate encounters the Four Kabiri as they represent these four qualities of fire (Astral, Volcanic, Solar, and latent. This primeval fire "From which all things sprang" is the underlying creative force the magus internalizes and cultivates in their own process of becoming a co creative agent of the divine design. Here the candidate is introduced to the "Sacred Pyramid of Fire" which expresses the creative fire of the divine as it expresses itself through uniquely, and also through the other elements of earth, water, and air. It is in the realm of water that the magician meets the great archangel of Fire Michael, and the sun itself. The alchemical notion of "Liquid Fire" is well articulated in this vibrant and inspiring ritual that conveys important ideas to the imagination and entrains the subtle body with important messages and codes for future revelation.

## **PHILOSOPHUS**

We come finally to the last degree of the "First Order" of the Golden Dawn. The philosophus degree, representing the element of fire, is last initiation in the elemental quaternity before the initiate takes the leap across the veil of Paroketh into the second order and the Dominis Liminus degree of the portal. Just as the Practicus degree invokes water, but leads the initiate into a journey and

understanding of the fires of creation, so the Philsopohus degree does the opposite. Here the fire table its invoked, and the daemons of the element of fire are summoned, yet the initiate stands ready to engage the powers and potency of the watery womb of creation. Here the initiate meets the waters stagnant, turbid, and limpid on his way to understanding that “Before all things are the waters and the darkness and the gates of the land of night.” Here are the waters formless and void, upon which the primeval spark of the Logos’s fire impregnated the watery womb that gave birth to the universe. Here the primeval Yod meets the primeval Heh, and the process of cosmic evolution in the alchemic mixture of water and fire begins.

This motif, found in Chinese alchemy as the union of Kan and Li, or water and fire, is the archetypal engine of creative production where the androgynous synthesis comes forth in the form of the magickal childe.

Here the candidate meets the serpent, Nehusatan. The serpent who is also the redeemer, messiach, that leads the children at the foot of the tree back up the ladder of lights towards their home in the supernal canopy of heaven.

Here the candidate also meets the rains of heaven, the dew descending, and the ruler of the mists and clouds and is reacquainted with the law of the trinity whereby, “the mind of the eternal father said, into three governing all things by mind...Thus floweth forth the form of the triad being pre-existent – not the first since, but that whereby all things are measured.” Once again the “Law of the Triangle” from whence Hegel’s notion of Thesis, antithesis, Synthesis, derived,

(Magee 2001) and which rests at the heart of the perennial philosophy, is brought for the magicians understanding.

These divine archetypes are presented to the initiates imagination and subtle body as means and vehicle to navigate the further ordeals and mysteries to follow. The Initiate is also given the pyramid of the elements that represent another geometric rendering of the divine quaternity. Finally a detailed series of lectures on sacred geometry and divine ratios are presented to the candidate. Here the candidate, having passed through the waters to the source of fire stands ready to make their own acts of creation whereby they impregnate the fertile seas of their own imagination with the fiery Seed of the Bud Will in the creative acts of magick. Through this union of opposites they can move forth in the production of their own “Magickal Children” that truly bring about change in conformity with Will.

## CONCLUSION

The rectification and integration the Golden Dawn systems provides leads to the threshold of a greater mystery. By integrating and balancing the elements of the personality, mind, and subtle body in the first order, the initiate stands ready for the greater mysteries before them. Here, having rewired and rewritten their internal code, they are able to begin the process of communication with non-personal forces and entities from a place of balanced integrity and inner sovereignty. The GD system helps bring the aspiring adept to a place of balance and strength from which this communication can both be received and transmitted from a place of healthy integrity.

The greatest form of this communication involves attainment of knowledge and conversation with one's holy guardian angel that provides the orientative locus for all acts and efforts of the adept. This effort has its roots in theurgy, for Iamblichus,

The specific skill required of the theurgist is the ability to enter a state of quiet receptivity-like the primal matter that receives the Forms and to surrender every impulse that would pre-empt god's orchestration of the rite...Iamblichus insists that rituals of ecstatic possession require long training and perseverance, and those who neglect such preparations fail to accomplish anything. Those who recklessly perform these rites, he says, become wicked, unholy, gluttoned with undisciplined pleasures, filled with evil, and affect habits foreign to the Gods. (Shaw 2003:59)

The only possession the initiate truly seeks, is the one of his or her Holy Guardian Angel. This spirit, intimate, and integral to the soul's very nature, provides the guidance and pathway for the individual's ultimate creative purpose that is to

achieve “Some maximum depth of intensity of feeling...God’s aim “is for depth of satisfaction.” (Whitehead quoted in Griffin 1989:12). The ultimate way in which the divine can instantiate itself into the world is through the magician’s acts of creative production that bring about change in conformity with will. The creative is “the ultimate reality which is embodied in all actual things” (Griffin 1989:21).

The magician’s possession by his Daemon, or Holy Guardian Angel opens the floodgates to creativity through which the unique and distinct nature of the magician’s True Will can unfold and express itself into the world in the act of articulating the LOGOS into the firmament of the world’s prima materia.

The possession of the Holy Guardian Angel gives the adept the ability to consciously synthesize previous experiences with the present moment as he weaves together the future in acts of willed change. (Griffin 1989: 22) In this act of concrescence, of getting it all together, and getting it all connected, the magician increasingly refines and tightens the webs of reality in accord with their own unique signature and soul spark as they move forward in the process of soul making.

But the hermetic paradigm upon which the OSOGD rests has broader implications than the rectification and enlightenment of the individual. The Rosicrucian heritage from which it’s derived, and which gave birth to revolutions both scientific and political, has at its heart a fundamental mission: reform. The reformation of the world in alignment with divine principles has lent shape to a league of “Golden Builders” (Churton 2005) whose efforts in the forms of

Masonic and Rosicrucian lodges have gone forth to lay the foundations for the building of the “City of God” amongst mankind.

This effort at design is an evolutionary one as Erich Jantsch writes,

We may say that in good design evolution concurs with human will--or human will with evolution...

In a world of monotonously increasing entropy, human will would be viewed, together with life, as struggling against the stream--as waging a heroic but ultimately meaningless fight. In an evolutionary, self-renewing, and self-elevating world, in contrast, subjective will joins hands with objective will. By will, I understand here simply an organizing force...Planning, the subjective activity of organizing the human world, is then the principal manifestation of subjective will; and love, the attractor in evolutionary organization, the manifestation of objective will. That human love is a manifestation of will is a recurrent theme in many of the more profound theories of love, from Ortega Y Gasset, to Fromm. "For in every act of love and will -- and in the long run they are each present in each genuine act," "we mold ourselves and our world simultaneously. (Jantsch 1975: 290-291)

At the heart of this endeavor, Love and Will are the driving spirit of the “Great White Brotherhood” and the outcome of that love and will is “Beauty.” For,

These souls who, so to speak, have lost their wings, are weighed down with earthly cares, unable to scale the heights of the truth. There is one experience that causes their wings to grow once again, and that allows them to ascend once more. This is the experience of love and the beautiful, the love of the beautiful. ...It is by virtue of beauty that we are able to acquire a lasting remembrance of the true world. (Gadamer 1986: 15)

This “Beautiful Itself” as the quintessential Arche towards which all creation longs is the hallmark for all of the efforts of this Great White Brotherhood. And the “The Golden Builders” who understand this strive ceaselessly to bring this beauty into the world. For to Create Beauty, Is Love, and Wills, Victory.

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