

EDITOR'S NOTE

Michael Paul Bertiaux (b. 1935) wrote the Monastery of the Seven Rays Courses between the years 1968 to 1973. The original goal was to introduce students to the contemporary practices of occultism and its esoteric doctrines. It did not take the approach of examining medieval grimoire and the later traditions derived from them but focused on the development of esoteric schools and orders, their research and approaches. The Monastery of the Seven Rays (M7R) was an esoteric creation which's sole purpose was advanced research into the worlds conjured up by practicing magicians, magus, sorcerers, and other specialists of occult practices. This fourth year crowned a long process of study and practices that included deep introspection from the part of the students as well as the different uses of incantations, visualisations, conjurations, and the creation of material supports, new and traditional, that have been used throughout the history of the practice of magic. The Fourth-year of the M7R's curriculum includes a historical exposition of its metaphysics, applications, and their development from the renaissance Period (14th-17th c.), through the Period of the Enlightenment (17th-18th c.) and to the 1970s. It identifies its various sources with the moments of their convergence through the Jean-Maine lineage and their transmission to the author and its brethren dispersed over the world. It consists in the retelling of a tradition which exists, for the most part, in parallel dimensions or in mythical times and that have come to interact with our human realm on periodical basis. The fourth-year course intend to provide the student with the knowledge and skills to engage in inner world building and to contact its denizens, to examine its physics, and in doing so, come to realize the nature of ultimate reality. Therefore, it is much more than mere spell casting, and it engages its practionners to research and actively engage one's inner creative powers to extend the boundaries of one's reality and being.

When preparing Year Fourth for republication, we tried to intervene or modify the original text as little as possible. One of the reasons for this is that many of these courses, spanning over four years, were written by Bertiaux in semi states of mediumship, sometime automatic writing, and the flow of his prose was deemed conducive to opening the mind of the students to a sort of

transmission. Therefore, run-on sentences are almost the norm and antiquated spellings (e.g., Tharot, Thibetan, etc.) have been used throughout. We standardized some spellings when both spellings were used indiscriminately (e.g., malcuth to malkuth, etc.) and decided for the more common usage. Certain orthographies (e.g., kabbalistic, cabala, and so forth) were kept as is, since context called for such usages. We have standardized the French spellings despite the fact that traditions from Haïti used a non-standardized spelling still employed today. The reason for our decision is due to the international membership and readership of the M7R. Coined words (monadology, functional noetics, matheological constructions, etc.) that have not been met in previous lessons should be understood by the context. Definitions and examples are often provided at first mention if not in the following pages.

Vocabulary and application remained a constant problematic decision in editing this volume. For instance, Bon-pa is used in these lessons for adepts of the esoteric form of indigenous Tibetan traditions. This can be contrasted to the bonpos who are the followers of the indigenous or “pagan” religious practices of Tibet which involves the practice of spells, incantations and magic. The word *bon pa* in Tibetan is a verb meaning “practicing bon” which is synonymous with ritual chanting (*gyer*). Those who were expert in ritual chanting were the bonpos, the followers of the larger cultic system of Bön (*bon*). Bertiaux, in his numerous writings, makes a point in emphasizing that his teachings are not those of indigenous religions of the Haitian Voodoo nor those of the Tibetan Bön, but rather are esoteric teachings dealing specifically with the creation and activities related to magical universes. I believe that this is an important point that readers should bear in mind.

One lesson was added to the Fourth-Year curriculum a few years after its final completion. This was the lesson entitled Gnosis of Fire, the excursus to follow immediately after the first lesson of Part II: Esoteric Cosmology. This lesson is not part of the first issue of the Fourth Year and the older collections do not contain it. In fact, only parts of it remains in the original English. Of its original 16 pages, three are missing (pp. 2, 3, and 7). The Spanish version, translated and edited by Manuel Lamparter supplied text that were edited and exchanged for the missing English parts. Here, we have included the version the author, Michael Bertiaux, supplied us with (January 2024) that he believes was meant to be original to the text written in the early 70s. It is in our opinion

that current readers best keep to the version presented here unless they choose to rely on Lamparter's version.

Lastly, I would like to commend the initiative of the editor-in-chief and publisher, Roberto Migliussi. Up until Roberto began working re-issuing the M7Rs lessons, and to make available unpublished writings of Michael Bertiaux, these lessons were floating on the internet under various guises with misleading versions and additions. The state of these productions was dubious at best and individuals with little scruples began to use these, transformed, or interpreted to suit their own unhealthy schemes. Therefore, these re-publications, edited with the help of Michael Bertiaux himself, will be of benefits to students and researchers interested in the Lessons of the Monastery of the Seven Rays.

J. F. Marc des Jardins
Concordia University, Montréal