

On the Invocation of Set, Enthroned Upon Matter

In former times, when the world was ruled by the wise, the secrets of activating these energies acoustically were known and put to use. [...] The music we hear today no longer works in this way, because the keys to the laws of correspondence are lost, or hidden; also because our world has become, in a way, too solid for its secret resonances to be sprung into action.

-Joscelyn Godwin, *The Mystery of the Seven Vowels in Theory and Practice*, in the chapter titled "The Egyptian Mysteries" ¹

Four days after my initiation into the Open Source Order of the Golden Dawn, knowing almost nothing about ancient Egyptian cosmology, gods, or language, I awoke with a start, having had an extremely vivid and intense dream, which at the time I was unable to interpret. The dream featured Soror ODL A.K., our current Hiereus, whose office invokes Set. That very evening she had, as my mentor in the Order, shown me the LBRP, doing it along with me in tandem, encircled in the same enclosure, wherein I had felt a very close energy between the two of us. The dream vision unfolded thus:

I was riding a strange bicycle, one that you relax on and push your feet back and forth at the same time to move ahead. The ride was very smooth, downhill, fast, and fun.

Then I was standing, and Soror ODL A.K. was standing on a little hill to my right, facing towards my left. (If we were in the O=O Hall, she'd be in her Hiereus place and I would have been in Stolistes' place.) Wearing black, she was intoning in a loud voice, in a language unknown to me. When she ended with what I somehow knew to be the name of the god she was invoking, the name ended in an S -- and as she ended the invocation she drew out the last part of the S into a loud, long hisssssssssssssssssssss.

The hissing then turned into a hissing, scraping, sucking, whooshing language fully different than the one she had been using before. This hissing, scraping language sounded somewhat like Parseltongue from the Harry Potter movies, but with no vowels...like

"SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSCHChChsssswhwhwhwhShhhhhhhhChhhhWhhhChhhhhhhkhkhkhwhhhhhhhhhssssssshhh hhhhhchchchkhkh..." It went on for a while and it was rather frightening and very intense. I awoke with a start, my heart beating quickly. I was so cold.

Since this dream, I have found various sources of information which may offer an interpretation, therefore leading me to what seems to be a novel (yet, I believe, also possibly ancient) method of invoking the powers of Set.

In *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, in the chapter titled “Naming the Gods”, Gregory Shaw writes: Neither Iamblichus nor any of his Platonic successors provide concrete examples of how names, sounds, or musical incantations were used in theurgic rites. There is a great wealth of evidence from nontheurgical circles, however, to suggest that theurgists used the *asema onomata* [ineffable names] according to Pythagorean cosmological theories and a spiritualization of the rules of grammar. In Demetrius’s first-century book *On Elocution* he reports: “In Egypt, the priests, when singing hymns in praise of the gods, employ the seven vowels (phonetai), which they utter in due succession.”²

On the subject of Pythagorean cosmological theories (the world as number) and the ancient Egyptian theurgic methods, Godwin writes:

The vowels are the way in which the human being creates and perceives the phenomenon of harmonics. Subjectively speaking, harmonics are the foundations of number made audible. Objectively, they are the imposition of these numbers on the physical world. In making vowels, we are speaking or singing numbers. The physical world is nothing but number, and its laws are to a great extent harmonic ones. The “adept” of Mardrus’s text is one who understands these laws and can replicate them with the voice.³

Shaw says, “Iamblichus believed that the seven vowels were connatural (*sungenia*) with the seven planetary gods, and certain Gnostic writings suggest that one-to-one correlations were ritually developed.”⁴

Iamblichus cites the authority of Ostanes and Zoroaster to explain the connection of the heptad with the planetary angels. The Babylonians, Iamblichus says, calls the stars “herds” (*agelai*) because they move together in circles and act as bonds (*sundesmoi*) and “collections” (*sunagogai*) of physical ratios. (TA 57, 2-3) Since the administration of these ratios was an “angelic” function, Iamblichus notes that with the addition of a *g* these “herds” (*agleai*) were called angels (*aggeloi/angeloi*) by the Babylonian priests.⁵

So, scholars agree that the “herds” (*agelai*) (AGLA?) of stars and angels were invoked in ancient Egypt by means of the vibrations of the vowel heptad – A E Ē I O U Ō. But in my dream vision, Set was invoked with only consonants – no vowels.

Shaw quotes Nichomachus of Geras:

Indeed, the tones of the seven spheres, each of which by nomenclature produces a particular sound, are the sources of the nomenclature of the vowels. These are described as unspeakable (*arrhēta*) in themselves and in all their combinations by wise men, since the tone in this context performs a role analogous to that of the monad in number, the point in geometry, and the letter in grammar. However, when they are combined with the materiality of the consonants, just as the soul is combined with the body, and harmony with strings, (the one producing a creature (*zōon*) and the other notes and melodies), they have potencies which are efficacious and perfective of divine things. Thus whenever the *theourgoi* are conducting such acts as worship they make invocations symbolically with hissing, clucking, and inarticulate and discordant sounds. [My underlining.]⁶

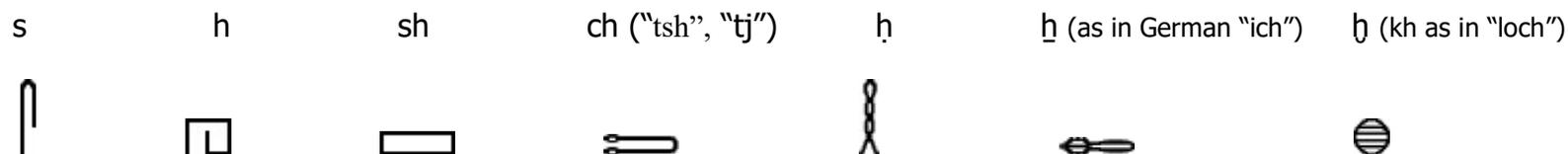
Israel Regardie describes Set as “enthroned upon Matter.”⁷ Conversely to the ancient Egyptian theurgic use of the vowel heptad – the seven voiced vowels – to invoke the planetary gods, the herds of stars and angels, I posit that ritually working a heptad of unvoiced consonants (evoking what Nichomachus called “the materiality of the consonants”) in the invocation of Set, the “Terrible and Avenging God at the Confines of Matter”,⁸ will lead the Mage to fully know this Guardian of the Sacred Mysteries, to invoke the herds of matter and daimons, to truly embody the realm of Matter. If the incantation of the vowels will lead us through the heavenly spheres, the light of the sublime, then the incantation of the consonants may lead us through the seeming impenetrability of matter, the light in the darkness of form. We may discover the subtle harmonics that exist within chaos of the seemingly discordant, the Beastly numbers of the ratios that can not rationally be discerned. “Chaos cannot be perceived or willed directly. Its existence is inferred from two phenomena. Firstly, the existence of matter, and secondly the random behavior of matter.”⁹

“Many have arisen being wise. They have said, ‘Seek out the glittering Image in the palace ever golden, and unite yourselves with It. Many have arisen, being foolish. They have said, ‘Stoop down unto the darkly splendid world, and be wedded to that blind creature of the Slime.’ I who am beyond Wisdom and Folly, arise and say unto you: Achieve both weddings! Unite yourselves with both!”¹⁰ It is easy to hear the brightness of the heavenly harmonics in I, A, and O, but to hear the harmony within the chaotic dissonance of KH or ħ takes the dark wedding, and then both to hear all.

The ancient Egyptian language had four different symbols for four different H sounds: 1) h, 2) “dotted h” or ħ, the “scraping” sounds of 3) “third h” or ḥ (pronounced ch as in German “ich”) and 4) “fourth h” or ḫ (pronounced kh as in “loch”).¹¹ I also heard in my dream the “whooshing” and “hissing” sounds of sh and ch. In phonetic terms all of these sounds are designated “voiceless”, produced without vibrations of the vocal cords. The vowels, on the other hand, are fully “voiced”. I suggest that experiments could be performed by invoking Set Enthroned Upon Matter using these Egyptian unvoiced consonants: H, “dotted H”, “third H”, “fourth H”, KH, SH, and CH. (I knew nothing of the Egyptian language or its possible pronunciations at the time of my dream, yet all the sounds from the dream of Set’s speech of “no vowels” are those that were part of the Egyptian language at the time of Set’s widespread

working.) Alternately, the unvoiced consonant sounds of the English language could be worked: F, TH, S, SH, H, CH, etc. “Thou shalt obtain the order and value of the English Alphabet; thou shalt find new symbols to attribute them unto.”¹²

Scholars to this day do not know the difference in pronunciation between the ancient Egyptians’ h and their ḥ – perhaps the less common ḥ was sounded on the inhalation – the “sucking” sound I had heard mixed in with the whooshing, scraping, and hissing of my dream of the Speech of Set? I had interpreted it at first as a W, but it was not a voiced W – more like an H sound on an inhalation with lips in a circular form. Why should all letters be sounded only on the exhalation? Both breath and creation go both inwards and outwards.



In the visual realm, seeing the progression, or “bonds” of the shapes of the glyphs of these voiceless consonants morphing into one another as if an animated film, we can perhaps conceive of an understanding of the various bonds of matter.

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
 Bending, spiraling in, enclosing, dividing in two, twisting in double helix, forming (as two connected parts), opening out as one.

If we come to fully understand the Voiceless Consonant Heptad and embody this Voiceless Voice with non-vibratory yet oral invocation, by successfully uttering the voiceless in succession we may be able to speak the true name of Set Enthroned Upon Matter, fully understand the mechanism of Matter, enter at once unto the sphere of Malkuth, and achieve the understanding of the dark material and its strange chaotic bonds, attractors, and ratios -- thereby becoming enthroned, ourselves, upon Matter! From there we shall continue on our Hermetic journey back up to the Beatific Sphere.

Abrahadabra! Once again spring into action the unvoiced secret resonances and regenerate the darkly splendid World, our Sister!

May this lead directly to the attainment of the Quintessence, the Stone of the Philosophers, true Wisdom and perfect Happiness, the Summum Bonum, for us and for all beings everywhere pervading space and time.

Aided by the Will and Wisdom of Ra-Hoor-Khuit,
 Written down by Soror Scio Nitorem, 0=0, in the City of Saint Francis of the Birds, the Golden State. A!

Notes

¹ Joscelyn Godwin, *The Mystery of the Seven Vowels in Theory and Practice*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Phanes Press, 1991) p. 71.

² Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*. (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995) p. 183

³ Godwin, p. 74

⁴ Shaw, p.185

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 184

⁷ Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*. (Woodbury, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, sixth edition, 1989) p. 337.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Peter J. Carroll, *Liber Kaos*. (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1992) p. 83

¹⁰ Aleister Crowley, *Liber Tzaddi vel Hamus Hermeticus sub Figura XC*. Lines 36-38

¹¹ James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp.14-17

¹² Aleister Crowley, *Liber al vel Legis sub figura CCXX as delivered by XCIII = 418 to DCLXVI*. Chapter II. Line 55