The Holy Guardian Angel



THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

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The Holy Guardian Angel

On the practice and experience of the Holy Guardian Angel

Edited by Michael Cecchetelli

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Holy Guardian Angel

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Introduction

It should never be forgotten for a single moment that the central and essential work of the Magician is the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

Aleister Crowley

....you shall see your guardian angel appear unto you in unequaled beauty; who also will converse with you, and speak in words so full of affection and of goodness, and with such sweetness, that no human tongue could express the same.

Abraham Von Worms

Knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is the primary goal of the ceremonial magician and must be achieved before any other meaningful magical acts can be accomplished. The Holy Guardian Angel, (the Secret Lover) will be the magician's teacher, lover, mentor and guide through the higher levels of initiation.

Lon Milo DuQuette & C. Hyatt

With these lofty words the Holy Guardian Angel, hereinafter at times referred to in the more colloquial abbreviation so prevalent in the modern day, The HGA, is described by some of magick's foremost authorities[1]. While I have selected the above three quotes to precede my introduction, there are a plethora of others from which I could have chosen, all to a greater or lesser degree mirroring the sentiments expressed by Crowley, Abraham, DuQuette and Hyatt.

1 If in fact, a subject so fluid and evolving as magick can be said to have authorities at all.

So venerated is the HGA in the practice of magick that Crowley himself has referred to Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel not as a part of the Great Work, but AS the Great Work itself[2]. One can scarcely pick up a book on the greater field without finding reference to this most revered being, along with the author's own interpretation of its nature. Likely due to the innumerable forms the Holy Guardian Angel takes in the magickal traditions of the day, and the vast differences in opinion held by those who claim to have achieved communion thereof, the HGA remains an enigmatic figure for the aspirant. The mystery shrouding this being is quite intimidating for one seeking to undertake magickal operations to obtain his "knowledge and conversation", as union with the angel is commonly called. Aspirants in the modern age are either over prepared, nervous far beyond necessity, and terrified of letting the least detail of the operation slip lest they be chastened harshly by the universe, or inversely go into it underprepared, having read one or more of the new age drabble books which assert that the whole process is as easy as pie, and can be completed in a night of spellwork. Likewise, the expectations of the aspirants run the gamut based on whose interpretation of the HGA and its function they have been led to believe.

One such discussion, like many of the more productive ones of the day, took place on the blogosphere in 2011. Originating on Conjureman Ali's Spiritual Blog, the debate made its way across upwards of a half dozen other such sites, my own included, where the authors of each weighed in with their own experiences and thoughts on the subject.

That debate provided the inspiration for the present volume. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the literary offerings provided by my fellow practitioners, gleaning insights and wisdom from their experiences as well as sharing my own, rethinking my own long-held conclusions under the lens of their own worldview and cosmology, and above all seeing how truly personalized the experience of the HGA is for each of us. Thus the idea for a book on the Holy Guardian Angel was born. It puzzled me that despite the inestimable value to the practicing or aspiring magus, and the gravity ascribed to the undertaking of achieving "K&C" by the foremost schools of magickal thought, there was no single volume dedicated to it and which offered insight into the varying manifestations and forms of this ancient entity.

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2 Liber Aleph, "This Great Work is the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel"

Knowing that such a work would be an invaluable tool to novice and learned magician alike, I set about determining how it should be done. Quickly I realized that the reason no author had set about producing such a volume, wherein are presented a diverse and varying cross section of the beliefs on the subject, was because no *single* author could. The nature of the Holy Guardian Angel, its function, its true essence, the mechanisms by which one comes to meet this much revered divinity and all other areas of study related to it, are far too diverse for any one magician to produce a definitive work on them all. Therefore, I sought out, approached, offered, proposed and at times cajoled some of the best and brightest minds of modern magick from all corners of the world, (or at least the internet) to contribute their own views and experiences for what would be an anthology, presenting the most comprehensive and in depth treatment of the Holy Guardian Angel to date.

Herein you will find the previously unpublished, collected wisdom of Grimoiric Mages, Strategic Sorcerers, Modern Grimoire Shamans, Golden Dawn Initiates, Ogdoadic Magicians, Hermetic Magicians and Thelemites, each rending the veil and exposing for the discerning reader their own experiential and academic gleanings on our collective subject.

In addition, for posterity's sake and because it adds to the present work a breadth it would not otherwise have, the aforementioned blog post from Conjureman Ali's Spiritual Blog which served as the starting point for 2011's discussion has been reproduced here, by gracious permission of our good brother the Conjureman himself. A further series of 4 of my own blog posts, originally from The Lion's Den, have also been reproduced here, annotated when necessary for clarity, as they serve well to illustrate my own views on the subject, followed by a new paper wherein I further the knowledge offered in those posts to include the ways in which my own beliefs have been, in some ways, evolved, in the years since their writing, as a result of my continuing work alongside the others in the field.

And now, without further adieu, we invite you, gentle reader, to join us on the journey to which we have given the name

The Holy Guardian Angel

PART 1

THE NATURE OF THE ANGEL

A Solar Spark of Light and Fire

Darren Scriven

The intention of this paper is to set forth what I believe to be the Holy Guardian Angel's purpose, its association to solar symbolism, and possible characters that fulfil the role of the Holy Guardian Angel. To do this we will be delving into the symbolism of myth and the scriptures; through doing so, we shall see how the *Greek Magical Papyri*, also referred to as the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* and abbreviated as *PGM*, and the grimoires use this symbolism to work with this type of spirit.

Although Aleister Crowley is not my cup of tea, he did seem to sum up quite succinctly the purpose of working with the Holy Guardian Angel:

> The single supreme ritual is the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. It is the raising of the complete man (and woman) in a vertical straight line.[1]

Or, as he also expressed in the same book, "in the language of Mysticism, Union with God."[2] Going by what Crowley said, the Holy Guardian Angel is the spirit which guides us towards God by aiding us in developing

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1 Crowley, 1979, p. 294.
2 Crowley, 1979, p. 151.

our spiritual nature. We do not have to just take Crowley's word for it, for if we turn to the *PGM* we will find the same meaning there too.

The first magical rite that is presented in the *PGM* is one for acquiring an assistant daimon. In this rite the magician deifies a falcon by drowing it in the milk of a black cow that is mixed with honey. He then identifies himself with it through a process of sympathetic magic by using two of his own fingernails and hairs. Next, the falcon is mumified and the magician drinks the honey and milk mixture before the rising sun to feel a divine presence within his heart. The ceremony culminates in the statue of the falcon being crowned in a shrine of juniper wood, with offerings and sacrifice being made to it.[3] From this ritual procedure it is obvious that the magician creates a link with a divine spirit, and although being separate from him it is linked to the magician by the use of his own fingernails and hair. Therefore, this makes the spirit a very personal divine guardian. For a detailed analysis of this ritual I would refer the reader to a chapter in *Occult Traditions* titled 'Waters Animating and Annihilating Apotheosis by Drowning in the Greek Magical Papyri' by Aaron Cheak.

The second ritual to be found in *PGM* is of a similar nature to the first. It is known as *The spell of Pnouthis for acquiring an assistant daimon*, and just like the previous ritual this spell also uses the symbolism of a falcon. In this rite the assistant daimon is refered to as an aerial spirit, a god, a king, and an angel. In *Occult Traditions* Damon Zacharias Lycourinos writes that the spell of Pnouthis "is also an initiatory rite of systasis, which means to present the magician to divinity."[4] This might suggest a correspondance to the natue and purpose of the Holy Guardian Angel, especially when recognising that this type of spirit, which is called an 'angel', performs the function of an intermediary and messenger between the realm of the magician and the realm of the gods.[5] What is the purpose of a messenger? It is to link the sender of the message to the receiver. This can be seen in some of our words today that are similar to the word 'angel', such as angle, which links two sides together; anchor, which ties a boat to the bottom of a body of water; ankle, which is where the foot and the leg are linked together; and last but

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3 *PGM*, I. 1–42.

4 Lycourinos, 2012, p. 36.

5 Angels, like daimons in the *PGM* and systems of theurgy in Late Antiquity, are a class of beings who are intermediate, apparently, between gods and humans. These spiritual beings, in the sense that they do not have a human physical location and limitations, are subordinate to the gods.

by no means the least, there is the Egyptian ankh, the sign for life which is produced by uniting together two opposite forces, such as male and female, or spirit and matter.

As seen from the *Greek Magical Papyri* and the *Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage,* the Holy Guardian Angel is an intermediary between divinity and the magician. The angel's role is to relay the sacred wisdom of God to the magician, and through doing this the magician is able to be guided through life towards union with God. The angel does this by helping the magician to have control over the forces that operate in the magician's life; "For the spell of Pnouthis has the power to persuade the gods and all the goddesses" and "the gods will agree to everything, for without him nothing happens."[6]

In the *Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* this is shown by the demon princes only being conjured after the operation of the angel has been successful. If the inferior spirits do not obey the magician even after calling their superiors, "you ought then to invoke your Guardian Angel, whose chastisement they will quickly feel."[7]

There is one key association linked to all of what is written above. That is the sun. In the two papyri rites refered to, both used the imagery of a falcon in identification with the guardian spirit. The falcon is a classic symbol of the Egyptian god Horus as a manifestation of the creator sun god.[8] In the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* there is a chapter for being transformed into a divine falcon, where the messenger says, "I am one of those gods or spirits who dwell in the sunshine" and a little further on in the same chapter,

> I am the falcon who dwells in the sunshine, who has power through his light and flashing. I go and come to the confines of the sky…Horus is upon his seats and his thrones, and I am he who is in his form. My arms are those of a divine falcon, I am one who has aquired the position of his lord, and Horus has invested me with his shape… Lift up your faces and look at him; he has made his appearance as a divine falcon.[9]

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6 *PGM* I. 52–53, 130.
7 Mathers, 1900, p. 102.
8 Pinch, 2002, p. 66.
9 Faulkner, 1994, plate 26.

The falcon is shown to be the symbol of the sun at its height of strength. This is portrayed in the Egyptian solar cycle:

> At dawn the sun was a child-a daily repetition of the emergence of the sun child during the First Time. At noon, the sun reached the peak of his strength and could be perceived as a triumphant falcon. By evening he was an old man, virtually the only god to be shown as old.[10]

The myth of this solar cycle is referred to in the first rite of the *Greek Magical Papyri* where it is pronounced in the spell to the statue of the falcon,

> You who have established the world on an indestructible foundation, who are young in the morning and old in the evening, who journey through the subterranean sphere and rise, breathing fire.[11]

When reading these myths, it is all too easy to interpret the symbolism of the sun for the actual solar orb in the sky. Herein lays the trap of mistaking these myths for some fabricated stories to explain the course of the heavenly bodies in the sky. To do this totally deprives the ancient myths of any spiritual meaning at all. In order to make sense of the spiritual meaning in the myths, we need to apply the ancient Hermetic axiom of 'that which is above is like that which is below.' In other words, we are a microcosm of the macrocosm. This rule is of fundamental importance if we are to enable clarification of the spiritual interpretation of mythology to take place. Nature is the body of God and if God made man in his own image and likeness, then by natural analogy there are corresponding parts of nature in every human soul. Myths are therefore the spiritual stories of these corresponding parts found within the soul. There is a saying in the Talmud that has relevance here: "if thou will know the invisible, open wide thine eyes on the visible."[12]

The sun is the outward symbol in nature that represents the divine part of the soul. Its journey around the four points of the compass in the sky represents by analogy the spiritual journey of the soul. This is why the spell

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10 Pinch, 2002, p. 91.
11 PGM 1. 32–34.
12 Blavatsky, 1902, p. 118.

in the *PGM* I. 1–42 depicts the sun as young in the morning and an old man in the evening. This is because the evening is associated with the west and death. When the sun enters the western sky, it goes down towards the realm of matter, where it figuratively dies and traverses through the underworld around the northern quarter until the morning. When the sun rises in the east, it symbolises the birth of the soul's divine nature. This is why the sun is represented as a young child in the morning. From there it moves to the south where it metaphorically reaches its height of spiritual power. It then repeats the entire cycle again as a continual reminder for all to see.

This is the crux of the myths about the dead and risen gods, for they represent that divine spark of solar light and fire which is to be kindled within us all. According to Proclus' commentary on The Chaldean Oracles, when this is done, "'it makes the soul to shine with fire' – that is, which itself shines round the man on all sides; it rays forth, becomes truly astral (augo-eides or astro-eides), rays forth with intelligence."[13] Just like it was previously described in the rite from the *Greek Magical Papyri* "who journey through the subterranean sphere and rise, breathing fire."[14]

This divine light is the symbol of gnosis, which is divine wisdom, as Proclus also explains, "The light of the sun is the pure energy of intellect,"[15] an idea that was carried over into Christian mysticism:

> Proclaiming the Intellect and wisdom of God, both essentially, as the source of being, and also as the true cause of existence; and they make it equivalent to Light, and call it Life. [16]

Jesus Christ, who is seen as a solar messiah in esoteric circles, said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,"[17] and "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[18]

Just as the Holy Guardian Angel's purpose is to present the magician to divinity, the words of Christ suggest he also does the same. He does this by bringing the light (divine wisdom) to those who are in darkness (spiritual

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13 Mead, 2010, p. 56.
14 PGM 1. 33–34.
15 Taylor, 1816, p. 148.
16 Areopagite, 1965, pp. 24–25.
17 John 14:6.
18 John 8:12.

ignorance). This light is sometimes perceived as coming down from the Higher Self, but whether one chooses to perceive figures like Christ, Horus, and the Holy Guardian Angel as an aspect of the Higher Self or as a separate entity is irrelevant. All that seems to matter is that the magician's spiritual development is greatly aided by making contact with this sacred angel. The prior condition to seeking contact with the angel is purification. This can also be seen as an alchemical operation of refinement of the inner states of being, as Companion Abrasax suggests in his chapter in *Occult Traditions* entitled 'The Holy Guardian Angel a Golden Thread in the Tapestry of Being and Becoming':

> A great part of this process of regeneration is facilitated by a 'burning of the dross', as I call it, which at its heart is a psychotherapeutic process of purification. It is imperative to the process of Knowledge and Conversation that we slowly and wisely remove the mental and emotional obscurations that blind us from the Knowledge of our Angel.[19]

These obscurations are seen as coming from the lower nature, which is associated with the body. The lower nature and the powers that work through it and upon it are often perceived as contrary to the divine powers of spirit. This is a prevalent theme in the ancient writings of the Hellenic world, from Platonism to Neoplatonisn, and the many different Gnostic sects. For example, in Mead's commentary on *The Chaldean Oracles* he writes,

> The unfortunate body is regarded as the '**root of evil**' or '**naughtiness**', and is said to be even the '**purgation of matter**', one of the fragments characterising it plainly as the '**dung of matter**'.[20]

In this way the body was seen as pulling the soul down into matter, causing her to become subject to the powers of fate. To escape from this necessary torment, the salvation of the soul depended on the intervention of the angelic powers to purify itself from the elemental forces of fate, otherwise known as daemons. Interestingly, we find that the word *daemon* is also

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19 Abraxas, 2012, p. 274.

20 Mead, 2010, Vol. 2, pp. 37–38.

thought to relate to the belief in fate. "Hence, Plutarch associated daemons with oracles."[21]

This type of dualism that is so common in gnostic spirituality is seen to be carried over into the grimoires of the medieval and Renaissance period. As shown in British Library Sloane MS 3825, called *Janua Magica Reserata*,

> As therefore amongst, the good spirits, there is a proper Keeper or protector, Deputed to & set over every one corroborating the mind of man to good &c – so from amongst orders of Evil Spirits, there is by Divine permission, sent forth an Enemy ruling over the flesh, & the desires thereof; & the Good spirits fight for us as a preserver against the Enemy of the flesh. Now man lies between those two, in the middle, & safe (amidst those contenders) in the Hand of his own Counsel, to which of them he will give Victory.[22]

In the writings attributed to the Apostle Paul, which are very gnostically inclined, from the New Testament, we come across this exact same idea:

> Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural: and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.[23]

Just like in the Egyptian solar cycle where the sun (soul) is described as an old man when it sets in the west and enters the realm of matter, Paul also describes the earthy soul as old:

> That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness.[24]

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21 Luck, 1985, p. 165.
22 Skinner & Rankine, 2005, p. 71.
23 Corinthians 1: 46–47.
24 Ephesians 4:22–24.

This dualistic philosophy is portrayed in many other parts of the Bible with the angels leading the way to help spiritualise the individual: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."[25] An angel is sent from God to Daniel to save him in the den of lions.[26] Moses is also sent an angel from God to help lead him and his people through the wilderness, to guard him on his way until they reach the promissed land.[27] In the New Testement, an angel comes before Peter while he is chained up in prision and delivers him from prision.[28] Each of these passages refers to an angelic power helping the individual when facing a hostile situation. When these stories are interpreted in an allegorical way using the symbolic language, they make perfect sense. The lions in the den represent the forces of the desires and passions of the lower nature that lay ready in wait to consume the individual. This is quite clearly shown when Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream: "Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him,"[29] and again, "That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen."[30] In the same way, the *Chaldean Oracles* state, "My vessel the Beasts of the earth shall inhabit."[31] The wilderness, or the desert, represent the field of life of the lower nature, which, just like the Israelites, we all have to find our way through before we find the spiritual kingdom of God. The symbolism of the prison represents the body, which keeps the soul confined in: "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name."[32] Turning to the founder of Neoplatonism, whose ideas greatly influenced Christianity, in regards to the soul, he writes,

> Everywhere we hear of it as in bitter and miserable durance in body, a victim to troubles and desires and fears and all forms of evil, the body its prison or its tomb, the Cosmos its cave or cavern.[33]

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25 Psalms 91:11.
26 Daniel 6:19–22.
27 Exodus 23:20–22.
28 The Acts 12:6–10.
29 Daniel 4:16.
30 Daniel 4:32
31 Mead, 2010, Vol 2, p. 79.
32 Psalms 142:7.
33 Plotinus, 1992, Eighth Tractate, p. 337.

In the New Testament this is also confirmed when we read, "when we were children, we were in bondage under the elements of the world."[34]

In *The Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* one of the talismans is specifically used "to open prisons."[35] Also, the spell of Pnouthis in the *Greek Magical Papyri* says the divine assistant "frees from bonds a person chained in prison."[36] Given what has already been said about the lower nature of the body being the prison of the soul, the above task that the angel is said to be able to do for the magician makes perfect sense. All this seems to pertain to the spiritual development of the magician. When one looks beneath the surface of the grimoires, this seems to be their main purpose. As is also noted in *Occult Traditions* regarding *Liber Juratus*, *The Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, and the *Almandal*.

> In short, we find in medieval angel magic a widespread tradition drawing upon classical sources, whose goal is to better the intellect and soul of the magician.[37]

Once contact with these higher beings has been established, the magician's spiritual development can ensue much more effectively. This is precisely the reason why contact with the Holy Guardian Angel is a prerequisite to working with infernal spirits. In *The Chaldean Oracles* it also warns,

> Thou should'st not look on them (visions of the lower powers operated by the daemons) before the body is perfected (the spiritual body of light); for ever do they fascinate men's souls and draw them from the mysteries.[38]

In the New Testament Jesus says, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."[39] It is always the divine solar power, whether manifested through an angel or a deity that gives the magician the power to control the infernal forces. Sometimes it is through a king that this

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34 Galatians 4:3.
35 Mathers, 1975, pp. 232–233.
36 PGM 1.101.
37 Plaisance, 2012, p. 145.
38 Mead, 2010, Vol 2, pp.65–66.
39 Luke 10:19.

divine power manifests itself, just like in ancient Egypt where the pharaohs identified themselves with the god Horus and ruled by divine right. In the Bible there is often a hint or two about the meaning of the word 'king': "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."[40] In this passage, the king is a symbol for the spiritual consciousness. It is highly probable that this type of symbolism could be the influencing factor for why some of the grimoires are often associated to King Solomon, with his magic being the magic of divine wisdom, which is what he asked for from God. According to the *Testament of Solomon*, he used this divine wisdom to help him enlist the aid of demons to build his temple, his higher spiritual nature. For this reason when Solomon built the temple for God, the Bible states, "So that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was building."[41] This is confirmed in the New Testament with the words of Paul. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you."[42]

There are many different rituals to choose from to establish contact with one's own guardian daemon. There are those from the *Greek Magical Papyri* as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, or there are others in the *Greek Magical Papyri* like the Mithras Liturgy and the Stele of Jeu the hieroglyphist, otherwise known as the Rite of the Headless One, which space has forbidden me to expand upon. Whatever you choose to use just remember consistency is the key to making contact. Once contact is established, the magical tuition truly commences.

> When the peculiar daemon is present with each of us, he then unfolds the worship which is proper to be paid to him and his name, and likewise delivers the proper mode of invoking him.[43]

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40 Proverbs 25:2.
41 Kings 1. 6:7.
42 Corinthians 1. 3:16
43 Iamblichus, 2006, p.325.

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Nine Pieces Of Heart
Advice For Those Seeking
The Holy Guardian Angel

Jason Miller

You are reading a book containing the thoughts of different authors about the Holy Guardian Angel. I don't know what my fellow authors are writing, but there is one thing I am sure that you learn – that there is no clear consensus on what exactly the HGA is, what it does, or how best to contact it. It seems that the HGA is one of those things that almost everyone agrees is important, but which no one can exactly define in a way that suits anyone else.

I myself attained the Knowledge and Conversation of my Holy Guardian Angel in 1996 after about 5 months of performing Crowley's Liber Samekh and another 4 of performing a stylized rite that is closer to the original version of the ritual from PGM V. Nine months total. Over the last few years I have had the opportunity to teach magic through my books and courses. Some of those students have approached me about the HGA and how best to approach it in a way that can work with their circumstances.

My approach to magic is one that rejects a cookie-cutter approach. There is no one ritual that I hand out to people for anything, much less something as nuanced as the HGA. What follows is a collection of Nine pieces advice that I have found valuable, and which have helped students of mine on the

path. Don't take any of it on faith. Evaluate what I and others have to say in the light of reason, personal experience, and tradition.

1. It Is Not Advanced Work

I have met many people who seem to be under the impression that contacting the HGA is very advanced work meant for later in one's career. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is in fact best done at the start of one's career. It is never too early. If it was the very first thing that you ever did on the path, that would be just fine.

For most people of course, that won't be the case. Most people will only really gain an understanding of the process after some months or even years getting their feet wet in the world of magic. With the exception of the old G.B.G. which as part of its famed "shortcut to initiation" had people performing Liber Samekh as soon as they join, most orders will want you to gain a basic familiarity with magical terminology and protocols before setting out after the K&C of the HGA.

Still and all there is no preliminary necessary to the work: just time, prayer, and a consuming desire for contact. If you are waiting for some kind of magical grade to be conferred or to read absolutely everything you can before you begin, don't bother. Just get down to it.

2. Do It When Your Life Can Withstand It

Another reason to do it when you are young is that you are probably not yet settled into a career, family, and various other commitments. Setting off to make contact with the HGA seems to often trigger a backlash effect from the universe, and aspirants have reported everything from internal disruptions, like demonic visitations and paranoia, to external disruptions, like relationships falling apart and finding oneself on the unemployment line.

The reasons for this may be magical, such as Archons trying to keep you mired in manifest reality, but may also simply be a normal result of the changes in lifestyle that you are making during the operation. For example, spending the majority of one's time in prayer and meditation while focusing on an angel does not exactly do wonders for romantic relationships. Even though you may be showing up for work every day, becoming

distant from everyday activities and concerns can negatively affect your job performance.

If you already have a spouse and kids and career, give serious thought to whether you want to do this or not. Your life is quite full already.

Many people believe that whatever happens is for the best, and that the angelic power will never steer you wrong, but that's a copout. You might look back on your estrangement from your kids and firing from your job and think, "*It had to happen this way or else I would not have met my current wife and job. Surely it was the divine plan.*" But you could say that about anything though! "*If I hadn't been anally gang raped by clowns, I would never have met my current wife in the support group. Surely the lord works in mysterious ways.*" I just don't buy it. It's retroactive interpretation. No matter what happens you will wind up somewhere. Just because it doesn't suck doesn't make it the hand of god. Don't be cavalier with what you have. Be smart and choose what you do and when.

3. You Don't Need The HGA To Do Magic

In *Magick Without Tears* Aleister Crowley said that "*It should never be forgotten for a single moment that the central and essential work of the Magician is the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.*" With all due respect to Uncle Al, that is poppycock!

This may be a strange thing to say in a book dedicated to the Holy Guardian Angel, but I actually wish the magical community could escape the gravity of the HGA. Witches, Druids, Shaman, and Tantrikas do not worry about the Holy Guardian Angel. For that matter the writers of every single medieval and renaissance Grimoire other than Abramelin did not worry about it either. In some cases there are familiars and supernatural assistants that are summoned, but these are not the same thing as the Holy Guardian Angel and in most cases do not take months on end to make contact with. There are also head spirits, patron deities, tutelary beings, and so on. Again, there are similarities, but they are not the HGA and do not require the same kind of operation to work with.

Having the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is a good thing, but it is not a necessary thing. It does not guarantee your safety. It does not protect you from all mistakes. It does not make life a bowl

of cherries. It can help with those things, but it doesn't do them for you. You can do magic without it.

4. Don't Worry About What Exactly The HGA Is

One of the ongoing debates in the occult world is what exactly the HGA is and what it is not. Is it your higher self exteriorized? The autangelos? Augoeides? If so, why should we exteriorize it as the HGA instead of approaching ourselves directly as the mystics have done?

If it is not part of the self, and is a separate being entirely, what is it? Is it the same as the Paredros? Is it the same as the Nativity Angel? Are all these beings the same? Who assigns them? In what way are they connected with us? If all the beings are not the same, then are we to believe that whenever someone is born, there is this huge collection of nativity angels, guardian angels, servitors, head spirits, and so on all assigned by some celestial bureaucracy? Makes for a crowded delivery room in the hospital!

Often you find people's opinions on this issue evolving over time. For instance in his early writings Crowley considered the HGA to be a part of the self, but later when writing *Magic Without Tears*, he wrote that it was definitely a discrete entity, perhaps a type of being that had passed through our stage of humanity already.

As for me, I started off thinking that it was part of my self. "Myself made perfect" as Crowley wrote in Liber Samekh. Once the angel showed up though, it was clear that this was no mere projection of my ego, subconscious, or in any way a just a part of me. The angel immediately ordered me to summon the demon princes and bind them, which is something that I had considered antiquated, overly Christian, and unnecessary. The angel insisted and said that it would provide an implement that would serve as a symbol of power to bind them to. That very night, a good friend gave me his 5-foot-long Was (the Set-headed staff that was the symbol of power in Ancient Egypt). The way that the HGA was acting against my expectations and manifesting things in reality according to its own design made me think of it as a separate entity.

When I asked the angel whether it was a separate being or a part of my self, it answered that I was asking the wrong question. The question I should ask is what is the nature of self? Eventually through various Tantric methods

I managed to see how both I and the Angel are manifestations of a stream of underlying consciousness which in itself is not separate from anything else.

You can think of your ego, everything you think and are in this life as being like a hand gesture – perhaps a fist. Then think of the angel as being a different hand gesture – maybe a thumbs up. What is important here is that neither of these are permanent states. They are both manifestations of an underlying hand. It's kind of like that.

Or maybe I am wrong. I'm only 40 after all, and if Crowley can switch his thinking in his 60's, maybe I will too.

The important thing is that for the purposes of actually doing it you treat the ritual as an actual invocation, not some psychological exploration, and that you treat the angel as a separate being, not your subconscious. Whatever the underlying reality is, you can worry about it later.

5. You Do Not Have To Follow An Exact Ritual

Chances are that you do not have the time, means, or inclination to perform the 18-month Abramelin Rite exactly as it is written in the book. That's okay. In fact, it's expected.

The book of Abramelin itself states, "*we must accommodate ourselves unto the era in which we live; and being unable to carry it out in one way, we should endeavor to do so in another; and attach ourselves only unto Divine Things.*"

Some people have taken this to mean that you must follow the instruction of Abramelin as closely as you can, but that the system is forgiving if you cannot do it exactly. That is not, however, what Abraham says. What he says is that being unable to carry it out in one way, we should endeavor to do so in another. Not a half-assed version of what it says in the book, but another way entirely.

To accomplish this all you really need are two basic principles of the operation:

1 Lowering the volume on your outer life while raising the volume on your inner life.

2 Constant devotional focus on contacting the angel

The actual method you use to accomplish this is not as important as holding to the principles. You can use Samekh, you can use my short prayer from *The Sorcerer's Secrets*, you can use a prayer of your own devising, or even just speaking from the heart spontaneously every day. In fact using spontaneous prayer is recommended even when you are also using one of the other methods.

Sadly, some modern writers have taken this flexibility and suggested all kinds of activities that do not follow these principles and suggested that they will also lead to the angel. Peter Carroll's Liber Kaos Keraunos Kybernetos is a wonderful system of training that just about anyone would do well to work though, but it is not, as he suggests it is, a suitable replacement for Abramelin. They lead to entirely different results. Kundalini yoga, Shamatha, Kamamudra, Astral Journeying, and even LSD have all been suggested as ways to contact the HGA; I assure you they are not. These are all wonderful things, and they can perhaps be worked into your strategy, but they are not the same. Just because you need not follow one ritual to the letter, does not mean that anything at all will do.

6. Don't Force It Into A Timeline

Most of the English speaking world has been relying upon the translation of Abramelin that McGregor Mathers did in 1897 at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris. This work lays out a six-month-long operation. This was the standard for over 100 years, and people have attained the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel by working off this timeline. Unfortunately, the French version that he worked from was probably the most corrupted version available.

In 2006 Georg Dehn and Steven Guth provided a new English translation from the German material that completely changed our understanding of Abramelin. The oil recipe used Calamus Root instead of cinnamon, there are no blank squares in the final book, there is an entire fourth section of natural magic that was missing from the French translation, and most shockingly the operation is actually supposed to take 18 months! Rather than three two-month sections making a six-month total, the original versions suggest three sections of six months a piece.

This opens up some interesting questions. Does this invalidate the people that did it in six months? If not does 18 months somehow grant a better quality result? The HGA in full HD with surround sound perhaps?

There is a business adage known as Parkinson's Law which states that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. When forced into a time frame, the work of contacting the HGA is a perfect example of this. If you wrote a text stating that the process takes three years, three months and three days, people following that text would get the result at that time. Using this principle, productivity experts attempt to streamline processes and cut wasted time. The application of Parkinson's Law does have its limitations however. You need to allot sufficient time to accomplish your task, otherwise you could just boil everything down to one minute.

This law of sufficient time is sometimes why people fail at the six-month version of the operation. I am aware of two separate instances where people that have performed the rite in a very dedicated and fervent manner, but did not get the Angel on the exact day that Abramelin suggests it should happen. They may have been only days or weeks away from the breakthrough, but they gave up when their experience did not conform within the time frame they set for themselves.

So how do we utilize Parkinson's Law and not waste valuable time and resources, yet still allow sufficient time to accomplish the task? The answer is to throw out the timeline entirely.

Approach the work with passion. Follow the two principles of invoking often and retreating as much as possible from the world. Realize that, spiritually speaking, different people are at different levels when they start the operation. Some people may have a lot of attachments and issues to work through before they can make contact with the angel. Others may be born so ready for the experience that it takes very little effort. Prior work done in meditation and religious training, gifts inherited through bloodline, experience from former lives – these all play a part in how long the operation takes.

You may decide that there are only so many weeks you are willing to devote to the process before you cut your losses and get on with your life, but that does not mean that the operation will necessarily fit in that time frame.

7. Learn To Shut The Hell Up For A While

Have you ever had one of those conversations where the person you are talking to asks you a question but keeps talking without giving you a chance to answer? They just go on and on without so much as a pause for breath in which you can answer or comment. After a while you probably feel like slapping your hand over their mouth so you can actually get a word in. If you are spending every waking moment petitioning your angel for contact without spending any time in silence, chances are your angel might feel the same way.

You need to make room in your life and in your mind for the voice of the angel to manifest. For that you need to open up some periods of silence where you are not only not doing any mundane activities, but you are not doing any particular prayers or meditations either.

People who know my work know that I am the meditation guy. I push it hard in almost everything, but that is not what I am talking about here. At least not in the terms of single-pointed focus. Quite the opposite in fact. I am talking about periods of open receptiveness.

Ever notice how sometimes great ideas and insights come when you are performing simple repetitive tasks like mowing the lawn or washing the dishes by hand? Our lives are so filled with chatter and information that these are sometimes the only moments that the mind is simply at rest, and thus calm enough to reveal innate clarity.

Imagine a glass of water and sand. If the glass is constantly in motion, it looks like a big muddy opaque liquid. It is only by stilling the glass that the sand settles revealing the natural clarity of the water.

You should seek to create more silence both in the temple and throughout daily life. In the temple it is easy, simply take long breaks for silence in between invocations. If you are doing a true retreat where you are not reporting to a job, you can even work in a day of silence a week.

Establishing some silence in your ordinary life is also not hard.

- Drive with the radio off – I like NPR and loud music as much as the next guy, but I try to make at least one car trip a day in silence.

- Fake a habit. Hopefully you don't smoke, but that doesn't mean that you can't take a break like the smokers do. Excuse yourself, go outside and just stand or walk a bit.

- Leave the iPod at home when running or walking in the morning.
- Linger a little bit in the bathroom – my friend Gendler called this "excremeditation".
- Tack on 10 minutes to just about anything. Running a quick errand on a busy day? Take 10 and just relax. No one has to know.

Whether you are in the temple, the train, or the toilet, all you have to do is relax the mind. Let thoughts arise from nothing and dissipate into nothing without attaching to any of them overly much. If you catch yourself really clinging and focusing on a particular issue, just let it go and relax again without judgment or criticism. This silence serves two functions in the HGA process. First it allows you to know your own mind better, which is after all the medium that you process the knowledge and conversation (as well as every other thing you have ever experienced) with. Secondly it allows the angel to have space to manifest itself.

I wrote above that the two underlying principles of the HGA operation were a lowering of volume on the outer life and a raising of volume on the inner life coupled with a constant focus on the angel. If you add periods of silent reception as a third principle, it can make the entire process much more efficient. My experience, and the experience of my students, has been that it speeds up the process, improves the quality of contact with the Angel itself, and helps deter psychological, paranormal, and situational disturbances that many experience during the process.

So by all means, invoke often, but remember to shut up and listen once a while.

8. If Your Angel Only Tells You What You Already Know And Offers Things You Already Want To Do, That Is Not Your Angel.

Your angel is not simply a supernatural assistant. It can function as one, but it is no errand boy. It is there to help guide you in your spiritual path, as such its job is sometimes to challenge you, call you on your nonsense, and lead you to places that you would not otherwise consider.

Think about it, if your angel is not doing those things, then what good is it? Just to confirm what a great person you are and how you are doing awesome? The HGA process is a lot to go through just to get a thumbs up.

Within six months of finding the HGA, at the Angel's urging, I had abandoned almost all my old magical practices and began a serious and in-depth study of Tibetan Buddhism that would dominate my practice for the next several years, even leading me to move for a time to Nepal. Your angel may not take you to the other side of the planet, but if your life remains more or less the same afterward as it was before, it is a pretty good bet that whatever it is you have Knowledge and Conversation of is NOT your angel.

Everyone is susceptible to self-deception. Everyone is susceptible to spiritual deception. If you think that you are beyond such pitfalls, you are all the more likely to fall victim to them.

9. Don't Get Too Attached To The Angel

Aleister Crowley stated,

> *"Once he has achieved this he must of course be left entirely in the hands of that Angel, who can be invariably and inevitably relied upon to lead him to the further great step—crossing of the Abyss and the attainment of the grade of Master of the Temple."*

While I am no great follower of AC, he is spot on that the HGA will lead people one way or another to the crossing of the Abyss. The Abyss is where the genuine mystical experience lies, and in my opinion is where the primary work of magical mastery lies.

One of the most interesting things about this is that to cross the Abyss you have to be stripped of everything, including the HGA. He writes in "One Star in Sight" that the Adeptus Exemptus is *"stripped of all his attainments and of himself as well, even of his Holy Guardian Angel, and becomes a babe of the Abyss."*

This is something that a lot of people have difficulty with, but it is not only true of the angel, but of any tool or system that got you that far. In Buddhism they speak of attachment to Buddhism as being an obstacle to Buddhahood. The situation is similar to that.

Think of the HGA as a boat that has brought you across an ocean to a foreign shore. To continue the journey you now have to climb a mountain. Should you be expected to bring the boat with you up the mountain? Of course not.

The abyss, and for that matter any type of practice that is aimed at the attainment and stabilization of non-dual experience, will necessitate a radical re-evaluation of the nature of self and existence itself. The HGA essentially comes from a view where there is a God that is external to the self who grants an angel that is external to the self. When you start attacking not only the idea of God being separate from the self, but of the self being in any way inherently existent at all, the Angel disappears.

But fear not. Most of us cannot live full time in such lofty states of being. When we return down to lower levels, the Angel's presence is instantly returned. The nature of your relationship with the Angel will be forever transformed, but it is there never the less.

As E.E. Rehmus once stated in his *Apocalyptic Cyclopaedia*, "The purpose of Magic is not worship, but transformation. And the purpose in evoking the Holy Guardian Angel is to obtain the information that is essential to the work of transformation."

The Descended Angel

Scott Michael Stenwick

"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

—Genesis 6:4[1]

The Hebrew word that is translated as "giants" in the book of Genesis is Nephilim. This word is believed to be derived from Nawphal, "to fall," along with several other meanings, including "to be accepted," "to have [inheritance]" and "to be lost." It is often taken to mean "fallen ones." Biblical literalists believe that this passage describes a historical event – angels in physical form interbreeding with humans before the time of Noah's flood – while others influenced by New Age philosophy believe that this passage in some way alludes to abductions by extraterrestrials in ancient times, the "sons of God" in question (Beni-Elohim) being aliens from other worlds.[2] In an esoteric sense, however, both of these readings are incorrect and miss the point of the passage. According to this perspective the text alludes to a mystical truth rather than a historical one.

The simplest esoteric explanation of the Nephilim story is that it was created to explain the existence of individuals with spiritual or magical

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1 *King James Bible*, Genesis 6:4.

2 As an example, see *The Demi-Gods of Genesis* 6 (Retrieved Jan 26 1995 from http://www.returnofthenephilim.com/Demi-godsOfGenesis6.html). An Internet search on "Nephilim" reveals all sorts of speculation, some of which is quite outlandish.

abilities. Parsed in this way, the tale represents a sort of "just-so story" based on simple observation of the world. Magical aptitude is like any other human ability; individuals are born with greater or lesser degrees of talent and only those at the high end of the scale ever truly master the discipline. In ancient times the concept of "essences" was generally accepted as explaining such individual differences, implying that spiritual aptitude should be the result of a divine origin. At the same time, magick was feared by the ancients, implying that this divine origin must somehow be tainted with evil. The idea of fallen angels marrying human women and then teaching their offspring various magical practices fits the bill nicely in terms of consolidating these two seemingly contradictory statements.

A deeper and more involved explanation along similar lines alludes to a more specific aspect of the magical path, known to many modern magicians as the Holy Guardian Angel. From this second and more intriguing perspective, the Nephilim story represents a personal process undergone by the magician during the transition from Initiate to Adept. The marriage of Angel and Human that opens the door to greater magical power and understanding should be recognized by any magician who has undergone this process. The devotion and commitment necessary to the work has much in common with a successful marriage, and the "child" brought forth from this union is in fact the magician him or herself, enlightened and perfected.

The term Holy Guardian Angel first appears in *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, a medieval grimoire that inspired the original founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley.[3] In effect, the Holy Guardian Angel is a kind of personal "Holy Spirit" that is also the true spiritual self of the magician. In the Golden Dawn and A.'.A.'. systems, after the initiate passes through grades corresponding to the four classical elements and Spirit, the next task is to obtain the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel – that is, to achieve contact and rapport with the Angel.[4] Even though the Angel is in truth directly related to the magician's innermost spiritual and magical nature, until he or she attains the sphere of Binah on the Tree of Life corresponding to the grade of Master of the Temple, the Angel is perceived by the magician as a separate

3 Aleister Crowley, *Magick: Book Four*, 398.
4 Ibid, 480.

intelligence and must be approached as such.[5] Contact with this intelligence is the mark of a true Adept.

The union of the magician and the Angel may be envisioned the marriage of Heaven and Earth. The Angel is the offspring of the archetypal masculine and feminine polarities in Atziluth and Briah, represented by the Yod and Heh of YHVH, and is represented by the subsequent Vav and the formative world of Yetzirah. It may be counted among the sons of God because Yetzirah is considered active and therefore masculine. The magician, regardless of gender, is among the daughters of Man, because Assiah, the material world, is considered receptive and therefore archetypally feminine. This process is represented by the union of Vav and final Heh of YHVH, and is represented in the Tarot by the marriage of the Prince and Princess or Son and Daughter, the alchemical wedding, as depicted in the Lovers card of Crowley's Thoth Tarot.[6] This union gives birth to a child, the Adept, who indeed has become a man or woman of renown by virtue of being in contact with a direct link to the divine light of Ain Soph Aur. Rapport with the Angel confers the ability to channel this divine light into the material world along the path of the Lightning Flash and thus work more powerful magick. Rather than a "fallen one," a better way to think of a Nephilim might be as a "descended one," a human who has experienced the descent of his or her Angel from its natural home among the supernals.

Similar theology has appeared at various times in Christianity, such as that of Nicholas Zinzendorf, founder of the Moravian Church. His theology was based on family relationships that closely followed the pattern of the Tetragrammaton. His heavenly trinity consisted of the Father (Yod), the Mother (Heh, the Holy Spirit), and the Husband (Vav, Christ), to whom all members of the Church, male and female, were considered Wives (final Heh).[7] The main difference between institutional Christianity and modern Hermeticism is that the Holy Guardian Angel is a truly personal being that forms a unique connection with every individual. As such, revelations from different Angels need not agree or consist of universal truths that apply to everyone's spiritual awareness and development. The early Christian church

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5 Ibid, 520.

6 Ibid, 63 (footnote).

7 Craig D. Atwood, *Masculine and Feminine in Zinzendorfian Piety* (Presented at the first annual conference of the Association for the Study of Esoterica, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI, June 2004).

did not understand this, and as a result one of the chief criticisms of the Gnostics was that their personal revelations did not match church dogma and therefore must have originated with the Devil. Since the Holy Spirit is considered one of the three "persons" who make up the Trinity, a single entity that comes upon all believers, Christianity has little room for dissenting revelations.

According to the apocryphal Book of Enoch, the Nephilim were evil and God unleashed the flood in order to destroy them along with most of humanity.[8] This portrayal is directly related to the social control mindset of ancient Judaism and many sects of modern-day Christianity, since the personal spirituality of the Adept is a threat to any institutional religion. An Adept is a potential prophet, and there is nothing that an entrenched religious system fears more than a new and compelling revelation of the divine. This is especially true of sects that are based around an intercessionary priesthood claiming special access to God. The Adept is in fact a trailblazer lighting the way to the divine for the rest of the world, or at least those in his or her immediate vicinity. An argument could be made that it is the intercessionary religious systems that are actually harming their members by deluding them into thinking that the priesthood can do their spiritual work for them, which is patently false and in fact prevents rather than facilitates salvation.

Once the Adept has achieved contact with the Angel certain changes begin in the mind and brain of the individual. While no formal research has been performed to date on Western esoteric practitioners, neuroscience studies of advanced meditators provide some insight into what those changes might be. Normal people tend to exhibit Delta waves (up to 4 Hz) when sleeping deeply, Theta waves (4-8 Hz) when moving in and out of the state of sleep, and a mix of Alpha (8-13 Hz) and Beta (13-30 Hz) waves in their waking conscious state with little if any Theta waves present. Advanced meditators have been found to manifest a higher than normal level of Theta waves during day-to-day conscious awareness, and when such individuals are performing deep practice they have been observed increasing their brainwaves into the Gamma (30-100 Hz) range.[9] Research performed on contemplative Christian meditators have identified changes in consciousness that appear

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8 R.H. Charles (ed.), *The Book of Enoch* (Escondido, CA: Book Tree, 1998).

9 James Austin, *Zen and the Brain* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 90-91.

to be consistent with those of Eastern meditators,[10] so it seems reasonable to conclude that as meditation is an important aspect of contacting the Holy Guardian Angel, similar changes should be found among Western Adepts.

Besides physical brain changes, on the spiritual level a more subtle shift generally occurs in the Adept's presence or aura. On the one hand, such an individual seems to be "touched by greatness," and is the sort of person that others will tend to see as one who is likely to accomplish something of meaning or significance. On the other hand, the Adept is also irrevocably separated to a degree from normal human beings, some of whom will tend to find his or her natural aura mildly disturbing. While the presence of a spiritually exalted soul can trigger personal gnosis for others in a religious setting, in the day-to-day world of work and shallow personal interactions it can be downright unnerving, especially for those who lack the desire or capacity to achieve this level of spiritual awakening themselves. Some of these changes may even extend to the genetic level, as it has been shown that changes in the nervous system can in some cases affect gene expression.[11] This may be an additional reason that people of high magical aptitude tend to have family members or ancestors with similar abilities above and beyond simple familial genetic similarity.

Invoking the Holy Guardian Angel was considered a massive undertaking even in Crowley's time. The formal Abramelin operation requires a house with specific characteristics, the ability to retire from the world for a period of six months, and servants to attend to the magician's personal needs, and thus could only be performed by the extremely wealthy. Even Crowley found the formal operation too difficult to complete as written, despite being wealthy enough and having purchased Boleskine, a suitable house for the operation. Years later he completed the operation astrally rather than physically but was met with success nonetheless.[12] He then reworked the Abramelin ritual into *Liber Samekh*, which is easier to perform than the

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10 Ken Wilber, *Integral Psychology* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2000), 131.

11 As examples, see M.J. Evinger, P. Emsberger, S. Regunathan, T.H. Joh and D. J. Reis, *A Single Transmitter Regulates Gene Expression Through Two Separate Mechanisms: Cholinergic Regulation and PNMTMRNA via Nicotinic and Muscariminic Pathways* (Journal of Neuroscience 14: 2106-2116, 1994) and Gregory S. Naeve, Meena Ramakrishnan, Rainer Kramer, Dana Hevroni, Yoav Citri, and Lars E. Theill, *Neuritin: A Gene Induced by Neural Activity and Neurotrophins that Promotes Neuritogenesis* (Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States of America 94: 2648-2653, March 1997).

12 Aleister Crowley, *Magick: Book Four*, 398-399.

original ritual and has less exacting requirements in terms of physical space and resources.[13]

While *Liber Samekh* is a functional ritual that has been employed by many practitioners to good effect, like the Abramelin working to a degree its structure is still built on the mindset of magick as struggle and conflict. In Medieval times, this mindset was prevalent in the theology of a war in Heaven, with the angels and demons pitted against each other. In the Victorian age, a similar point of view emerged from the idea that the "lower self" required massive personal discipline to prevent it from falling into debauchery and antisocial vice. While Crowley's biography clearly shows that he did his best to escape his upbringing and often ridiculed the idea of "debauchery" being all that bad, he was still a man of his time and felt that ruthless self-discipline, even for its own sake, was highly virtuous. As a result, he sometimes writes as though the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation as a kind of "battle" with the Ego or lower self, in which the Angel would eventually emerge victorious but only after a difficult fight.[14] On the other hand, in *Liber Samekh* Crowley writes the following, contrasting his impression of the Golden Dawn system with the perspective of his own Thelemic system:

> G: D: (As it is printed in Equinox I, II, for the old Aeon) the Hierophant is the perfected Osiris, who brings the candidate, the natural Osiris, to identity with himself. But in the new Aeon the Hierophant is Horus (Liber CCXX, I, 49) therefore the Candidate will be Horus too. What then is the formula of the initiation of Horus? It will no longer be that of the Man, through Death. It will be the natural growth of the Child. His experiences will no more be regarded as catastrophic.[15]

While achieving the Knowledge and Conversation requires discipline and diligence and is not a trivial undertaking, even Crowley sometimes makes it sound much harder than it actually is. In fact, his own first contact with his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, came in 1904 at the Angel's

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13 Ibid, 504-529.

14 Aleister Crowley, *Magick: Book Four*, 526-527.

15 Ibid, 511.

insistence, not his own, using his wife Rose as a medium. He then performed invocations of Thoth and Horus, and was given the instructions that led to the writing of *The Book of the Law*.[16] It took until he completed his astral version of the Abramelin working in 1906 for Crowley to figure out that Aiwass was in fact his Holy Guardian Angel,[17] perhaps because the contact came too easily – after receiving *The Book of the Law*, Crowley had no difficulty invoking Aiwass.[18]

There is no reason to think that the process should be more difficult for anyone else or even require complex magical training, though such training makes the contact easier to achieve. In many people contact with the Angel may happen almost accidentally, and a good case could be made that some of the most successful and influential people in the history of human society somehow managed to achieve this contact whether by magical means or otherwise. Such individuals may have equated this contact with either the voice of whatever God or gods they believed in or perhaps with unusually accurate intuition. The contact is not as difficult to achieve as it might otherwise be because the Angel is always present and wants to be heard and understood. What is necessary is for the magician to facilitate the contact in a way that makes it easy for the Angel to make itself known.

One way to do this is to use a system of divination, such as the Tarot. The Major Arcana of the Tarot correspond to Hebrew letters, and as such a Tarot reading can be used to obtain a functional name for the Angel. Having worked with this technique for years, I am now convinced that a name produced by this method is not necessarily the Angel's true name, but it is a sort of "handle" that can be used in invocations to produce contact. This is done by designing a personal invocation of the Angel, which should be as heartfelt and sincere as can be managed. As part of his or her daily magical practice, the magician then opens an operant magical field by using the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram followed by the Lesser Invoking Ritual of the Hexagram. This operant field method differs from standard Golden Dawn teaching, in that normally in that tradition the initiate is taught to employ the banishing forms of both the Lesser Pentagram and Lesser Hexagram followed by a more elaborate rite, such as the Middle Pillar Ritual. In my own work I have personally found the operant field to be just as effective and

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16 Ibid, 431-432.

17 Crowley, *The Law is for All*, Israel Regardie (ed.) (Tempe, AZ: New Falcon, 1975), 27.

18 Crowley, *Magick: Book Four*, 434.

considerably simpler than the traditional structure, but feel free to try both versions and determine which form of opening works best for you. Thelemic magicians may wish to substitute Crowley's Star Ruby for the Lesser Pentagram and the corresponding Star Sapphire for the Lesser Hexagram. The standard Star Ruby is a banishing and the standard Star Sapphire is an invocation, so these two rituals taken together will also open an operant field.

Once the magician's preferred set of opening rituals is complete, he or she should then perform the Greater Invoking Ritual of the Hexagram for the Sun, since contact with the Angel will occur in Tiphareth. The generic name Shemesh (Hebrew for Sun) may be used as the god name following the keyword ARARITA for each of the hexagrams, because the name of the magician's Angel is not yet known. Other possibilities include Adonai ("Lord" in Hebrew, which Crowley employs as a name for his Holy Guardian Angel in *Liber LXV*) or IAO, a Gnostic form of the Tetragrammaton. Finally, he or she may add the Rose Cross ritual, which will anchor his or her consciousness in Tiphareth. For a Thelemic magician employing the Star Sapphire, this step is redundant, as the making of the rosy cross is already integrated into Crowley's ritual of the hexagram and will be performed as part of the opening procedure.

The invocation of the Angel then follows. This portion of the working should begin with Crowley's *Liber Samekh* rite, a Golden Dawn rite such as the Bornless Ritual, or some similar practice. This should be followed by the magician's heartfelt, personal invocation of the Angel. Once the presence of the Angel is felt, the magician should then ask the Angel to reveal its name through the Tarot and draw some number of cards. If the cards drawn are all Major Arcana, the letters may be used in the order given to form a name for the Angel. The magician should decide ahead of time how many cards will be drawn, as this limits the temptation to stop drawing cards at an arbitrary point for fear of ruining a streak of Major Arcana draws. Such action limits the statistical significance of the draw and therefore is more likely to provide a name that is simply random and therefore of little use.

Experimentation with this method has shown that three cards makes for an effective pre-determined number. Drawing three Major Arcana cards in a row is unlikely, but not overly so. The Angel needs to use the physical body and nervous system of the magician to focus the magical energy required to shift the probabilities in such a way that the right cards come up, so

the necessary probability shift needs to be within the range of the magician's strength.

The odds of drawing three Major Arcana cards from a standard Tarot deck are (22 * 21 * 20) / (78 * 77 * 76) or 9240 / 456456, which approximately equals 0.02 or 2%. So the overall odds of success with three cards are about one chance in fifty. However, the odds of drawing four Major Arcana cards in the same manner are calculated as (22 * 21 * 20 * 19) / (78 * 77 * 76 *75) or 175560 / 34234200, which approximately equals 0.005. This means the overall odds of success with four cards are substantially lower, about one chance in two hundred.

As soon as a card is drawn that is not from the Major Arcana, the Tarot reading should stop. This Minor Arcana card could be interpreted as the influence that is blocking communication with the Angel, or if it is a card representing a concept such as Completion (Four of Wands in the Thoth Tarot), it may indicate that the name is shorter than the chosen number of letters. If the card appears to represent a block, over the course of the next day the magician should think about the card and, if there is time to do so, meditate on it and try to reach some understanding of what it represents in his or her life.[19]

Once a set of letters have been obtained, their combined Gematria value should be compared with that of words given in a resource book such as Crowley's *Sepher Sephiroth* (included in *777 and Other Qabalistic Writings*) or David Godwin's *Cabalistic Encyclopedia* to see if the value has any significant associations. The factors of the number should be checked as well, as these may represent a combination of influences that are significant. Another value to check is the Gematria of the name with the traditional Hebrew ending AL, which normally denotes an angel of some sort. The name with the suffix should be used if the Gematria seems more significant. Finally, the Qabalah of Nine Chambers method can be used to reduce the Gematria value to a single number. This method consists of a simple form of numerology in which the digits of the number are added together until a single digit is reached, as shown here for the value 864.

$$8 + 6 + 4 = 18$$
$$1 + 8 = 9$$

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19 Via Ardens Volitas, *Divining Your Holy Guardian Angel's Name*, (The Laughing Star, Issue 1, Fall 1996).

The number nine is then related to the ninth sphere on the Tree of Life, Yesod, which is attributed to the Moon.

This reduced numeration of the name should in some way provide insight into the nature of the magician's True Will, which usually will relate to one of the planetary spheres or the sphere of the elements as a whole. The numeration of my Holy Guardian Angel's name reduces to 8 by this method, which is the number for the sphere of Hod corresponding to the planet Mercury. This association made perfect sense once I analyzed the name. In addition to practicing Hermetic magick (Hermes = Mercury), I am a writer and a software developer and have been writing and programming since elementary school. As both of these activities are very Mercurial in nature, this indicates to me that the name I obtained through this work is genuine and accurate. The reduced number should in some way reflect the magician's talents and interests – usually people are particularly good at and interested in things that resonate with their True Wills, and often these are activities that they have enjoyed since childhood.

Attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is not the final goal of magical operations, but really more like the beginning. Once contacted, the Angel will instruct the magician regarding his or her own spiritual development with teachings that are perfectly suitable to the magician's own unique situation.[20] These teachings will lead the magician through the realization of the spheres of Tiphareth, Geburah, and Chesed, and finally to the threshold of the Abyss.[21] Crossing the Abyss and thus gaining the realization of the sphere of Binah is the attainment represented by the degree of Master of the Temple in the Golden Dawn and A.'.A.'. systems.[22] This is the level of consciousness at which the magician will experience the interconnectedness of all things in the universe, transcending the Vision of Sorrow described in exacting detail by the Buddhist system through the resolution of duality and arriving at the Vision of Wonder alluded to in *The Book of the Law*: "Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains."[23]

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20 Aleister Crowley, *Magick: Book Four*, 519.
21 Ibid, 529.
22 Ibid, 480.
23 Crowley, *The Book of the Law*, chapter II, verse 9.

PART 2

After The Angel

Never Again Alone

Frater Rufus Opus

Across the vast expanse of the wild, wild internet, you will find many thousands of words written about the Holy Guardian Angel (HGA). There are many people with opinions on the nature of this spirit, some informed by their experience, others in spite of their lack of experience. They don't hesitate to post their theories where they can be read and passed on by others.

It happens in the print publishing industry, too. Crowley has his things to say about the HGA, while Mathers has his own things to say. Each author emphasizes the parts of the HGA that are most meaningful to themselves. For the last hundred plus years, we occultists who fancy ourselves authors have felt free to say whatever we pleased about the process of establishing contact with, and subsequent experiences with, the HGA.

I do the same. This book itself is filled with varying views of what the HGA is all about, and even when we agree… we disagree.

That's sort of the nature of our quarry, our prey. It is changeable, a chameleon taking on whatever symbols fit into our context to reveal as much as we can stand to hear, every chance it gets. It shows up as "totem animals" and talking lizards that never existed, nor ceased to exist. It has no shame, and will be a beggar or a King, whatever is necessary to get your attention when it must.

We can trace this entity across history, in every culture, and see it develop over time from a familiar, a fetch, or a helper servant in the first through

third centuries AD, to the harbinger of enlightenment itself in the Victorian Age.

This was a time of conquest, when men were men, and savage cultures didn't stand a chance. Corporations and nobles plundered the physical resources, while their spiritual counterparts turned their attentions to the their spiritual resources, their beliefs pinned down and held open for examination, study, cataloging, and consumption by the privileged trust fund brigade of their time. Curious white men ran their pudgy fingers through the veils of Mystery covering the smooth brown skin of their victims, squeezing, groping, and pinching with their broken minds and broken hearts.

Concepts of the Atman were married to the emerging psychotherapy movement, and ideas of the Oversoul being a reflection of the Self were plugged into the naïve notion that there might be a Science of the Mind that would let us turn that slippery fish reflected in the depths of our thoughts into a known quantity whose behavior could be predicted, controlled, and, if we deemed it in need of treatment, cured. Ancient rituals were pulled from Middle Eastern caves, translated from the native language and its alleged twilight language, and the name of a forgotten Pharaoh Osar Onophris comes to us now in the phrase, "Myself made Perfect."

What is this thing, this HGA? I've been on my own quest to answer this question since my magical infancy. What I've found over the years has brought me through a lot of shades of opinions regarding what, exactly, this entity might really be. I traced it through the methods of attaining a relationship with this entity across the centuries. From the oldest records of Hermetic magic to the latest emergence of coherent thought in the Western Mystery Traditions, the Renaissance. I explored rites, performed them, and experienced the spirits and the results of the rites for myself. I evaluated the results in my quest to determine the nature of this entity.

Eventually, I found my "HGA," and I speak with it now. I commune with it. I found others who have done so, via various methods and means, and, once I got them to open up and talk about it, I found our experiences to a person overlapped and were the same, even when the information we received from the HGAs was in opposition.

Today, after nearly of decade of being in intimate communion with my HGA, of having attained and utilized and implemented the results of Knowledge and Conversation with my Holy Guardian Angel, I am confident

in my experience, my gnosis of this entity. I can tell you openly and without doubt the true nature of the HGA:

The Holy Guardian Angel is your Holy Guardian Angel, and it will be what it will be, whatever you need it to be, whatever is necessary for you to become what you are supposed to be. It is an agent of your attainment. It brings you spirits, it connects you to wisdom, it teaches you, it provides for your needs, it gets you favorable attention and hides you from unwanted attention. It is your guide, your servant, your teacher, your informant, your mentor, your butler, your trainer, drill sergeant, Mother, Father, and Cool Uncle rolled into one.

Above all else, it is your friend.

Ultimately, you won't understand what the HGA is all about until you start hanging out with your own. I can talk about what I've found on my quest, and you'll pick up clues and hints that will serve you well, as I did when I was researching those who I believed had attained what I was after in my early pursuits.

Whatever I say though, don't you believe it completely without any questions. Know it's a reproduction of a set of experiences that words cannot truly reflect. The words I choose are the ones that mean what I think, because that's what they mean to me. You'll put it differently when you've been through it yourself.

That doesn't mean there is no right answer though. It just means the right answer is expressed in different ways to different people. If you pick up a hammer and show it to three people who speak three different languages, you will get three different words. But all three words mean "hammer," and if you ask for one in their language, they'll bring you what you're talking about.

If you ask for a bangy thing for pounding pointy stuff, god knows what you'll get.

Likewise there is really a real and right proper HGA, and there is bullshit. There are those who talk about the HGA who know what they're talking about, and those who don't. There will be shit you experience and read that you will need to toss out as garbage, not at all applicable. You will meet spirits and people who seem to be the real deal who turn out to be total charlatans. When this happens, it is disheartening and irritating, at least, but it can also be more dangerous to magicians pursuing the Great Work. Getting

caught up in pursuit of false spirits and doctrines can delay the process of the Work for decades.

There's no real way to completely eliminate the risk of distraction, but one of the key methods I've found is to have a really solid understanding why we're after the HGA. If we understand what it's supposed to do, we'll know relatively quickly whether or not it's doing what it's supposed to, or if we've gotten the wrong spirit.

Most of us interested in the Holy Guardian Angel are practicing a form of Hermetic Magic, i.e., magical rites that are based on the Hermetic teachings about the Cosmology of existence, the creation and manifestation of the world we experience, and the role of human kind within that manifestation. The function of the HGA in Hermetics is to help us accomplish the Great Work through applied Hermetic magical practices.

And understanding what that means is vitally important to those who would understand the HGA. Hermetic magical practices are based on a fundamental idea: that we can, through magic, become greater than we are without magic.

That's a really simplified version of it, and I watered it down to that point on purpose. There are more specific details related to Hermetic Magic that you'll find in different Orders, different lodges, different grimoires, and different perspectives. My own view of what "Hermetic Magic" is all about is an interpretation based on my experiences and my studies. It's not the only interpretation, but it's the most effective method I've personally found to accomplish the Great Work.

The Hermetic system I use and teach is based on the following key points:

- A simple set of core beliefs that tells my personal spiritual story: who I am, where I came from, what I am supposed to be doing, why I forgot, and how to remember who I am and how to do my job with grace, style, and efficiency while being loved by all who know me.
- A model of the end state.
- A system of progression from beginning state to end state with clearly defined phases and standards of measurement by which one can determine whether they are making personal progress towards the end state or not.

- A simple set of practices and techniques that accomplish this transformation.

I'll expand on these briefly, and then get back to why we're after the HGA and how it fits into my system so we can know whether we've got the right spirit or not.

My core beliefs about what a human being is come from the *Divine Pymander*, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. I go over it in a little more detail in the Neo Platonic Basics series on my web site, and in a lot more detail in my courses, but at a really high level, God was everything, then he created the raw stuff of what would become matter by removing himself from a part of himself. Then he Spoke a Word, and things started forming. Seven Planetary Spheres formed, four elemental spheres separated, and the chain of manifestation was established. Thoughts formed in the Mind of God, were spoken through his Word, and took on the traits and qualities of each of the planets as the Idea descended to the material realm. The ideas were turned over to the Elemental Kingdoms with the Spiritus Mundi, the Sphere of the Material World, where they would take on physical form and substance. The winds and the airs and the breath of the god filled all things with spirit and soul.

And then God created humans in his own image. The first human wandered through the seven heavens learning from his brothers and sisters the powers of creation. He loved them and was loved by them. He learned to create, as God created, because that was his function. He was a microcosm of the macrocosm, and created his thoughts. He loved it.

He went down to the Material realm and took a peek through the elemental curtain, fell in love with his reflection (because he looked like God), and immediately entered into a likeness of himself made by the Spiritus Mundi. I'm skipping a lot of details here to get to the point: we are creator gods in the flesh because we love the flesh, and we love to create reality.

Is that clear? Being made "in the image of God" means we are carbon copies of him, and that we are able, as a result, to do what he does. We create the way he does, by speaking things into existence. And we do it for the same reason he did: to experience that which we create. In my beliefs, humans are vessels God inhabits to experience his reality. And we all, being made in his image, have the capability to become creator gods, if we're willing to go through what it takes to remember that we are gods to start with.

That is the point, in my understanding, the goal of the Hermetic Magician: to remember we are gods, to become fully aware of that fact, fully trained, fully empowered, and then to create and experience our world so we can enjoy it. That's important too, to remember we are here to enjoy our creation.

I've found that what that looks like in actual practice, the model of the "End State," is embodied in the Emerald Tablet of Hermes. There's some mystical stuff all through it, and some physical alchemy secrets it hides as well, but the main text tells the story of human incarnation, the path to attainment and empowerment, and the result of what the magician becomes.

> *0) When I entered into the cave, I received the tablet Zaradi, which was inscribed, from between the hands of Hermes, in which I discovered these words:*
>
> *1) True, without falsehood, certain, most certain.*
>
> *2) What is above is like what is below, and what is below is like that which is above. To make the miracle of the one thing.*
>
> *3) And as all things were made from contemplation of one, so all things were born from one adaptation.*
>
> *4) Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon.*
>
> *5) The wind carried it in its womb, the earth breast fed it.*
>
> *6) It is the father of all 'works of wonder' (Telesmi) in the world.*
>
> *6a) Its power is complete (integra).*
>
> *7) If cast to (turned towards- versa fuerit) earth,*
>
> *7a) it will separate earth from fire, the subtle from the gross.*

8) With great capacity it ascends from earth to heaven. Again it descends to earth, and takes back the power of the above and the below.

9) Thus you will receive the glory of the distinctiveness of the world. All obscurity will flee from you.

10) This is the whole most strong strength of all strength, for it overcomes all subtle things, and penetrates all solid things.

11a) Thus was the world created.

12) From this comes marvelous adaptations of which this is the procedure.

13) Therefore I am called Hermes, because I have three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.

14) And complete is what I had to say about the work of the Sun, from the book of Galieni Alfachimi.

This is my current favorite translation, though there are others that are worth reading.

Here you see the descent of the essence of man into the body, the path to reclamation of our birthright, and the subsequent application thereof. The first seven verses can be interpreted as the descent of the human soul into the flesh, and how our immortal spark entered into the mortal flesh, to participate in the creation and maintenance of our worlds. At the same time they are a description of what happens when the magician receives Knowledge and Conversation with their Holy Guardian Angel.

But those are actually complementary interpretations. They are approaches to the same concept, two different lenses that capture the same light and focus it differently into our minds so we can comprehend something beautiful: the process of a spirit manifesting for the accomplishment of magic.

In Verse 8 we see what happens when a person made in the image of God remembers that makes them a creator god of the universe. You go through

the process of rising through the spheres, gaining initiations, working with the spirits in each to learn to direct and control, to integrate and express the forces of their sphere into your own projects. You get purified, and your output capacity increases until you just don't even talk about it anymore, because it's a little scary and people wouldn't believe you. Verses 9 and 10 are the Rubeus stage, the Red Work.

But it's not until the magician has reached the final phase that their purpose begins to take shape. In verse 11 we see what happens when the Work is completed, when the magician has traveled through the heavens and returned to the Earth empowered: the world itself is created. The Emerald Tablet is, in my understanding at least, a blueprint of what we are supposed to do, and what we're capable of doing when we've completed the Work, when we've created the Stone…

One of the things that the Emerald Tablet makes clear to me is that the Great Work is not the end. It is the beginning. It is the means by which we reclaim our heritage and our power. It is the means by which we return to fully operational world-creating machines, gods of our experienced existence. It's not until we get into the business of world creation that we're even starting to use the stuff we've learned in the process of the Work. The Work itself is preparation for something a little more comprehensive and detailed than we might think.

World creation is friggin' complicated. In Crowley's Thelema, we learn the magick number is always 11. That's seven planetary spheres and four elemental ones. Every magical act that we perform takes the intricate layering of the seven planetary forces around an idea before turning it over to the elemental forces to make the Idea manifest materially where we can experience it.

Think of the possibilities! Think of how many different things we can create! Think of all the steps in the process! Imagine how many ways there are to screw up! Now remember how piecemeal the grimoires are, and the likelihood of finding anyone who understands this well enough to pass on more than warning stories and really crude techniques!

Sure would be cool if we had an awesome teacher, eh? Someone who could introduce us to the spirits we need to meet to learn how to materialize our desires… someone who could train us, teach us, help us, someone who loved us, and was intimately invested in our personal ascension… Someone to protect us from our own ignorance, who would provide the wisdom we

needed when we needed it to help our struggle to become creator gods pass without so much gods-damned drama…

Someone like the Holy Guardian Angel!

And that is a major impact of working with the HGA. It teaches, guides, and introduces. It helps you understand how you're screwing up. It provides techniques and insight in equal doses. It also does this thing to your Body of Light that makes you into a super power. But that's a Mystery.

This is why we seek the HGA, and also how to tell if we've found it. We are looking for an acceleration of the process. We are looking to see our magic improve in effectiveness. We are looking to see that we are attaining initiations into the higher spheres, that when we conjure spirits, we receive evidence of their presence, and ultimately the desires we seek. We are looking to become creator gods.

And we know where we are when we start. We know how helpless we feel, how effective it seems like our magic is when we do anything. We know the doubt and anxiety and angst of living with the burden of being responsible for our own Joy and not having the means to manifest the things that bring us Joy.

Knowing this, knowing what the HGA is supposed to do and why we do it, we can tell whether we've established a useful relationship simply by looking at the results of our magical activities. Are things easier? Do we know more? Can we change more, on a larger scale? Have we learned Who we are, Where we come from? Have we reclaimed our potential and become creator gods?

If the answer is no, it will be obvious. If you don't have K&CHGA, if you've been duped, or if you've deluded yourself, it will be apparent. You simply won't progress.

The only means of telling whether you're progressing or not that I know if is to really intimately understand the system you are working, and the stages of progression that you should expect to go through as you Work through it.. If you don't have that intimate understanding of each phase in the process, the progression from beginning to end, you won't be able to know if you're succeeding or failing. I use the Alchemical phases of the Great Work as the metric or system of measure to let me know how the things I am experiencing relate to the overall goals and my intentions to accomplish the Work.

The phases are color coded based on what happens to the prime material that you're Working on in each phase. See, you take a substance, treat it, purify it, and then when you're done you have the Stone. If you're working on turning lead into gold, lead is your Prima Materia. If you're working on yourself, you are the Prima Materia. The process of the Great Work is the transformation of the Prima Materia into the Philosopher's Stone. No matter what you're working on, your Prima Materia will go through something like the following:

- **The Black Phase** – This is the early Work. In metallurgy, this is where you heat the ore-containing material and burn off the dross. The initial heating turns the impurities black and they smoke and rise to the surface, while the ore you are after goes down deep.

- **The White Phase** – This is the next stage where the black impurities are further purified, heated until they turn to fine powder, purified white ash. This is the Calcination phase, from which it is possible to separate the gross from the fine.

- **The Green Phase** – When the impurities have been separated and the pure materia obtained, it is not yet ready to become the Stone. In the Green Phase, the materia is taken through specific steps and processes, with chemicals being added, or heat being applied in specific increments for specific durations to achieve very specific reactions in the materia.

- **The Red Phase** – When the purified materia has been taken through these additional phases, it is again heated, and the processes and preparations are incorporated into the end state. In the previous phase, the materia went through a myriad of color changes, many shades of gold and blue and green, like the colors of a peacock's feather. In this phase, the materia turns only one color, a deep and dark ruby red, the color of ochre, the color of blood.

- **Projection** – This phase is often overlooked and forgotten in the West, but the Projection phase is the point of the entire system. Here the Red Stone is not worshipped or revered. Here the creator of the

Stone receives no honor or money or recognition; no, instead the stone itself, that which has been sought across a lifetime or lifetimes, is ground up into a powder, mixed with water, and used to create the world, to heal the sick, to purify the unclean, to bring wealth and peace of mind, ease and luxury, that the world may turn its eyes from the sweat and labor necessary for bare survival, and remember, for a second, that we are gods.

The role of the HGA in this process is to lead us, to guide us, to help us, and to assist us. It does this in many ways, but mostly by making our magic more effective.

When you really take a look at magic across the centuries, as far back as we can track it, the goal of magical rites is to change the world around you. The Greek Magical Papyri are mostly about sex and winning at the local racetrack. The Solomonic stuff is about getting spirits who would otherwise be causing you stress, illness, and grief to build your Temple instead. The more spiritual rites, like exorcisms and the attainment of a Supernatural Assistant or your Holy Guardian Angel are about making your world better, getting the crazed family member back to normal, or having an Inside Man to bring you riches, health, and protection.

Seriously, the Book of Abramelin is a perfect example of this. How many people think the goal of Knowledge and Conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel is about preparation for a mystical voyage across an imaginary Abyss that separates the Manifest Realm from the Supernal Triad of Primal Manifestation of God? It's not about that at all. That's a Mystic's interpretation projected on a framework of Christianized Kabbalah that he was trying to use as a series of sign posts to mark the path of the Mystic's progress towards transcendence.

The real goal of the Abramelin Rite is to attain a Supernatural Assistant who will grant you the power to bind the spirits who would cause you harm and set them to working for you instead. As a result of this relationship, you get the ability to protect or blight cattle, influence the outcome of battles, and manifest piles of coinage. The majority of the Book of Abramelin looks a lot more like a receipt book of a Hoodoo practitioner than any mystical text of holy transcendence. It's about doing things to make the world a better place for yourself and your clients; it's not about unifying with the God-Head, or becoming One with Divinity.

And yet … it turns out that Crowley and Mathers were right about the HGA in this regard as well. They recognized that the HGA brought the skills and insights to improve all your magical activities, including your pursuit of unifying with the God-Head and becoming aware that you are One with Divinity. They saw that it was as beneficial in moving "up" the Tree of Life as it was in bringing down the Ideas from the Mind of God into the manifest world.

In my experiences, the HGA accomplishes both the Ascension and Materialization magic by introducing us to the spirits we need to speak with to get what we're after, helps us process and integrate the forces of the spirits we work with, and teaches us more along the way about who we are, where we come from, and shows us in clear ways what it is we really want out of life, whether it is material stuff and situations, or spiritual insights and understandings. He's taught me that Ascension and Materialization are two aspects of the same thing.

I'm going to focus on two ways the HGA makes our magic more effective in the apparent duality of Ascension-focused magic and more practical Material-focused prosperity magic. It's easier that way. The truth, however, is that whichever type of magic you're working on, the real role of the HGA is to teach you who you are. It never stops doing that.

When I say "Ascension," I mean the set of magical practices that lead us up through the heavens, like in the Emerald Tablet. These are the rites of conjuration of the Spiritual Governors, Intelligences, or Archangels of the spheres of the planets, and the subsequent results of these conjurations.

When we are travelling up through the heavens, we ask for initiation, understanding, and help in the process of remembering who and what we are. The spirits we work with in Ascension-based magic teach us by example, instruction, and purification of our sphere. They teach us how the forces represented by their spheres manifest in our lives, and how to better control that manifestation process as we go through our daily lives. It's something we already do, all of us, but with their help we get better at it.

Initiations into the spheres of the planets follow the Alchemical process of purification. If there's something impure in your sphere as it relates to a planetary sphere, Working with the Archangels of the planets (for example) will result in these forces getting cleaned up and purified in your sphere.

For example, the chief vice of Mars in Hermetic teachings is "unholy Daring and the Rashness of Audacity." If you suffer from this vice, live

recklessly without regard for the consequences and who you may be hurting (yourself most of all), working with Mars may bring about some learning experiences in your materially experienced reality. Anything you've been handling irresponsibly in your life may suddenly melt down. You may find yourself tempted to do reckless things that you know end badly. You may see others in your life going through the consequences of making poor decisions, or living without self-discipline or control of their activities.

Once you've dealt with those issues, the forces of the planet will flow through you in greater clarity, strength, and effectiveness. We will have gained experience, and personal understanding, hands-on experience-based knowledge (i.e. gnosis) of the forces of creation symbolized in the planet. We'll understand proportions, we'll have nuance and variation available to us in our magical vocabulary as we speak the world into existence. In our example, we will know the Martial nature of our selves.

The HGA's role in this process is both obvious and subtle. I include my HGA in my rite by calling on him by name and asking him to appear before me. Then I ask him to set up a spiritual feast appropriate to the spirit(s) I'm Working with in the rite, and he does so. When the spirits appear, they have some spiritual snacks to enjoy while we discuss the things I'm after, usually an initiation, or expanded understanding of an aspect of the forces of their sphere.

Then when I'm going through the ordeals, or integration, or dreaming about learning the information later, my HGA is present and actively helping to integrate the lessons and information and forces in ways that are somewhat difficult to put into words. From the astral realm, it looks like a kind of spiritual overlay that provides enhanced processing capabilities.

As a result of our increased wisdom, understanding, and power of each planetary sphere, we will gain the reflected increases in our ability to manifest and materialize things related to the spheres. It's vitally important to understand that every initiation received Above in our ascent towards understanding our source and our personal nature results in a material, physical, experienced tangible result.

In our Martial example from the previous example, after going through a Martial initiation, we will be able to understand when and where to apply the forces of Mars in our material life. In matters of competition, we will understand how to succeed, and how to wait for an opening without being rash. We will learn the techniques of preparing for battle, learning our

opponents' weaknesses, understanding the rules of engagement and how to use them for our own advantage, and the most effective ways to use our own strengths to achieve our personal goals. We will gain healthy ambition, as well as a deep and resonant understanding of when a force is appropriate, and when it is not.

In addition, Mars teaches the nature of forces that are behind the experiences in life that are, shall we say, *minus malum*, the lesser evil. Inconveniences at one end of the spectrum, near-death experiences at the other end. Anything that can be considered lesser than a greater evil falls under the forces of Mars. Jinxes, hexes, runs of bad luck, anything less than death for most bad experiences, death in cases where that becomes the lesser evil. The ability to manifest these things in the lives of your, uh, beneficiaries comes with the knowledge of when it is necessary, useful, and appropriate to manifest these things in creation of your world.

Materialization of things, experiences, people, or whatever it is you're after in your created reality will require working with spirits of materialization. Everything we experience through the flesh is under the influence of several thousand spirits of material translation. These terrestrial elemental spirits are of several classes in several systems, but in the Hermetic magical traditions, they are often found in the grimoires of chthonic, or Goetic flavors. They are called Demons, and Spirits, and Angels, and there are pantheons, legends, and entire chthonian feudal systems of spirits assigned to layers of matter at our experience level, and those deeper underground, in the infernal realms.

Whether you're after the HGA for Ascension or Materialistic types of magic, the reason you want to be communing with him remains the same: better magics. More better ascension, more better prosperity, more than what you've got today, and better than what you've got today. You want to improve your skills in your magical practice, for the good of yourself, and all those who experience you.

So how do we do it?

When the stars were right and I had been through enough pre-processing, I was able to contact my HGA. I used Liber Samekh and the complete and total intention of conjuring my HGA. Every night, or every other night, I sat on my couch, lit some Abramelin Incense, anointed my forehead and temples with Abramelin Oil, and I performed Liber Samekh the way Crowley said to do it: in my Body of Light.

In other words, I imagined a temple. I stood within it and performed an LBRP. I then performed Liber Samekh. When I got to the hard parts to remember, I cracked my eyes and read the printed rite, while trying my damnedest to keep the Temple and Body of Light in my mind's eye at the same time. I didn't assume the Golden Dawn god forms because they weren't part of my system, and felt out of harmony. After that I'd meditate a while, stilling my thoughts and waiting for some kind of response. Then I'd perform another LBRP and call it a night.

A couple of weeks into it, I met my HGA and we started hanging out formally. At that point, I got the spirit's name, and it agreed to come whenever I called it by name.

Process that for a minute. I started doing Liber Samekh, minus the Golden Dawn line dancing, and two weeks later I had the experience that indicates contact has been made. Two weeks! That's not 6 months, or 18 months. It's not even close!

Now, before you start thinking I am typical, or that if you do things my way, you'll have the same results, let's go over some of the other stuff that explains why I was able to get through it in a couple of weeks. It's not just because I'm awesome. Hell no. It's because I was thoroughly traumatized before I started.

But it happened after two fucking years of spiritual hell. I'd been pure fundy, pouring my heart out to God, literally in tears in his presence on a daily basis looking for answers, help, peace, succor. I was on an ecstatic mystic's journey to the heart of the Sun for years before hearing a still small voice telling me to go back to the occult and looking at it through the eyes of a born again new creation in Christ. The framework was laid, the pump was primed, and I had spent years enflamed in prayer, systematically destroying my psyche through the well-intended but spiritually bereft advice books of the modern Charismatic-Puritan movement in the Church. I mean, I was basically living like a Plymouth Brother, Crowley's home religion. It makes perfect sense that his rite would work for me, when you think about it.

The rites and rituals that are designed to put you into contact with the HGA in modern times are functionally designed to induce a traumatic event so intense that you are able to see, hear, and interact with your HGA. You spend your six months or eighteen months ritually creating the circumstances necessary to instigate a psychic breakdown, to create a reframing experience that allows your whole perception to be altered. You use special

oils and perfumes to put your brain into a particular state, and there's some speculation that you get high to help. One of the contributors to this book has speculated that marijuana was used in the original formula of the Abramelin incense, and from what I've seen, I have a tendency to agree with him.

But the trauma is the key. You've got to get yourself all hyped up, all psyched out, and maintain it for a while to hit that moment of breakthrough when you smell that holy smell (not the marijuana incense, by the way, a different smell) and say, blessed is the day of the Lord! It's not a once-and-done kind of thing. It's a full-on rebirth experience that drives you a little bit crazy to make you a little bit more sane.

It's just exactly like the Shamanic Death Trip, as I understand it. The shamans were ritually buried and hopped up on psychoactive drugs to get through to the spirit world, receive a vision and an ally or two, and return able to cross the bridge between the realms to fight spiritual battles for their community. I'm sure that's not exactly historically accurate, but that's basically the understanding I have. The Masons recreate the Death Trip as part of their initiations too. You go through something traumatic.

But here's the thing. These rites and rituals create specifically designed traumatic experiences. They aren't … fun.

I spent a great deal of time coming up with an alternate means of contacting the HGA. I've developed this method over the years with various students, and developed it into a pretty effective technique. It works well for many, but like everything else in magic, comes with no guarantees. This method involves engineering a Solar Initiation, conjuring your Genius, and getting the name of your HGA from that spirit.

First you'll conjure up Michael, the Archangel of the Sun, and ask for a Solar Initiation. You'll ask it to help you commune with your HGA; you'll ask it to facilitate the contact.

Then you'll work on establishing contact with your Genius. Agrippa has a method of deriving the name of your Genius from your natal chart in the Third Book of Occult Philosophy, Chapter 26. It's a little complicated. I have an eBook that explains it, but if I can figure it out, most of you can too. In the Red Work courses, I offer more detailed instructions and information, but this is basically the system I use.

When you get the five letters, add an EL to the end to conjure the active aspect of your Genius, or an AH to the end to get the passive aspect. Think of Jacob's Ladder, where he saw the angels descending and ascending. The

Descending angels were coming down from heaven to carry out God's will, so their names all ended in EL. The ones Ascending were returning to God having carried out their mission, so their names ended in AH.

To speak about information concerning your personal "return to God" conjure the AH version. To speak with the Genius about active things, like getting a job, or money, or physically doing anything, conjure the EL version. It's convenient. The AH suffix aspect will be the one to target for K&CHGA.

Don't be intimidated. Sit down with a piece of paper and a pencil, and draw out what you read in Agrippa. Think about it, and draw it again if necessary. I drew up three circles, and took the time to divide them each into 360 degrees using a protractor. Then I put the aleph-beit in each degree, clockwise starting in 1 Aries for the Genius Name, counter clockwise starting in Pisces for the evil daimon name. I think. I did this a year ago, and my memory gets dusty. Now I just use the spreadsheet. One column has the aleph-beit, another has the degree, and the third has the sign. I run the charts for people and get their info, round the degrees up, and derive the Names from the chart values. It's a series of simple steps. They just get tedious.

After you get the name, draw it a few times in a few scripts, and enjoy getting to know it. Then you conjure it. (Oh spirit NN, I conjure you in the name of the Most High God Eheieh, appear before me in this mirror/stone/bowl/whatever.)

Then you ask it to facilitate K&CHGA. Ask it for the name of your HGA. Ask it to reveal itself to you. Seek it fervently. Repeat the conjurations, pray every day, enflame yourself, devote yourself, and set yourself on fire.

If that doesn't work, add in performances of Samekh or Abramelin, or whatever. Having a friend in the Genius to recommend you paves the way a bit.

There are certain warnings that ought to be mentioned to those pursuing their HGA. I've mentioned already that the rites seem to induce a trauma state that results in changes to the magician that enable them to participate with their HGA in ways that you simply can't without some kind of seasoning and marinating of the soul. But there are other warnings that should probably be mentioned too. Like the ones from Crowley.

I haven't read Crowley's notes on Samekh in years. Great stuff. I especially like this part:

> *In the same way the Adept almost always begins by torrential lyrics painting out mystical extravagances about "ineffable love", "unimaginable bliss", "inexpressible infinities of illimitable utterness". He usually loses his sense of proportion, of humour, of reality, and of sound judgment. His ego is often inflated to the bursting point, till he would be abjectly ridiculous if he were not so pitifully dangerous to himself and others. He also tends to take his new-found "truths of illumination" for the entire body of truth, and insists that they must be as valid and vital for all men as they happen to be for himself. It is wise to keep silence about those things "unlawful to utter" which one may have heard "in the seventh heaven". This may not apply to the sixth.*

It's funny, I go through this with every deeper level of initiation I experience. I think I've mellowed out some with this whole thing, I rarely post "The Key to All Power in the Universe!1!!1!" posts over my revelations these days, but once in a while it still bubbles up and over.

I can't help it, and honestly, I think it serves a purpose. Reading through other people's Revelations of the Key to Everything has helped me a great deal, so maybe it will help others as well. My Keys to Everything may be different than yours, but seeing the doors mine open may make you see a door you missed, and urge you to find your own Key to open it. I know that happens to me a lot. It helps.

So I disagree with Crowley. Whimper and sob when you feel your HGA; there's nothing "unmanly" about expressing the pleasure and pain of being with Purity. And don't be afraid to go on about "ineffable love" and "inexpressible infinities of illimitable utterness." It's important to remind people that this is what it feels like when they forget, or inspire them to feel it for themselves if they haven't yet.

But do be careful to remember that it's not necessarily as valid and vital for all as it happens to be for yourself.

Another thing to bear in mind is that the HGA is not in charge of your personal attainment and spiritual path. You are. I have asked my HGA countless times if I should do something, and it has always answered, "Yes." It has never told me no.

It will gladly help you through whatever difficult path you wish to tread, no matter whether it hurts you or feels great. It doesn't see any difference between your experience of happiness and your experience of sadness, really, or if it does, it doesn't particularly care. It will use whatever path you choose to bring you to the knowledge and understanding it seeks to impart.

What this means is that you may very well find yourself standing face to face with a demon king from the Lemegeton's Goetia, nearly shitting yourself because it is so dark and powerful. Or you may find yourself in the presence of one of the Governors of the 91 Parts of the Earth, feeling suddenly very small. The HGA will facilitate these meetings, and although it might keep you safe, that does not mean it will keep you from all harm.

Remember, it guides, teaches, provides, and protects. It does so on its own terms, and will let you learn from the heart attack you end up with after brushing the forces of a Demon King without a proper circle. It will use the time you're stuck in a hospital bed to encourage contemplation of the things you've done and where you're heading.

While it cares about your spiritual attainment, it does not care about your personal comfort or happiness. It will work with you however you wish. So aim high.

Enough with the warnings though. The best thing you can do is get on with it.

Whatever method you use to contact the HGA, whether it's Liber Samekh, Abramelin, contacting your Nativity Angel, who can foster a relationship with your HGA, the Genius, or acquiring a Supernatural Assistant using the Greek Magical Papyri... it doesn't matter, as long as you make the acquaintance of this spirit so you can get to be more effective in your magical practice. Over time you will find your Good Spirit of God fulfilling the roles of HGA, Genius, Supernatural Assistant, and everything else it has ever appeared to be to whatever magicians in whatever time period.

The point is to get in touch with the "Good Familiar" who has the authority to Speak for God into your life.

In preparation, I recommend reading through Bill Heidrick's "An Abramelin Ramble" a couple of times, reading Crowley's Notes on Liber Samekh, and reading the descriptions of the Good Daimons and Familiars in the Greek Magical Papyri. I believe the Dehn translation of the Book of Abramelin is a must-read for every modern magician who has been spoon-fed the concept of the HGA that we've inherited from the Golden Dawn and

Aleister Crowley. Mather's Introduction to The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage is also required reading, in my opinion.

Take all these points of view together and look at the differences and similarities in the descriptions of the experiences. Get to know the authors of the work as best as you can. There are biographies of Agrippa, Eleazar of Worms, Crowley, and Mathers all over the place. Read through Heidrick's other stuff to get a grasp of how he writes and what he means when he puts phrases together in different contexts. Try to see where the authors were coming from in their presentation of their experiences with these entities.

When you do, you'll find that you have an inventory of reports that you can use to help understand your own experiences with the entity that has so many names. You'll be able to fill in the gaps that aren't apparent in the writings of these authors as you develop your relationship with this spirit. You'll be able to see what parts of Liber Samekh were just Crowley being Crowley, and what parts are effective techniques derived from thousands of years of practice.

Whatever you do, do it with full intent, and aim for the highest state you can attain: the state of Joy. Follow your bliss, and it will save you a lot of time. Today I recommend Working on that first and foremost after attaining K&CHGA, use your new relationship to get to know who you are, what you want, and to attain the things and situations that make you happy. In your happiness you will find the fulfillment of your reason for being here upon the Earth.

And whatever you go through in your personal path towards ascension and reclaiming your personal god-hood, once you have met your Holy Guardian Angel, you will never travel this path alone again.

After Abramelin:
Working with your Holy Guardian Angel

Aaron Leitch

The *Book of Abramelin* is a German magickal text supposedly written by Abraham von Worms in the 1400s. It contains a method of invoking and permanently bonding with one's Holy Guardian Angel. The angel, then, becomes the primary guide and teacher of the aspirant, and the source of his spiritual authority. This allows the aspirant to perform magick, command lesser spirits and – most importantly – strive toward a higher state of spiritual purity.

Because you are reading this book, I assume you have some familiarity with – or interest in – this famous grimoire. Yet information about it can be rather hard to find. While much has been written about the six (or eighteen) month Rite outlined in that book, precious little has been written about how the system works *after* those months are completed. In a previous anthology I was given the opportunity to write about the spirit-magick of Abramelin, providing a basic outline of how one should work with the spirits and talismans of that system after completing the initiation. Now, I have been given another opportunity to provide my readers with a rare glimpse into the practice of Abramelin – this time concerning the Holy Guardian Angel itself.

All too often, seekers who read the *Book of Abramelin* make the assumption that it is "just" an evocation ceremony. A lengthy and involved one, for certain, but ultimately just a method of summoning a very powerful angel. That angel, then, will immediately answer all of your questions about life, the universe and everything and provide you with all the miracle-working powers you could desire. Afterward, you go on with your life as an empowered magus and never need look back at Abramelin again. As they say: "Been there, done that."

Let me assure you, *nothing could be further from the truth.* In this essay, I will tell you what you can likely expect during the final days of the initiation itself and in the weeks, months and years that follow. I will bust any number of Abramelin myths, and explain how Abraham himself outlines the system as it should be practiced over the course of a lifetime. So with this in mind, let's get right to the first issue:

Abramelin is not a Mere Summoning; it is a Crowning Ceremony

The Rite of Abramelin is quite famous, yet it remains one of the most misunderstood magickal systems in the Western Esoteric Tradition. As I mentioned above, those who look at the material superficially often mistake it as a complex and lengthy angelic evocation ceremony – intended to establish contact with a mysterious and powerful being called the "Holy Guardian Angel." It is assumed that this contact is called "knowledge and conversation" of the Guardian Angel, but that is not in fact the case.

It is true that Abramelin involves communication with the angel. However, this only makes up the "conversation" half of the "knowledge and conversation" concept. The fact is you don't even need the *Book of Abramelin* to establish conversation with your Guardian Angel. If that is all you seek, then simply living right, praying for it every night before bed and sitting in silent meditation for a period of time each day will give you the same result. As Agrippa writes:

> "This [angel] doth direct the life of the soul, and doth always put good thoughts into the mind, being always active in illuminating us, although we do not always take notice of it; but when we are purified, and live peaceably,

> then it is perceived by us, then it doth as it were speak with us, and communicates its voice to us, being before silent, and studyeth daily to bring us to a sacred perfection." [*Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Book 3, Chapter 22]

In other words, the Holy Guardian Angel is always there; you simply have to achieve the right state of purity and clarity to perceive it. If you are familiar with the Rite of Abramelin, then you know it fulfills Agrippa's requirements of purification and peaceful living. However, these things can be achieved without Abramelin. I've known several people who have established conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel through their own efforts – sometimes taking months or sometimes years. I have even known a few who were contacted by their angel without attempting to seek it out, often by virtue of their work in other magickal or mystical traditions. (In such cases, it is not uncommon for the angel to appear in dreams, or to communicate during ceremonial workings.) Communication with your Guardian Angel is based upon your aspirations toward the Higher and dedication to the work of self-rectification and purification.

So, if it is not necessary to engage in the whole Abramelin ordeal in order to speak with your Holy Guardian Angel, why bother? The answer resides in the other half of the "knowledge and conversation" concept. Here, the word "knowledge" does not mean that you've studied something and know that it exists. Instead, the word is intended in its Biblical sense – to have a direct and *intimate* experience of something or someone.

A better term to illustrate this is the Greek word for knowledge: *gnosis*. In the Western Esoteric Tradition, we often use this fancy word to indicate higher spiritual experiences. You can intellectually know anything by reading a book, but gnosis only comes from direct personal experience. And to have gnosis of God means that you have been touched by the divine. Therefore, to "know" or have gnosis of your Holy Guardian Angel means to experience an intimate bonding with it in a higher spiritual sense. Just as a husband "knows" his wife, so too must the Abramelin aspirant bond spiritually *and physically* with his Guardian. The two become married as one.

This is by no means a new concept. As a study of ancient tribal shamanism will make clear, it was not uncommon for a new shaman to become literally married to his patron deity. He would take on a spiritual wife (or

a shamaness would take a spiritual husband), who would then become the source of all magickal powers, healing abilities and prophecy.

One ancient African shamanic tradition that has survived into the modern world is called *Lucumi* – though it is better known in the New World as Santeria. In order to become a priest of the faith – called a *Santo* (Saint) – one must undergo a ritual known as *Ocha*. This is a crowning ceremony – which means one's patron god (*Orisha*) is "put to your head." In other words, the Orisha is called down to permanently "possess" the new priest or priestess – so the two effectively become one. In some traditions this is called being "Sainted." However, it is also called a "crowning" because the Orisha takes up residence in the head – the highest point of the body, the place of consciousness and thus the most directly connected with the celestial spiritual world.

Students of Abramelin might find aspects of the Ocha process quite familiar. First, a seven-day ceremony (Ocha proper) is undertaken wherein the Orisha is called down and bonded to the aspirant. (To facilitate the entrance of the Orisha into the skull, the aspirant's head is shaved.) The ritual exhausts the Orisha, so afterward it will go to sleep for a time. Meanwhile, the aspirant spends a year and a day in seclusion and purification. He or she can only wear white, eats a vegetarian diet and is to avoid going out at nighttime. After this year-long period is complete, further ceremonies are held to feed and awaken the sleeping Orisha, and thus the new Santo has been established as a living vessel for the god.

The Abramelin process is essentially the same – though it switches the seven-day crowning ritual to the end of the period of purification. In the original German version of the Rite, a full year and a half (or three sets of six-month periods) is spent in seclusion and purification. In the later French version, this is shortened to six months (or three sets of two months). A vegetarian diet and some fasting are required. Sleep during the day is discouraged – thereby suggesting one should not be going out at night. In the latter months of the process, one must wear a white robe when praying in the oratory. Finally, the seven-day ritual is undertaken, during which the aspirant calls down and bonds with the Guardian Angel.

In fact, this same basic process can be found in various forms in many cultures and traditions around the world. Consider Moses, who spent forty days and forty nights in seclusion on a mountain, only to come down with a brightly shinning "presence" around his head (Exodus 34:29). The same

effect was seen at the Transfiguration of Jesus, where the resurrected messiah was said to shine as brightly as the Sun (Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9). Likewise, Catholic Saints – who are understood to have undergone an ecstatic spiritual transfiguration – are depicted in art with halos surrounding their heads. Notice, too, that monks traditionally shave their heads (a practice called "tonsure"). While tonsure is often explained as a symbolic renunciation of the material world, I have been told by at least one Orthodox Priest that it is in fact to make way for the entrance of the Holy Spirit.

Of course, the *Book of Abramelin* does not require tonsure. However, in the French version of the text, during the first two days of the convocation of the angel, the aspirant is instructed to enact his own funeral (wearing a robe of sackcloth, a veil and ashes sprinkled on his head) and then to lay as if dead for several hours *with his head at the foot of the altar.* This is the very spot where he has focused his devotion and invoked his Guardian Angel for several months. On the third day, he enters the oratory in a clean white robe – reminiscent of the Resurrection and Transfiguration of Jesus – and is considered to have achieved the knowledge of his Guardian Angel. He then spends that entire day in conversation. He has, in fact, been crowned – that is to say permanently possessed by the angel – and the two have become married as one. Much as we see in Ocha, Abramelin is how one becomes a living saint (or prophet).

So, you can see that Abramelin is not "just" a summoning ceremony. Certainly the angel is summoned after a fashion, but this isn't about gaining a one-shot audience with the angel and then licensing it to depart. If you've done things correctly, the angel will *never* leave again, and you'll be faced with sharing your head-space with another distinct entity.

What the New Abramelin Prophet Can Expect

One of the biggest problems faced by Abramelin aspirants comes on that final day of the convocation of the angel – the "Big Day" when the white robe is donned and one enters the oratory to realize at last the long-sought conversation with the Guardian Angel. If the aspirant has given his whole heart and soul to the process, then he has bet everything – all of his hope and all of his faith – on the final outcome. And, perhaps understandably, he is expecting a deeply moving spiritual revelation. After all, this is how Abraham describes his own meeting with his angel:

> And then shall you first be able to put to the test whether you shall have well employed the period of your six Moons, and how well and worthily you shall have laboured in the quest of the wisdom of the Lord; since you shall see your guardian angel appear unto you in unequaled beauty; who also will converse with you, and speak in words so full of affection and of goodness, and with such sweetness, that no human tongue could express the same. He will animate you unto your great content in the fear of God, making you a recital of the blessings which you have received from God; and bringing unto your remembrance the sins by which you have offended him during the whole period of your life, will instruct you and give unto you the manner in which you shall be able to appease him by a pure, devout, and regulated life, and by honest and meritorious actions, and such things as God shall ordain unto you. After this he will show unto you the true wisdom and holy magic, and also wherein you have erred in your operation, and how thenceforward you should proceed in order to overcome the evil spirits, and finally arrive at your desired ends. He will promise never to abandon you, but to defend and assist you during the whole period of your life; on condition that you shall obey his commands, and that you shall not voluntarily offend your creator. In one word, you shall be received by him with such affection that this description which I here give unto you shall appear a mere nothing in comparison. [*The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, Book 2, Chapter 13]

Sadly, the above description is vastly misleading. It is not wrong or untruthful. In fact, every bit of it will come to pass as described. However, it will most likely *not* happen all at once during the final day of the convocation of the Guardian Angel. Perhaps it happened this way for Abraham, but then again perhaps he is speaking metaphorically – telling us what will happen in the long run rather than what to expect on a single day. We can never know for sure.

What I can tell you from both my own experience, and that of others who have gone through this ritual, is that a special-effects extravaganza or

an "Ezekiel's vision" is probably not going to happen on the Big Day. I say "probably" because it certainly isn't impossible if you are just the right person with just the right mindset. However, it is important to remember that its absence does *not* indicate failure! I have seen far too many aspirants reach this point and feel let down because they didn't experience their own divine vision, nor hear mighty voices, nor perceive the splendor of their angel, nor receive any magickal power. Sadly, I fell prey to this roadblock myself.

While I underwent the months of purification, my very good friend and teacher (the Santero Ochani Lele) would openly mock my lofty expectations. He would take on a high-pitched voice and intone, "What?? No flash of light? No puff of smoke? No deeeeeeemonnnn...??" It was all in good fun, but he was also trying to use humor to counter-balance what he knew was going to be a major disappointment for me. He knew the Ocha ceremony, and he knew what new initiates often experienced afterward. Apparently, it is not uncommon for new Santos to feel a bit let down when fireworks fail to light the sky during their own initiations.

He also knew something else. As I mentioned previously, the crowning ceremony is exhausting – not just for the aspirant, but also for the patron deity who has been called down and born into a physical body for the first time. It is no less traumatic than birth for a human baby and its mother. And, like them, rest is required for both parties afterward. In Ocha, the Orisha is allowed to sleep, recover and get its new bearings for a full year. Then it is fed and awakened via another ritual.

In the *Book of Abramelin* a mere week of rest is prescribed after completing the process, and nothing at all is mentioned of the Guardian Angel sleeping. However, you can be assured that it will indeed sleep. How long it will rest is uncertain, and likely depends on each individual. But if the aspirant has patience and faith, there is little doubt the angel will eventually awaken and begin to manifest major changes in one's life.

Unfortunately, I was not aware of this during my own Abramelin initiation. Even Ochani's warnings and jesting didn't get through the thick armour of my expectations. Therefore, when I reached the Big Day of the convocation of the angel, I was profoundly disappointed. I was somewhat fortunate thanks to my previous years of magickal experience, and I at least had some vision of and communication with my angel. But these were weak at best. What I saw would later turn out to have a deep significance, but at the time I doubted that I was seeing anything more than my own imagination and

wishful thinking. I certainly didn't have the ecstatic experience described by Abraham! I got no magickal secrets or instruction, no recitations of my blessings and nothing that filled my heart with contentment and wonder.

I soldiered on through the remainder of the ritual. Then, when it was over, I decided not to voice my disappointment to everyone. Instead, I privately sought advice from three people I greatly respected. I didn't give them any details or speak of my lack of earth-shattering results. I simply asked each of them a single, simple question.

The first was Ochani Lele, without whose guidance I could never have performed Abramelin in the first place. To him I asked, "What can an initiate of Ocha expect directly after the rite is complete?" I think he knew why I was asking, and it was then he finally explained about the Orisha sleeping for some time after the ritual.

The second was Steve Kinney, a close friend, Quaker and experienced ceremonial magician. From him I merely asked for a Tarot reading, the question being what I might expect now that Abramelin was done. Without going into every detail of the reading, I will say that the final card was Judgment – indicating an upcoming awakening of great power. (The card in the deck we used literally depicts the archangel Michael rising from the sea and calling an initiate from his tomb in a halo of phoenix fire.) His interpretation of the reading was that things were very quiet for me at the moment, but that something big was on its way.

The last person I asked was a senior adept of a Golden Dawn Order, Chic Cicero – who was at the time a rather new acquaintance of mine. He had given me the wand of almond wood I used in the convocation of the spirits. He had also previously performed a modified version of Abramelin himself, and he had his own opinions about the nature of the Guardian Angel. I asked him what he would tell someone to expect directly after the Rite. He suggested that both myself and my angel were now newborns, and that I probably shouldn't expect too much at first. It would take time, he said, for the two of us to grow up together.

I was shocked to have received such similar answers from three distinct and unrelated sources. They were even supported by a comment made by Abraham in the *Book of Abramelin* – where he asserts that one does not come away from the Rite as an adept, but in fact only as a beginner with much yet to learn. Based on all of this I decided to leave aside my fear of failure and

just have faith that things would come about in their own way and in their own time. I prayed to my Guardian Angel every day, and affirmed my trust that she was there, that she could hear me and that she would make herself known when it was time.

It took about a month. I suspect things were accelerated by my attending a large Samhain celebration near the end of October that year – to which I decided to wear my Abramelin robes. As part of the main ritual, several people were brought to the center of the circle with their personal Tarot decks, where they were blessed and the decks charged for readings that would be given afterward. I was one of them, and the magickal charging turned out to be quite powerful. Later, during the Tarot readings, my angel awoke and began to speak prophecy through me like I had never experienced before. I was given secrets and visions about everyone who came to me – I hardly needed the cards! Many present said that I seemed to be glowing, and before long I had the longest line of people seeking readings. That night marked the starting point of what would become quite a roller-coaster ride as my life began to drastically change. I have never been quite the same person I was beforehand.

Over the years since that time, everything Abraham described about his angel has come to pass with my own. I have conversed with her and felt her compassion. She has instructed me in the true secrets of magick – calling down angels, working with spirits, making proper use of talismans and more. She has directed me to other sources of wisdom and knowledge. She has taught me how to properly live and interact with my fellow humans. She has been the primary influence in all the major decisions I have made in my life, and has set me in my current station as an author and teacher of the esoteric. She has answered every prayer I have ever put to her, and though she does not often lead me down an easy path, she has never in fact steered me wrong.

Other Abramelin initiates have described similar results. That is, not much happens at first, but if one holds onto faith and refuses to give in, the final outcome is quite astounding. For me it was just a month, and others have reported different lengths of time. But your dedication to the process must be such that it wouldn't matter if it took years or even the rest of your life. If you perform the Rite properly and hold fast, it will come as soon as you are truly ready.

So You Didn't See Your Angel – How Should You Proceed?

Once I explain these realities to a student, the next common question is "what about the convocation of the spirits?" It's a fair question. The Big Day with the angel is only the fourth of the seven-day Rite. The final three days are spent summoning the lower spirits and having them swear oaths to work for you and to never harm you. If one fails to perceive the Guardian Angel, and thus has not received instruction on how to wrangle the lower spirits, how does one complete the Abramelin Rite? For this, we have several options to consider.

My standard advice is that one should have some experience with spirit evocation before attempting Abramelin. Whether it comes from Voodoo, Hoodoo, Solomonic grimoires or ceremonial magick (to name just a few), it can only help you to know how to work with spirits before you find yourself brandishing a wand and demanding oaths of loyalty from the likes of Lucifer and Satan. Plus, it is quite helpful to have developed some skill at perceiving spiritual entities – as it will help you in communicating with both the angel and the lower spirits.

Also – and this is of vital importance – even if you lack experience and cannot yet perceive your Guardian Angel, you should proceed forward with full faith that your angel *is* there and working on your behalf in the spiritual realm. He (or She) is not going to go to sleep and leave you alone with the demonic princes! As you recite the conjurations that call the spirits to you, know with absolute surety that your guardian is standing behind you with drawn sword in hand. At the same time, you must be just as certain that the spirits can hear you and will take their proper part in the ritual as it plays out – even if you can't see them. Once it is complete, and the spirits have been sworn to do you no harm, then the angel will sleep and you both can rest.

Such is the advice that I have given to students, because my own situation was very similar. The meager visions I received from my angel on the Big Day did not include any instruction at all concerning the spirits. Fortunately, I had some limited experience with the spirits of the grimoires, and I proceeded onward with the convocations in faith that the ritual would do its job, and my angel would support me regardless.

On the other hand, I have since spoken with other Abramelin initiates who chose a different – yet equally valid – option. The specific example that comes to mind is an aspirant who, like myself, undertook the six-month

French version of the Rite. When he reached the Big Day and failed to perceive his angel, he simply chose to *keep going*. He put off the convocation of the spirits entirely, and decided to continue the seclusion, purifications and prayer until the following Passover. And, had it been necessary, he says he would have added another six months, and then another, and continue forever until he achieved the desired vision of his angel. Fortunately, he only needed the extra half-year and he attained his vision by the next Passover – after which he completed the Rite with the convocation of the spirits.

There are several reasons I find this a perfectly valid option. First, it shows an incredible amount of faith and perseverance. It tells your subconscious and the universe at large that you're simply *never* going to give up until you achieve your goal – even if it takes the rest of your life.

Second, though we didn't know it at the time, we have since learned the Abramelin Rite was originally an eighteen-month ritual rather than a mere six. Therefore, this aspirant's choice to keep going for another six months – and then another six if necessary – was not even a violation of the Rite itself. His Guardian Angel led him in a direction that was later verified when the German text of Abramelin was finally published in English.

Finally, my own experience post-Abramelin agrees with his ultimate results. I have been asked many times if I believe one must undertake the full eighteen months or if the six months will do. My answer has always been that it doesn't matter, because either way you're going to do the same amount of work. Abramelin doesn't end just because you've completed the initiatory Rite. Notice that even Abraham, in the previous quote, suggests the angel will point out your failings in the Abramelin process, and presumably tell you how to rectify them with further work.

Thus, if it is going to take you a year and a half to achieve a full bond with your Guardian Angel, then it won't matter if you complete the ritual in six months. You're still going to work for a year and a half before you see your results. And if it's going to take you five years to achieve the bond, then even if you complete the eighteen-month version you will *still* work hard for five years until you make it. And even *after* you've achieved the bond, you're work will have only begun!

In my case, I decided to complete the seven-day Rite and trust in the ritual to do what it was designed to do. Afterward, I continued to pray and aspire toward my angel until I achieved the goal. In my second example, the aspirant decided to set aside the final seven-day Rite and keep at the

invocations until he got what he was after. Neither one of us simply gave up and admitted defeat. We both showed our own brands of faith and perseverance. Both of us ultimately did the work that was necessary for each of us to achieve our goal.

And, most importantly, both of us have *never* ceased working the Abramelin system to this very day. The same is true for every successful Abramelin initiate I have ever met (and we are admittedly few and far between). This is not a mere magickal experiment, and one does not "give it a try" and then move on. Once the bonding is done and the Holy Guardian Angel awakens, you've got a lifetime of work ahead of you.

Continuing Work with Your Guardian Angel

So let us assume you have undertaken the Abramelin process and followed it through to its completion. The angel is bonded to your head, the spirits have given you their oaths of loyalty, and you have observed the required seven days of rest after all is said and done. Your Guardian is *probably* still asleep, but you know that it will awaken in its own time and the two of you will have work to do together. How should the continuing process of knowledge and conversation proceed? Abraham reveals this to us in the *Book of Abramelin*. First, we find this gem:

> "Also, should you wish it, you can retain your arrangements in place, and keep the apartment of the oratory proper and clean, as well as the altar; which latter you may place in a corner, should it [inconvenience] you in the centre of the room. For in this apartment, if it be not contaminated nor profaned, you may every [Sabbath] enjoy the presence of your guardian angel; the which is one of the most sublime things which you can desire in this sacred art." [*The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, Book 2, Chapter 18]

The above quote is found at the very end of its chapter, appended there as if it were an afterthought. Plus, the inclusion of the phrase "should you wish it" makes it all seem to be optional. However, this can be quite misleading. The entire purpose of the Abramelin Rite is to bring your Guardian Angel to the forefront of your life and have it guide and teach you. *Of course* you

should wish to enjoy the presence of your angel on a regular basis! And it is quite telling that Abraham admits in the final line that this is "one of the most sublime things which you can desire in this sacred art." In other words, it is indeed vastly important to do this.

I believe Abraham's intention was to suggest that the full-scale oratory was optional. From what I have seen, few people will have the luxury to maintain their oratory after the Rite is accomplished. My oratory took up a good portion of my apartment's living room. Not only did I need to give that space back to my family when I was done, but I have since moved away from the place. Others have rented spaces or set up temporary structures to serve as the oratory, after which they have had to move on or dismantle the structure. It is perhaps needless to say that it would be best to keep your original oratory intact – the very place where you were spiritually reborn – and hold your audiences with the angel there for the rest of your life. However, it is not an ultimate necessity to do this.

The next best-case scenario is to maintain *some form* of oratory somewhere in your home. I am fortunate in that I have a dedicated "temple room" in my house. There is a black altar in the center of the room where general magickal work is done, but the east side of the room contains a white Abramelin altar (most often surrounded by a white curtain) that serves as my personal oratory.

However, I have not always had the luxury of an entire room for this purpose. In the months directly after my completion of the Rite, I simply placed my Abramelin altar against a wall in my bedroom. There was not even a curtain to separate it from the rest of the living space. Yet, I did all of my work with my angel there, and never had a problem with it.

Whatever options are available to you, at least you know that it is desirable to maintain the altar in a sacred space to continue your conversation with your Holy Guardian Angel. Plus, you know that the communication should take place on a regular basis – Abraham suggesting the Sabbath as the best time to do this. (Whether this would be on Saturday or Sunday depends on your culture. For me it is every Sunday.)

Standard Procedure

Next, we must ask what procedure to follow when we do this work. Abraham reveals this when he describes how to receive new magickal word-squares

from the angel. Common sense tells us this is the standard method to use any time we wish to hold angelic conversation:

> "Fast the day before, and on the following morning you, being well washed, shall enter into the oratory, put on the white tunic, illumine the lamp, and put the perfume in the censer. Then lay the lamen of silver upon the altar, whereof the two angles shall be touched with the holy anointing oil; fall upon your knees and make your orison unto the Lord, rendering unto him grace for the benefits which you have received in general.
>
> "Then shall you supplicate him to be willing to send unto you your holy angel, that he may instruct you in your ignorance, and that he may deign to grant your demand. After this, invoke your holy guardian angel, and pray him to favor you with his vision, and to instruct you how you should design and prepare the symbol of the operation desired. Also you shall remain in prayer until you shall see appear in the room the splendor of your angel. Then wait to see if he shall expound or command anything touching the form of the symbol demanded. [...] And without touching or moving the lamen, copy at once the symbol just as it appeareth, and leave the plate of metal upon the altar until the even; at the which time, after having made your ordinary orison, and returned your thanks, you shall put it away in a piece of clean silk." [*The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, Book 2, Chapter 20 (How the Operations Should be Performed)]

You might note, if you are familiar with Abramelin, that the above mirrors the procedure used during the prayers of the final months of the initiatory process. Therefore, Abraham is telling us that one should, in essence, keep the Abramelin process going for the rest of one's life. One should meet with one's Guardian Angel at least once a week – on the Sabbath. And the procedure for doing that is to keep doing what you have already been doing for months.

Over the years, I have developed two standard methods of working. The first and most important is directed at the full summoning of the angel, in order to hold conversation and receive lessons and wisdom. The second method is what I call "general observance" – an abbreviated practice that focuses upon the prayers and devotions without actually calling the angel to appearance. In the following sections, I will cover both methods:

Sabbath Eve: Preparations

Regardless of which method you are following, you must begin with a fast on the eve of the Sabbath. Abraham elsewhere tells us (French version) the fast begins at the appearance of the first nocturnal star. I generally try to stop eating at sundown, then spend that night drinking only water.

This evening is also the best time to clean the oratory. I sweep the floor, dust the altar and any cloth hangings, and clean and polish the sacred items on the altar.

If your intention is to fully summon your Guardian Angel, or if you're doing this before another magickal operation, you'll want to spend the evening in seclusion and peace – preferably reciting prayers or invocations for the success of your endeavor.

The Sabbath at Dawn: Opening the Oratory (and the General Observance)

Just before dawn the next morning, wash up, put on the white robe and enter the oratory. Remember to wear nothing on your feet.

First, open any windows in the room. (If there is only one, it is best if it is in the East – but not ultimately required.) I prefer to open the window entirely, but when this is not practical (such as for privacy concerns), I just open the curtain to let in the morning sunlight. Make sure to turn off any artificial lighting.

Then, at the altar, light the lamp and incense. (Also, if your intention is to fully summon the angel, you should unwrap and place the silver [or wax] lamen on the altar – but I will outline this in more detail in the next section.)

Kneeling at the altar, make your prayers to the Highest and to your Guardian Angel. Offer thanks unto God for the benefits you have received in your life, and also make confession of your own failings and shortcomings.

Then pray that your Guardian Angel will appear and speak with you. (As per the French version of Abramelin, I also recite Psalm 138: "I will praise thee with my whole heart...")

For general observance, all that needs to follow the above are similar prayers of thanksgiving to your Guardian Angel. Then just sit in silence or silent prayer as you wish for a while. When done, arise and extinguish the lamp, close the window and leave the oratory. This general observance is good for when you are short on time, or feeling exhausted or otherwise do not feel it necessary to speak face-to-face with your angel.

Full Summoning of the Guardian Angel (and the Silver Lamen)

However, it is always preferable to perform a full evocation of the angel – so that you can ask it for any messages from the divine or to share any teachings it may have for you. In that case, you should employ the mysterious silver (or wax) lamen.

The lamen is a communication device, used to receive messages from the angel. Such an object is traditionally called an *almadel* – a magickal tool used for skrying spiritual entities. In the most ancient times, prophecy was often obtained by seers staring into sacred pools. As time went on, various reflective or mirrored surfaces were used – giving rise to our modern concept of a magickal mirror. Eventually, even the reflective surface became optional, and materials like wax became common in the construction of almadels. The two versions of the *Book of Abramelin* seem to cover both bases – where one (the French) suggests a square plate of polished silver, and the older (German) version suggests a heptagram (figure of seven sides) formed of wax. Personally, I have a square plate of silver. Whichever version you have constructed, it should be used whenever you wish the angel to speak directly to you.

Therefore, after you light the lamp and incense, but before you kneel and begin the prayers to the Highest, take the lamen/almadel out of its white silk wrapping. Place it in the center position atop the altar. Then take holy oil, lightly dip your finger into it, and touch the angles of the lamen. I mark all four corners (rather than just two) with small crosses, then I use what is left on my finger to mark a small cross on my forehead as well.

Then kneel and make your prayers and confessions to the Highest as usual, followed by similar prayers and invocations directed at the Guardian Angel to appear and speak with you. Continue the invocations until you perceive the angel is with you. You may then speak with him or her as long as you wish, and ask for what you may need.

How you see, hear or perceive the angel will be an individual concern. In the quote that heads this Standard Procedure section, Abraham suggests a requested magickal word-square will appear "on" the silver lamen. Elsewhere in the text, he describes the letters as appearing like dew on the surface of the metal. However, I have used mine more as a kind of shewstone. Sometimes I gaze into the mirrored surface, but most often I place my fingers directly onto the metal and close my eyes – letting messages and images come to me as they will. Most of the time, of course, I'm not asking for a new word-square talisman. I simply ask the angel to speak to me as she will, and relay any messages God may have for me that day. I have had quite a number of ecstatic experiences doing this.

Closing the Oratory

When the session is over, I end with thanks to my Guardian Angel and the Highest for granting me such a high treasure as this knowledge and conversation. I then place fresh incense on the coal and extinguish the lamp.

If you are doing general observances only, you can close the window in the oratory and leave – there is nothing more that needs to be done. The coal in the censer will burn itself out naturally.

On the other hand, if you have just used the silver lamen, leave it uncovered on the altar and the window open when you leave. It is best to leave the lamp lit for the day, if it is practical and safe to do so. The oratory should not be disturbed for the rest of that day.

At dusk, wash yourself once again, don the white robe and re-enter the oratory. Re-light the lamp and incense, then kneel at the altar and make the usual prayers of thanks to the Highest and the Guardian Angel for the help they have given you. (Psalm 138 is not necessary here.)

When done, close the window, put fresh incense on the coal and extinguish the lamp. (In my case, my angel requested I replace the oil lamp with a white candle – so when I leave the oratory in the evening, I leave the remainder of the candle lit to burn itself out naturally.) Finally, wipe down

the silver lamen to remove the oil, then wrap it up again and put it away. You can then leave the oratory until the following Sabbath eve.

I strongly suggest one begin these weekly devotions immediately after completing the Abramelin Rite. You are supposed to rest for a week afterward, then you can put the above into practice on the following Sabbath. It is okay if your Guardian Angel is still sleeping, as performing this ritual every Sabbath can only hasten the time it will take for it to awaken. It is as if you have continued the Abramelin Rite itself and provides a perfect setting for the awakening to take place. After that has been achieved, it then becomes the regular meeting place between the two of you.

Conclusion: Life with the Holy Guardian Angel

Not only do I follow this procedure nearly every Saturday night to Sunday, I also do it before any major magickal working. I invoke my Guardian Angel first and foremost, asking for her aid in the work I am about to undertake. Then, with the oratory still open and active, I proceed with my intended work. It has made an incredibly positive difference in the magnitude of the results I achieve. She stands with me no matter what angel or spirit I am invoking, or talisman I am consecrating, etc. She offers her instruction and advice as I perform the rituals and converse with other entities. And she has taught me more about how to work the Old Magick than any text or teacher. As it should be, she is my primary source of magickal ability.

My primary hope is that this essay has helped students distinguish between a basic summoning ceremony and the "permanent possession" that results from the Abramelin process. Most authors who propose alternate – and usually simplified – versions of Abramelin are generally talking about "conversation" with the Guardian Angel. And, for that purpose, their methods may in fact work. However, the process outlined by Abraham von Worms, as related to him by the Egyptian prophet Abramelin, is not something that can be simplified or substituted.

Few and far between are those who have undertaken Abramelin as it is given – without either quitting early or making changes to suit their own

egos. (Changes can be made to fit your circumstances, but never simply for your convenience.) However, with this essay and others like it – plus in work still to come – I hope to give seekers a better chance of obtaining the rare and sacred treasure promised by the *Book of Abramelin*. That is, of course, if you are willing to dedicate your life to the goal.

Passing Through the Void:
The Journey To Unite With Your Holy Guardian Angel

Frater Ashen Chassan

The Opening Eyes of the Seeker

At the spiritual summit of every magician's endeavor or *Great Work* is the ascension of consciousness and ultimate union with divinity in whichever way he or she perceives it. This ascension of the waking magus is the true emergence of a super-consciousness which breaks beyond the limiting ego and unconscious conflicts of the human psyche. Whether a separate guiding intelligence is perceived or not, the result is often the individual becoming a veritable force and influential figure in the world. The mage in union with his HFA is a catalyst for change and impracting for all who come in contact with them. The capacity to which human beings may experience this phenomenon appears to be determined by how much they are able to sacrifice and endure until the experience befalls them.

> *It should never be forgotten for a single moment that the central and essential work of the Magician is the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian*

> *Angel. Once he has achieved this he must of course be left entirely in the hands of that Angel, who can be invariably and inevitably relied upon to lead him to the further great step—crossing of the Abyss and the attainment of the grade of Master of the Temple.[2]*

This spiritual awakening and connection to totality is at the height of not only magical endeavor but the human experience as a whole. However, the emergence of the exalted mystic, spiritual warrior, magician, mage, wizard or anyone of notable wisdom or influence did not arrive at that point unscathed and untried. None achieved true power and enlightenment without first undergoing life altering and typically difficult challenges.

Even after achieving divine union, not all is bliss and unending success. A common misunderstanding is that the Holy Guardian Angel experience or "awakening" only happens once and then it is done with. Envisioning the possibilities of this magnanimous achievement, many neophyte magicians envision their lives as being a series of unending successes after emerging from this experience. They assume every action and decision will be perfectly guided by the hand of their "divine assistant". As many discover, they still stumble along paths which lead along steep edges of utter ruin, or the highest exaltation of the human condition. Growth and change only cease after death, and that is even debatable.

Very few occultists achieve let alone pursue the surrender of their desires to a higher authority. Many that begin the journey do so with a romanticized ideal of what their Holy Guardian Angel is or what this spiritual "ascension" or "awakening" entails. The one who strives beyond self-gratification and distraction will be led to persevere and discover the method by which the attainment of "knowledge and conversation" will occur. This process cannot be accomplished synthetically or prematurely with a simple ritual or guided meditation. Even if following the *Abramelin* rite to the letter, this spiritual awakening will only occur after certain personal aspects and awareness are integrated into the striving magician. The events of successfully coming into communion with your Holy Guardian Angel (HGA) are unmistakable and life changing. The results cause permanent shifts in consciousness.

All who are awakened to their divine genius or HGA must strive to return to a state of clear communion after it's experienced. Life and circumstances distract us and pull our attentions out of alignment from time to

time and we are constantly pushed to new ways to reunite with our perfect person. The few Masters or Adepts who have reached this state are humbled by it with a new respect for suffering and mortal toil.

Prayer, finding humility and inner silence, meditating and seeking further wisdom keep the magi in tune with their angels. For the ceremonial or ritual magicians, their HGAs will also assist them to better communicate and work with spirits and angels of endless variety. Working with a variety of spirits, angels, and even demons will certainly become easier for the awakened magician. The magicians who are honest with themselves foremost and obedient to the advice of their HGAs will not be led astray by foolish and selfish ideals.

As with anything, you get out what you put into it. Some people are not quite ready to have their eyes opened to the degree in which their angels are capable of doing for them. Few have the needed will, discipline, and focus to put such enlightenment to good use. For the striving magicians, their will can unlock the doors of the deepest mysteries if they place their minds and hearts in a direct line with their angels. There are no real "secrets" to this practice; many will be familiar with the methods which align ourselves to the universe.

Praying, finding humility and internal silence, meditating, and fasting are all timeless practices used by every spiritual master of countless cultures. The magician who is honest with himself foremost will not be lead astray by foolish and selfish imaginings.

I am of the conviction that uniting with one's HGA cannot be conducted in a group environment, establishment, or order. Regardless of any assertion from magical orders claiming otherwise, this undertaking is not to be witnessed, assisted, or led by anyone else under any circumstances. This is a solitary endeavor of the most private and personal nature imaginable. No one, even if they appear at the pinnacle of spiritual advancement, and in direct counsel with their own HGAs, should influence the course of another's quest once it is embarked upon. It is for the waking seeker alone to undertake, and for them alone to discover. This means that there is neither contact nor proximity to another human being during the entire course of the ritual to gain knowledge and conversation with your HGA. For pet owners, this includes the company of dogs or other pets that would offer some feelings of comfort and companionship.

I am not so much concerned with presenting a definition on what or who I think the Holy Guardian Angel (HGA) is, but *how* one achieves this

experience of ultimate union and awareness. My sources stem from my discoveries and adventures I've undergone as well as my personal journey on how I came to experience this trademark of ascendant spiritual union. By this relation I will outline how another may undertake this journey adhering to similar aspects of ancient magical traditions. If one follows the experiments I describe, then awakening to one's divine genius/HGA will occur in earnest. Better still, there will be no external distraction to persuade or dissuade you from your goal once you set out into the unknown to discover your ultimate power.

Not only will attaining *knowledge and conversation* first make spirit interaction (e.g., magical working and conjuration of any kind) more fruitful and more profound, working from some sources of magic will bring you closer to these experiences naturally. Revealing paths and options will be set before the daring seekers in order to unite them with their most divine councilor. At the current point in my Great Work I am hesitant to argue a specific viewpoint on one's guardian angel and more apt to state that nothing written will quite compare to the personal experience of it.

No book, no matter how well intended, can fully prepare and inform individuals as to what their personal knowledge and conversation with their Holy Guardian Angels will be like. If ever there was a more personal experience of the divine I know not of it. I must reiterate that the true achievement of this most monumental experience cannot be forced or staged. Only when the human mind and spirit has gone through the gauntlet that strips them of false pretenses, does the spirit truly awaken in the model of the body. The Guardian Angel calls to its charge in the measure of time and ability.

Historic textual references on the HGA only allow glimpses at possible manifestations. We can only speculate on what really occurred for masters who are said to have achieved enlightenment. Regardless if one recognizes the presence of an independent entity of ethereal intelligence or not, it's safe to say that they are irrevocably connected to something higher than their own consciousness. Despite differences on tradition, culture, and belief, I find striking similarities between those who have achieved the ascension of their consciousness and ultimate union with divinity. Each awakened Master or Adept typically passed through three intense stages which led to his or her awakening. The same stages will befall magicians who undergo the journey to receive the confirmed contact of their HGA.

1. A releasing of the old is achieved by a sudden stripping of comforts, distractions and habits previously held. This initial "step" can be compounded or direct depending on the psyche and process of the seeker/ magician. Often, as with the *Abramelin* operation, this stage has to be initiated and endured with will and determination to make the ego let go of its hard-held habits.

This initial step can be initiated by the seekers themselves (my chosen method) or sometimes it may be enacted upon them by fate, the universe, God, their HGA, or whatever. This can be a very trying time for the neophyte or anyone unwilling to release habits and comforts held for too long. Sometimes great losses are incurred or circumstances where you are forced to reexamine your own identity.

During the latter part of this stage I recall being flooded by countless images of hurtful or stupid things I had done or said since I was a small child, showing pathetic acts which made me feel less than the most insignificant microbe on the face of the earth. During the lengthiest part of the meditation and fasting, I was able to see every action and circumstance in sharp detail putting me perfectly in my place which was nothing my protective imagination had previously convinced me of. The stress of isolation, ritual, and mental introspection should not be taken lightly. The resulting angst can cause a ritualistic shock which deep unconscious fears, and reservations are suddenly brought to the surface and are no longer able to be concealed. The magician who falters during the initial stage in this section runs the risk of psychological or emotional trauma and the possibility of heightened states of panic or hysteria.

2. A dissolving of the ego is done where previously held "truths" or assumptions about the self and the world are discarded or completely abandoned. The particulars of these are multifold and usually go beyond simple mental labels and considerations. Fantasies about becoming a "powerful wizard" are completely done away with by this stage. Images constructed by the ego about "who" you are dissolve with the last real meal that was ingested. Memories, past grudges, and pains of being wronged by others may start to fade. Old biases or prejudices arise and seem to leave your consciousness. Hidden feelings of self-hate or deep internal conflict may begin to disperse.

Along with sudden mental and emotional shifts will be a dissolving of hopes for greatness or importance. Indeed at the height of this point in the

ceremony, the idea of "self" may nearly be eradicated as the very concept becomes vague and fictitious. Fears, even primal ones are overcome; the fear of death becomes a foreign concept, as does the intense desire to hold on to "important needs". I reflected how in this state, if I were face to face with God I would not have any questions, any concerns or arguments, no complaints, wants or needs, or frustration about how or why things happened the way they did. Indeed all of those things and everything related fell away in a complete void of irrelevance. You realize how impossible it would be to "force" a union with divinity and how trying to force anything at any time seems completely alien.

3. At the nebulous point after you feel that all conception of self and surroundings are completely dissolved in a white, golden haze of release, an indescribable joy and empathy for all creation fills you to capacity, at once replacing all that was painfully discarded with unquestionable divinity. In this space of no space and time which seems indefinable, you will come into meeting with your HGA. To describe what this will be like or might be like is to no benefit since I am utterly convinced the entire process needs no amount of "visualization" or "imagination" to occur. It will occur exactly as it is meant to in the way which is precisely intended for you. The event will be unmistakable and without the need to compare to what others have experienced. The way in which your HGA is perceived and communicated with will be the way intended by the Most High. To describe it as being born anew would not be inaccurate.

The energetic process and reaction seems to be a dissolving of base or gross "conceived" perceptions leaving a raw core of "you" that is neither glorified nor degraded, but finally receptive enough to perceive and unify with your perfected pattern through divinity, your true self through the eyes of God. For learned magicians with a basic knowledge of Alchemy, yes, this is the true Philosopher's Stone. Awakening to the sight of your HGA is to receive the truest essence of spiritual gold.

Along with the sudden shift in the perception of who you are, your concept of who or what a magician is likely changed as well. The greatest treasure for the ritual magician is the ability to return to this state of godhead during exhausted climaxes of ritual and literally bend the fabric of reality and the universe. This is all achieved without the ego-driven conscious desires of the lower mind.

First Step of the Seeker – To Know

If the above three steps did not convince you of the sincere magnitude this ritual entails, I would urge you to study the magical retreat process closely. The initial step to discovering true will and uniting with the HGA is based on the conviction that a magician embraces fears and doubts by confronting them head on. Magicians do this by stepping into total darkness and isolation to discover the truth which exists in the deepest place of their being. The only way this can be realized without self-delusion or guile is to leave behind any comforts and vices that may support false senses of security and authority.

This first step is taken with full knowledge and awareness of one's personal weaknesses. Determination emerges once illusions, doubts, and fears are cast away and vulnerability is embraced. True strength stems from the heart and expands through the mind. It's imperative that we break beyond the barriers of our perceptions and defensive reasoning to really affirm that we are divine beings. A mindset to consider when deciding on this journey is one rid of assumptions. Be sure none of your motivations are based on a sense of entitlement. Also do not depend solely on your piety or purity of life to achieve enlightenment for you, but instead invest in faith and hope that your ascendant angel will uplift you when such an endeavor is truly pursued with sincerity and humility.

> *"Once he has gained control over his mental processes, the student can then learn to stimulate and direct his emotions. This becomes Will."*
>
> —Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*

Magic will truly be in everything you do, say, touch, and experience once you emerge from your darkest hours. The effects of magic, when all else is dissolved away, is nothing but the true spirit of relation to divinity, be it anthropomorphic or no. Within the midst of this divine light there are no questions, frustrations, or need of want. There is just completeness of spirit and belonging. It is truly a grace which is unmistakable for anything else. The most difficult experience after one has been immersed in this light is to feel withdrawn from it again, to feel separated and removed again. Indeed it is even more painful than before since you now know what this unique experience is like and that it is true beyond previous speculation. However, with enough passage of time and distractions, doubts and questions may

arise as the rational mind tries to make excuses or substitutions for what was so clearly experienced.

> *"It is necessary that ye should begin to attach yourselves unto the very beginning, if ye truly do wish to have the Veritable Wisdom; and thus shall ye walk in the right Path, and be able to work; all the which is contained in this Book, and all the which is therein prescribed. For to undertake this Operation with the simple intention of using it unto dishonest, impious, and wicked ends, is neither just nor reasonable; for it is absolutely necessary to perform this Operation unto the praise, honor, and glory of God; unto the use, health, and well-being of your neighbor, whether friend or enemy; and generally for that of the whole earth. Furthermore, it is also necessary to take into consideration other matters, which though less important be still necessary; namely, whether ye be capable, not only of commencing, but also of carrying through the Operation unto its end; this being a necessary point to consider before coming unto a final determination upon the matter; because n this case we are not negotiating with men, but with God, by the intermediation of His Holy Angels, and with all Spirits, both good and evil."*
>
> —Abramelin, *The Second Chapter. What We Should Consider Before Undertaking This Operation*

I do not claim to live a life of astute holiness or virtue. I daresay that if my magic were solely reliant on such requirements of self-perfection, I would have no ability to speak of. Luckily, this is not the case. I am often shown what I would consider veritable "proof" and support of divine interaction when none seems disserved. I have experienced the ecstasy of being filled with the "light of creation" even after times I wasn't sure such a thing even existed. I am not quite sure why this is so. However, this is why the belief and assumption in a separate/ascendant being who is an ultimate champion of my existence is warranted in my view.

Despite any personal shortcomings, I do my utmost to live "rightly" which has nothing to do with religious dogma or "fear of damnation or judgment". I strive to be aware and accountable for all of my actions without trying to

justify my way out of them or resort to excuses. With a clear channel to my HGA, I feel I am held even more accountable and am not able to fool myself into a lifestyle that does not harmonize with my potential. I believe anyone wishing to unite with his or her divine genius must find this "right" way of living regardless of any particular religious, cultural or social constructs.

There is no boasting in the above statements and no sense of self-degradation either, just an admission that I have been given all the proof I need to know the validity of my path. In the midst of working with my HGA, I let go of my wants, desires, or worries of inadequacy and personal shortcomings. In the events of my life I can say with all humility that I don't believe I would have achieved any noteworthy success without this guiding grace. There is truly another hand in the unfolding pages of my life. The above realization did not occur due to a strong faith in any religion or spiritual discipline; it did not emerge out of a tradition or specific philosophy. It occurred as the natural result of undergoing the experiences which I relate below.

I really can't be certain if a single event or many triggered the desire to unite with my ascendant angel. Perhaps it began when I was younger and went on my first magical night run where I fully relied on the presence of God and my angel to protect me when my courage faltered and I really had no other weapon for which to defend myself against dangers seen and unseen. Perhaps it fully came about as I stood upon a lofty hill overlooking a shadowed landscape in hours where most of humanity slumbered in my immediate area, feeling comforted and supported in that moment of utter isolation. Or perhaps it began the first time my mind entered the stillness of trance and all was silent but for the celestial hum of a halo which sounded my entire being.

> *"If thou shalt perfectly observe these rules, all the following Symbols and an infinitude of others will be granted unto thee by thy Holy Guardian Angel; thou thus living for the Honour and Glory of the True and only God, for thine own good, and that of thy neighbor. Let the Fear of God be ever before the eyes and the heart of him who shall possess this Divine Wisdom and Sacred Magic."[1]*

I believe that one should continually strive to maintain mind and body through discipline and practice but not for reasons of impunity or gain.

Desire for spiritual relations must be done for its own sake with a sense of yearning. In the paragraphs below I share a few experiences which I feel prepared me for the eventual contact with my HGA. I do not propose others would need to go through these same events; they are simply included as reference points. Much befell me and led me to seek my HGA before simply trekking out into the wilderness.

First Awakening

I began my martial arts training when I was quite young and believe it led me into one of the major passions, paths, and disciplines in my life. When I was around eight years old, I recall sitting near the back wall during my Karate class while each of us performed our "kata" or form. The class had just finished with a major work out and was expected to sit still and be attentive during each student's performance. I began staring directly at myself through the full-length mirrors that covered the opposite wall. I had not read, learned, or ever been informed of any meditation practices previously as it was not taught in the children's martial arts class and my parents were not knowledgeable about such things. However, I found myself staring directly at my sitting form, then at my face, then my eyes. I held my gaze without blinking. I had no intention behind what I was doing or any thought for that matter; I just looked. I remember seeing my surroundings fade out in a haze of fuzzy white. No other sounds or images remained. Only myself, in a seated posture surrounded by this bluish and white glow were visible. This would be the first time I could recall seeing an aura. No sound, no thought, no care existed in my mind. I do not recall how long this experience went on, but I remember my vision starting to magnify my eyes as I stared back into them.

Finally something brought me back to attention as I believed my instructor called my name. I don't remember hearing any sound till I came back to awareness and once again saw the room around me. I also remember the class having an interesting expression on their faces after I snapped out of it. Apparently everyone had noticed a shift in me. I don't recall feeling all that different, just relaxed without any distracting thoughts. After class I explained what I experienced to my *sensei,* not really knowing what happened, having nothing to compare it to or even a reason for what I experienced. I remember him saying exactly that "Many people try to achieve that state

their whole lives and are unsuccessful." He seemed happy if not surprised by my experience but didn't explain anything further. I give martial arts training credit for much of my early success and further seeking. Beyond physical strengthening, training took my imagination and thoughts and focused them into a disciplined will. Beyond even those reasons my martial training gave me the courage to explore into the unknown with a warrior's heart. In reflection of this writing and my feelings associated with it, I realize that my true motivation for all works of magic is to experience that sense of reconnection and spiritual integration to totality, to be immersed in that place of cessation of all internal conflict. I could enact no change of fortune or circumstance and be content with the aforementioned experience. The inspiration and construction of magical tools, insights to spiritual machinations of spirit intelligences and observations of classical magical phenomena, as well as the reaches of material successes are appreciated but always just a side effect, a residual emanation of the grace of the Source. Such statements may seem to echo the philosophical ascertainments made by the eastern Buddhists or Hindus, but they are honest statements of my personal experience. In reflection, I realize I can take little credit for the achievements I've made or knowledge I've gained as a result of this union. Regardless if it's truly some aspect of my "deeper" mind or true self, my destiny is definitely supported by something beyond my simple "normal, reasoning intelligence". Within the true silence of the microcosm can the macrocosm not only be heard and felt, but also moved. There is not an obliteration of consciousness, just dynamic change. No sufferance past the emergence of the perfected soul. This journey must be ultimately unique to the soulful dictates of the seeker. It must be pursued without ceasing, yet not forced into being. Your angel will know the true reflections of your heart and know the exact nature of your paradoxical transformation.

Mirror staring Exercise

In the experience where I stared in the mirror while in Karate class, I happened upon a very useful tool in magical practice. I found that continually practicing such an exercise was beneficial for changing states of perception and awareness. An exercise can be practiced which may assist the magician to peer beneath the physical and mental reflected images of the physical to unite with the angel of one's true will and identity. These practices are not

directly related to the Invocation of your HGA I explain below but may help to better perceive and interact with your divine genius as well as all manner of spiritual beings.

To begin this experiment, all you need is a mirror large enough to draw your entire gaze without anything distracting behind it and a quiet space to do it in. Each time, a prayer of intense longing and intention must be uttered toward a mirror which has been set aside solely for the purpose of contacting one's guardian angel. The prayer should be said after a few moments of concentration and focus. If you are having difficulty coming up with a potent- sounding prayer on your own, I have provided a list of a few from some classic grimoires that are well suited toward HGA contact.

Steady breathing and centering exercises (such as the Middle Pillar) can assist with putting you in the proper frame of mind. Once the prayer is said, a state of complete openness must be maintained as you stare directly into the reflection of your own eyes, allowing a soft focus which enables you to see the majority of yourself reflected in the mirror. Continue the gaze trying not to blink and refocus your gaze too often. Eventually an optical occurrence will occur which causes a white fuzziness to expand through your entire peripheral vision and cause your image to become distorted, which is perfectly fine.

After long moments of this practice your vision will usually return to normal. With longer practice, you may start to notice that your reflection begins to change and may even transform into new faces or appearances which is at first startling. The idea is to let these apparent transformations come and go on their own accord and just "be" within the space of staring as your mind relaxes into the experience.

> *"Magic places the achievement of self-awareness second in importance only to the achievement of unity with God."*
>
> —Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*

Another magical exercise to consider if you are not already well versed in it is the banishing rituals of ceremonial magic. There has been much slander and upturned noses by some purists on the more "modern" practices, such as the banishing rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram. However, I can declare that these practices have enhanced my overall connections to

the spiritually ascendant realms as well as cleared out subtle mental waste from my spheres of influence.

The Middle Pillar is an excellent exercise for those integrating themselves into the Hermetic and Kabalistic frame work of magic. These rituals are widely considered to be used for banish areas of magical working which it in fact it does, but more so it "banishes" the unwanted mental and energetic noise that inhibits the sacred silence that proceeds the divine. Not only this, but when these practices are done with renewed integration of the sacredness of the sounds, names, and correlations, the magician is able to use sound and motion as sacred instruments of connective creation. These practices should never be done simply out of habit or familiarization by repetition after these sacred correspondences have been integrated.

Magic in true expression and passion is the only way to make the aforementioned rituals beneficial to one's work. They have to have profound meaning and importance. Not because of who created them and which magical orders "use" them but of what they truly mean. The very sounds should connect the magician to the forces which are named, the motions, and gestures of sacred acknowledgment. If continued practice does not lead one to this type of experience, then such repetitive ceremony should be abandoned with all certainty.

Often the particulars of a magical ceremony must be apprehended and integrated in order to find the perfect harmonics between internal revelation and external adherence to ritual. *Joseph C. Lisiewski* covers this particularly well in his advisement in the LBRP in his book, *Kabbalistic Handbook for the Practicing Magician*. Some left brain magicians would like to speculate that the answer lies in the details whereas I venture to believe it dwells within the multifold expression of the inner psyche, the true "will".

Even after a healthy collection of recorded experiments and interactions with beings of biblical and magical lore, I'm still "surprised" or in awe when a conjured being actually arrives. That same sensation of humbleness, of being in the midst of powers which far surpass my limited intellect and comprehension is quite palpable. Sometimes I think I like pretending to being a wise magus who has the capacity for understanding the complete embodiments of the forces I come in contact with. The truth of the matter is I am still an adventurous child who is, at times, allotted glimpses of interpretive forces of the universe. In the highest points of this allowance, I feel deeply a part of an immense whole, and more than willing to reintegrate

into my proper place when called to do so. Another blissful comprehension bestowed by my HGA.

Some wish to encounter and speak with their HGA in a formalized setting of brilliance. It is indeed possible to do through a ritualized soul or astral journey of some preparation, or the immersion in the *Abramelin* undertaking which I have not personally undergone but do not doubt is achievable. I encountered my HGA after an intense physical as well as astral journey which made dynamic shifts in my consciousness and perceptions. There is actually no need for an encounter with the humanoid manifestation of one's HGA in order to come into veritable relationship with it. What is required is a sincerity and tenacity to find and form this bond, the absence of conscious preconceptions and preconceived notions about what form it should take, and willingness to discard preconceived assumptions of "self".

There is a narrow fence to be walked along the lines of formulated and ingrained religious constraints on the appropriateness of spiritual manifestations. On the other hand, a complete abandonment of system and structure allows no roadmap for the psyche to follow in order to gain any sense of recognizable (spiritual) interaction. The dilemma is such that each person and seeker must find and follow the most suitable road map that only true knowledge of the self can reveal.

There is much esoteric and occult debate on what the HGA actually is and is not. Although I find the scholarly debates fascinating and encourage all seekers to research and investigate where they are able, I encourage the seeking magician who has not yet undergone the operation to keep a very open mind and heart about the subject. My own research has led me to connect the areas of similarity and coincidences and leave the rest of the dogmatic corners for others to wrestle with. It may not take six months or a year and a half, but seven to nine days should at least be dedicated to this ritual.

The nativity angel is not the same as the Holy Guardian Angel per say as your HGA is solely unique onto you and no other quite has the same divinely intimate relationship. This subject was confusing for me for a time until I read from *Aggripa* that there were three main guardian angels assigned to each person.

The Vision Quest – To Dare

I am by far not the first to recognize the similarities of the *Abramelin operation* and other versions of the HGA invocation to the shamanic Vision Quest. In practice and purpose there are many similarities to be found. When esoteric practices share many common elements across cultural and religious barriers, it rings all the more true for me. This is not to say I am not fond of exclusive practices or traditions, but also recognize where commonalities must be observed to leave room for the personal expression. Nothing is more personal than the union of a mage with his HGA.

> *"As an unfolding series of insights this illumination involves stripping away the veils of rigid belief that conceal the nature of the Original Self or True Will. A central concept of Maatian magick is N'Aton, the collective and universal consciousness of future humanity, which we are eventually to awaken; and for me this is one more way of understanding the unity of the personal or individual self and the complete and universal Self. The Atman and the Brahman are one, the Self is the seed or spark of God."*
>
> —Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*

For the process to reach conversation and true knowledge of one's HGA, I compare the experiences that early shamans have gone through as well as the most noteworthy religious icons of the day. I am fascinated by the history of how shamans underwent what Turner and colleagues coined a "shamanistic initiatory crisis", which is a traumatic event that basically introduces a perspective mystic or shaman to the spirit world or underworld. In essence the person in question "dies" or is very near death and is able to experience the nonphysical world(s) in a dynamic and profound way. It is a rebirth of the soul back into body with one foot now firmly placed in the otherworld. The sudden experience typically involves a physical injury or severe illness and/or psychological angst of some kind. The event is traumatic enough that it causes a severe shift in the consciousness that will either break them utterly or have them reemerge quite changed.

There are possible risks and repercussions of a failed attempt which I felt it prudent to include here. Undoubtedly there will be those who seek power and the thrill of such magical endeavors who are not intended in that time

to successes and walk the path of the magician. Indeed I have encountered many who fill this category in its entirety. Unfortunately such extreme magical undertakings can produce severe consequences for those who are not ready to undergo such an experience. It may be as simple as not truly believing the exact nature of your HGA and the divine nature of the universe. It may be that the deluded thrill seeker enters a wilderness area entirely filled with ego, expecting to control all he sees around him by undergoing this ritual. I daresay that this is an invitation for disaster as the spirits and very awareness of nature may turn on the supposed magus.

I once read of a deluded magician attempting to harness the workings of nature by going out and uttering aloud the repeated words of the *Bornless Ritual* which states, "and make all spirits subject on to me..." The reaction was the magician being swarmed by angry bees and suffering other severe injuries while attempting to flee back through the woods. Besides delusions of grandeur, the aspiring mage will be constantly challenged by the shadow self's urge to quit, often struggling with boredom, anxiety or depression, feelings of loneliness, etc.

An experiment like this cannot be faked, cannot be "visualized" into being, and cannot be successfully attempted by a person who is not in the right state of heart, mind, and soul to perform it. The initial fear of undergoing this must be overcome, but if your fear is such that it brings up to the surface that you are not yet at the point where you should attempt this, then that fear should be heeded with acceptance. To undergo a more traditional Native American style Vision quest, heed the example given below.

> *"A rectangular place, approximately four- to six-feet wide and six- to eight-feet long, is cleared and a pole with tobacco offerings is put at the center. Other smaller poles are placed at the four directions, with offerings and the representative colors of the four directions tied to each of them. Sage is spread near the center pole as a "bed" for the seeker rest on when tired. The seeker will sleep on the bed of sage, with his head at the center pole, but the entire duration of the vision quest he does not eat or drink. If the vision quest is successful, one or more "helpers" from the four elements of fire, earth, air, and water; birds, insects, and the animal kingdom will show themselves to the vision seeker and become the individual's*

sacred reflection of Wakan Tanka in the individual. These guardian spirits will remain with the person all their life and protect them as long as the heart remains pure. A symbol of an individual's vision protectors are carried with them and are represented on personal items by carvings, paintings, and bead or quill work designs. Not all of the seekers will receive a vision. Perhaps they are not mentally or spiritually ready to receive one or the time for them to receive a vision is not right. It takes a person of high level character, preparation and purity of mind, body and heart to be given the gift of a vision."

—Jerry Sikes With Regard to.. Shared Vision

http://www.thetimesharebeat.com/global/sikes284.htm

Although the above ritual is not specifically a Western Ceremonial Magic ritual intended to bond with your HGA, it may very well initiate the process regardless. If it does not, it will undoubtedly bring you closer to what the ritual will be like and open up avenues of your spirit to be able to endure such a process. You will need to be truly aligned with whatever course of action you decided to take. If you are adhering to a religious or spiritual tradition, you should be well versed and integrated in that path. Forcing yourself along some pattern of belief and practice for the sake of tradition will not be very beneficial to your practice. Likewise, if you have determined that your belief system really is within the framework of a tradition, you should be adamant about following the laws, guidelines and observances to every detail. In no ways should New Age or dissimilar perspectives be considered while undergoing this operation. I give the above example of the vision quest as a possible procedure for the undecided or inexperienced seeker. If nothing else, the example shows similar challenges which are faced during the HGA Invocation.

To understand the light you must likewise understand the dark. Your HGA or ascendant genius is a light that is brightest in the whole of your existence. There also exists a shadowed self, the embodiment of that which is hidden and recessed deep within our consciousness as a manifestation of our wretchedness. Herein lays the capacity we share with every single one of our human brothers and sisters for the most abominable of crimes, most wicked of acts and horrific designs. The nature of the shadow self will be

most formed toward our personal weakness, shortcomings, and faults. An intense psychological self-analysis of the most profound kind will be the unveiling of this shade. An exemplary observation of Christ's crucifixion, decent into Hades, and reemergence into the immortality of the light could not be a better archetype for the extent of this experience. The level of intensity your confrontation with this shadow-self is in the underworld will be equivalent to the radiance to which your contact with the HGA will be. The ideal "place" to confront your shadow-self face to face, is by traveling to the underworld.

Formula for Underworld experience:

Hell or the underworld is not solely a Christian invention. The visual aspects of which *Dante's Inferno* speaks has been with western consciousness since early civilization. I guarantee that regardless of your religious persuasion, you will find in your psyche a model of the underworld that speaks to you personally. The magician is one who dares to walk the nebulous path of light and shadow, taking both with understanding of their value and lessons. Immersion in both should be pursued and explored in raw detail.

My personal underworld soul travel was an intense and life-altering experience. Initially I saw places and beings that I never wish to encounter again. Souls were walking around in barren wastelands with expressions of horror and constant turmoil who shuffled like shades unaware of their own self-created prisons. I can state with certainty that I have been through the gates of darkness and of death in quite a dynamic fashion. Somehow the death of the ego, of the mind must be faced and overcome but not through attachment of what was before. Transcendence cannot be achieved by a fierce clenching on to past convictions, not of ideals, beliefs, or even long held concepts of the self.

This section is not geared toward techniques and methods for astral travel or remote viewing, but if this is within your capability, I highly recommend you attempt a shamanic "Underworld Journey". If you are curious to develop or explore the possibilities of astral travel, I recommend reading up and experimenting with techniques which harness levels of self-hypnosis. The astral doorway construct for the underworld realm is quite easy to identify: A deep dark hole at the base of a gigantic tree and an enormous cave beneath a large mountain are the most common entrances. Once entered

you may come in contact with a being that looks like a distorted vision of yourself. This being is often referred to as the "shadow self" or "dark-opposite" and can be initially very frightening and repulsive to interact with. However, the determined magician or shaman should make efforts to counsel with this being and come to a firm understanding of its place in your life. Coming face to face with this visual representation of your repressed fears, desires, and collective shortcomings is difficult but well suited to discovering concealed truths about who you really are.

Formula for Celestial experience:

So once you have journeyed through the very fires of the underworld and have managed to be cleansed rather than blackened by the experience, you are now ready to transfer your consciousness, or rather, have it transferred to the celestial gateway which leads to your HGA and divinity itself. Again, there are formulas for this and magical procedures to inevitably bring you face to face with your divine genius. However, it is you who must uncover the true path to this most sacred of chambers and come into union with the pillar of your true will yourself.

When you are in the midst of the guiding light of your HGA, your life, actions, and thought patterns will reflect it. Life will take on a meaningful and splendid course where every waking moment has value and importance. You will feel "awake" in a way that was never perceived before. Don't mistake this awakening to be misconstrued into being "easy"; life will still challenge and surprise you in new and profound ways.

For this exercise, once you have entered your astral state, or "body of light" as it is sometimes called, you will want to ascend upwards through the sky until you find yourself in the darkness of space. Continue to travel further until all light has diminished. While being aware of the endless dark space around you, start to extend your senses until you perceive a pinpoint of white light in the distance. As you move toward this light it grows larger and larger, expanding in all directions. Eventually the light should surround you and replace the once total darkness. When the white light begins to fade, you may find yourself in a landscape or building, or some location that will have a being that will act as a guide for this celestial realm.

The guide may very well be a vision of your HGA or perhaps a deceased relative or guide which you never knew you had. I try not to make too many

assumptions on what others will encounter on these voyages since my own experiences have varied phenomenally from one journey to the next. Take the experiences for what they are and integrate them into your magical working in the physical.

The above exercises and experiences can put you into states where understanding the deeper parts of yourself and the spiritual world become more definable and vivid. I consider experiences in the astral to be models of learning which lead me to understand subtle truth about my own being and the spirit world. The above experiences or experiments are not essential for the Invocation of your HGA, but they help in being able to clearly converse with energetic and spiritual beings in understandable form.

The Test of a Modern Magician – To Will

In today's society it is quite easy to evade or distract ourselves from having to face our fears, shortcomings, or weaknesses. It's easy to buffer ourselves against the true nature of our being when we have endless distraction in every form possible to keep us from having to dig too deep. Even among occult practitioners, very few have ventured into realms that early shamans and mystics have in order to receive true spiritual refinement and knowledge required to walk the path of the magician.

My position is that unless the darkness of our own minds and souls are truly faced, union with our Holy Guardian Angel cannot be achieved to its fullest realization. It requires a dynamic choice, a sincere risk and challenge that rip us away from all sense of familiar comfort and distraction.

Simple meditation and a magical ritual will not achieve the same results as a full-on "vision quest", a journey out into the unknown to see if our will is strong enough to see us though any challenge.

The structure and resulting effects of a vision quest are immensely important for every individual seeking to live beyond the mind-numbing integrated social sludge of modern society. For the daring seeker it means coming face to face with their own mortality, their place within the universe, and deeper understanding of purpose. For the awakened/awakening mystics it means breaking beyond illusion and false senses of ability or importance. It means cutting away fantastical delusions of grandeur and dealing with bare truth of who we are without anyone or anything else around. The sudden leap into this difficult and shocking ritual is designed to thwart

western comfort mentality as well and will more likely produce results than would any light-hearted approach which leans more toward a lot of *New Age* idealism.

This practice is given with the assumption that that reader is most likely a ritualist or ceremonial magician that will be conducting the whole of his experiment in the "uncontrolled environment of the wilderness". That is to say that weather, temperature, and animal presence may be unpredictable. This should be a welcomed and accepted feature to add to the overall nature of this particular type of experiment. I find that if the magician goes into this with the sincere open heart which was mentioned earlier, the resounding microcosm will indeed create an environment which is suited to this challenge. Yes, *challenge*, which means that all elements to the ritual may not be at first liking to the idealism of the ego and may be intended to test the your particular levels of weakness or frustration.

In the midst of the operation to unite with your HGA, your senses should be exalted to the point of neglecting any discomforts your surroundings would present under normal states of consciousness. Likewise, any fears of animals or spirits which may be near to your surroundings should equally be put to rest. There is a true sense of surrender and faith that the universe will support you in your endeavor. Never is there more a dynamic way to test your resolve and faith in what you are attempting than attempting this ritual. Where there are no other human beings or manmade structures to protect you from the raw exposure to the elements, you will be amazed at what deep-seated emotions rise to the surface. The initial risks become very pronounced once you are in the midst of your ritual and you must break beyond the underlying doubts and arguments your conscious mind will invariably come up with to halt you from undertaking such a task. Jesus wandered the wild for 40 days and nights:

> *12 And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.*
> *13 And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to Him.*
>
> Mathew 4:1–13

(Mathew 4:1–2 tells us He fasted the whole time)

Jesus was not the only one who retreated to the wild and was challenged by all the desires and needs of man, including hunger, comfort, and shelter. The Buddha also retreated into the wild, confronted by similar tests of his resolve. Mystics and shamans each retreated as did Native Americans venture out on their vision quest. The "vision" is that of the HGA in the case of the ceremonial magician. Nature is the crucible of all created life and the one which makes and unmakes man accordingly. The true magician does not buffer himself against the world in a greenhouse of fantasy, but strikes out in the wild in hopes to be remade. The successful magician is one who not only able to enter the wilderness and become enveloped by the world of spirit and nature, but also return once again to "the world of men" and bring about a successful discourse between the two.

The Need for Nature

Nature is the ultimate teacher, the irrevocable and enduring dispenser of unending, cyclical truth. It functions continuously despite the tampering, philosophizing, and meddling of mankind. Here is where the magician truly faces the spirits of the macrocosm and microcosm. Within the *Liber Samekh* the greatest and most potent archetypes of nature are listed as the divine manifestation and awesomeness of the Creator. Here the elements of nature are first petitioned in order to grant you access to bridge the realms of your consciousness to your super-consciousness.

In this section I will be expounding more on the raw symbolic references and relation to nature in its transformative representation to the magician undergoing the sacred journey into darkness to be remolded by the elements of nature and the masterful hand of his/her HGA. Notice first the beginning action after the oath and the use of the Bornless/Headless rite which Aleister Crowley integrated into the process of gaining KC/HGA. Each element is called, invoking the most potent and transformative energies contained in each of the primary elements: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. In this stage there is a surrender of control the mage allows in order to be remade by the potent forces of creation. These pure elemental energies which contain the vital building blocks of life as well as the most awesome destructive forces in the universe will begin the transformation process from seeker to adept.

In the final part of an early section of *Liber Samekh*, the declaration is made: "Devour me!" This is a powerful statement when made in the midst of

the wilderness without fallbacks or retreats. Far removed from civilization where nature is indeed all encompassing and powerful, and you sit isolated and alone in its midst, you will appreciate the weight of the above declaration. The devil you face will be your own and it will not be gentle.

Running Toward the Abyss

If you have not found yourself in the place and time where you were forced to face the many factions of your personality, it may be that you are not yet stepping beyond the bounds of your own comfort zone. Before attempting an actual invocation of the HGA or higher genius, I suggest you first conduct several retreats where the magical focus is to "know thy self". Become familiar with solitary retreat; learn to be more comfortable being out in nature, and accustom to spending long hours of the day praying and fasting. Such practice will undoubtedly assist you with preparing for the arduous HGA ritual.

When you feel that you are actual ready to attempt the invocation, you should select an area far removed from the habitations of man: from technology, from devices and contraptions of distractions of any sort. This must be a solitary retreat, without communication with another human being for the duration of the ritual. As our modern world rapidly increases levels of digital connectivity and communication available to all, ironically so has it immensely separated us from intimate knowledge of ourselves. Retreat is very profound and if practiced for a suitable length of time will either force the perspective magician toward introspection and eventual communion and conversation with his HGA, or will lead him to consequential irritability and further distraction.

The process of stripping away the insulation of routine comforts is not an easy one, and consequently should be a catalyst of substantial change. I can state with all certainty that no major or permanent breakthroughs will occur in regards to your ascendant being while continuing habitual routines within familiar enclosures. The experience of your HGA does not require strong imagination or visualization; it actually requires a breakdown of both, plus all preconceptions of yourself and the spiritual at the same time. Even if it is never undertaken, one should study the entire process of the *Abramelin operation* to get an appreciation of just how far the ego needs to be disseminated in order to begin seeing with new eyes. Whether your

personal crucible is a framework of religious doctrine or structured within the confines of a tradition will have little barring if the undertaking of the operation is done completely, and fully with your whole self. If knowledge and conversation with your HGA is not successful, you will at least have a deeper understanding of yourself and how much you are truly connected to the aspects of the ritual.

Some questions you should answer before undertaking the operation are the following: When was the last time you were truly afraid of something? When was the last time you felt near to death? Have you ever been in a position where there was no one else around for assistance and you had only your courage or faith to depend on? Is your will to the point where you know you will succeed during the extreme times mentioned in the ritual? It is quite easy to create ideals about ourselves and beliefs when our surroundings are comfortable enough to conceal our true nature. Luckily, there are ways to test our resolve to find what we are truly made of.

My First Challenge

My first wilderness challenge of a magical sort was during my mid-teens when my awareness of the supernatural world was coming into stark contrast against the accepted reality of the social norm. Many friends and family members had already had a number of encounters with the "unexplainable" and some of these occurrences frightened them. I knew by this time that something other than the mundane world existed and not all denizens of that unseen world were friendly. I was deeply interested in Celtic mysticism and ancient shamanistic practices during this time as well.

The ritual format for the Night Run as I've come to refer to it was taken from a book that attempted to blend classical Hermetic magic with pagan Celtic ideas in a rather illegitimate fashion. The author himself was accused of many slanderous undertakings as well as ill-researched data that served to confuse the uninformed reader. I cannot in anyway recommend this book to anyone who wishes to learn about historic and accurate Celtic or Druidic practices. If I had known what I do now in the areas of magic and Celtic lore, I would have never touched this book. Nevertheless, the book also initiated some very powerful experiences for me that I stand by to this day. It is for this reason alone I refer to it and share my early experience from it below.

The book and section I am referring to is *The 21 Lessons of Merlyn* by Douglas Monroe in a chapter titled "The Wild Hunt". This chapter describes a ritual which contains a version of the Native American spirit quest ritual in conjunction with Germanic Pagan folklore. The Wild Hunt legend was said to occur on or around the time of Samhain/Halloween. The legend was told in various parts of northern Europe hundreds of years ago and eventually spread to England. In essence it describes a terrible otherworldly hunter who sweeps through the land near the time of Halloween, and anyone and anything caught in his path out of doors is either killed or driven mad by the sight of him and his hellish hunting hounds. The ritual Monroe outlines is designed to be a test of wits against the land and otherworldly beings around that threshold time. It is a way for aspiring magicians to test their inner resolve and master the fear of the unknown. The game is compounded by the added dilemma of being hunted by this Otherworldly terror, The Lord of the Hunt.

Autumn in Colorado is typically a beautiful time of year where the air begins to chill and the leaves turn all manner of brilliant colors. The sights and scents of the earth getting ready for the oncoming frost seem to affect everything that lives upon it. In Celtic lore it is said this time is like no other time where the veil between this world and the otherworld is at its thinnest. The dead as well as many other spirits seem to have more success in moving about freely between the thresholds of reality.

When I first read the ritual, I had not known about history or from where Monroe had gathered all his information on the subject but was fascinated nonetheless by the story itself and the prospect of magical adventure. The thought of testing myself, being bold enough to enter into the otherworld, and risking life and limb was too much to resist. I wanted to see if I was worthy to be the type of person I felt I was meant to be.

The basic outline of Monroe's *Wild Hunt* required me to go out three days prior to the Evening of Samhain, to an area of wilderness where the hunt would occur, and announce the terms of the Hunt. Within this wilderness, I was to choose a starting and ending position where the Hunt or race would occur and announce my intentions aloud to the spirits of the land. The Spirits or guardians of the land had to be informed aloud that I was challenging them to complete a run within the allotted time of the "hours darkest before dawn". I had to stay within the boundaries of the designated area and I could not bring forth any weapons or implements (like

flashlights) which were not agreed upon. The starting time was set to begin after midnight and I would have to complete my journey and arrive at the finishing point before the first light of dawn.

Turning around and retracing my steps, lingering till the sun came up, or going "out of bounds" were ways in which I'd be forced to "forfeit" the hunt. The prize for winning this race was mastery over the hunted land for my life time and anything else agreed upon. If I lost and survived, I would have to offer up the land spirits a worthy boon that equaled my asking prize. The stakes could be considerably high but it was cautioned that initiates should not "bite off more than they could chew".

Offerings of Bread and Fruit were left at the starting point where the terms of the challenge were spoken aloud for the next three days. If the offerings were removed each time by the next day after a recitation of the terms, then the terms were accepted.

I studied the ritual of the Wild Hunt in depth. I decided my hunting ground would contain the whole area of forest I knew which began from my house and extended to the large reservoirs to the south, the large field to the east, and mountain side to the west. I spent some time writing out all the details of the ritual and made sure it contained all the necessary elements. I made my starting position at a pine tree stump which I placed in a small clearing around some scrub oaks. I decided my Night Run would begin at this tree stump and would end after making a huge loop past both reservoirs, returning on the eastern side of the forest, and back to a large pine tree that was about ten feet from my starting position.

On a piece of parchment paper I wrote out the terms of the Hunt and prize in clear detail in a contract-type format. I wanted to wager enough to make the successful completion of the Wild Hunt worth the ordeal in metaphysical gold. After some internal debate, I decided to wager a magical implement that I had received from a teacher which was quite valuable to me. In exchange to not only have mastery over the land I asked to have my magical abilities increase tenfold (unsure if this was possible or even within the "spirits" power to bestow). I thought it a worthy risk for the amount of power I was hoping to be imbued with when I completed my task. I was sure that the spirits of the land had much more to teach and could impart mystical power well beyond that which I had already received. I checked over my parchment written in deep blue, making sure it contained everything needed for the ritual.

I went to an herb shop and purchased a large mandrake root which was to be ritually burned at the start of the hunt. The smoke from the mandrake plant was to be the ethereal form of my challenger, *The Lord of the Hunt*. The Lord of the Hunt, also known as "The black guardian" was a type of shade competitor and opponent to keep me from my goal. I took the herb and tied it within a small sack of dark red cloth and painted a picture of a shadowy being upon it. Now it was time to offer the terms to the land as well as my food sacrifices. I went to the small clearing where the pine stump rested and laid out three colorful apples and eight slices of grain bread upon surface of the tree stump. I unrolled the parchment of my written "Terms of the Wild Hunt" and looked to the tops of the surrounding pine trees moving slightly in the breeze. I spoke aloud the ritual of the wild hunt and asked for the attention of the ruling land spirits. It was a very eerie feeling that I never for a second felt like I was speaking out loud to empty air. As soon as I began describing the ritual and terms, I felt like everything in the forest was listening very intently. The trees and plants themselves seemed to be concentrating directly on my words. I felt an atmosphere of serious consideration for what I was speaking aloud. I looked around my immediate area and realized I needed no measure of visual confirmation that I had been heard. I arranged my offerings of bread and fruit for the spirits and rolled up the parchment of the terms, placing it neatly near the stump.

The next day as I walked up in anticipation I saw that the stump was completely cleared of the offerings. Excited, I walked up closer and looked around to see if any animals had dropped bits of the offering around the area. Oddly no crumbs or traces of the food were found at all, just the end of my parchment sticking out from beneath the stump. My offering was completely gone. As excited as I was moments before, I was exhilarated now but also a bit anxious. This magical game was proving to be a serious contract of engagement. I returned to the forest with my second offering. I placed a second serving of apples, bread, and nuts. The next day the offering was removed, just as it had been done the day before, and the night of the actual Wild Hunt, Samhain Night, was soon approaching.

Halloween day was spent enjoying a few family traditions, but soon I was reviewing the ritual in my head and preparing my nerves for the night ahead. A few hours before midnight, I dressed all in black and steadied my nerves with some meditation and prayer. I wanted to blend in as much as possible this night and also required all the magical protection I could

muster. I gathered up the implements needed for the ritual: A piece of paper containing the words and spell for summoning the host of the Wild Hunt, the red pouch containing the mandrake root, a ceramic bowl to burn the mandrake in, and my treasured wager. I remember the last hour and a half dragging by as I sat in anticipation in my room. The house and the forest outside grew very quiet as if in anticipation. I had informed my parents earlier that day that I intended to be out in the woods a bit late that night and to not be alarmed. I was blessed with some very understanding if not tolerant parents because they did not object, mostly because this was not odd behavior… for me.

When the clock showed that it was 12:00 a.m., I gathered my belongings, made my way silently downstairs, and crept out from the bottom-floor door. I tried to move as quietly as I could so I would not disturb my family. As soon as I made it beyond the house, I felt as if a million eyes were upon me, watching me in anticipation. My black costume provided no sense of blending in with the night; in fact I felt as if every sound I made echoed in an observatory of dangerous beings. I remember feeling distinctly terrified. I tried to reign in my imagining of what the night and ritual could really produce. Some part of me hoped desperately that this whole business was a bunch of hogwash and the only thing that would happen would be a scared teenager running through normal woods with a vivid imagination.

The night was cold and very still. The hunter's moon shone through the tops of the pines in illusionary streams of pale scattered light. I became so aware of my lack of courage that I was unable to even look around and instead just made my way to my starting area stiffly, shivering as I crept. The night was so dark in places where the pale moonlight did not come through that I could barely see anything. The pine wood stump seemed to be cleared of my offering once again. This time the surface of the wood allowed me to place the bowl that would contain the burning mandrake to send forth the otherworldly Lord of the Hunt. The rite stressed to make haste once the smoke rose from the man-shaped root as this was meant to be the areal body of the *black guardian*. I set up the bowl and mandrake methodically, trying to keep my hands from shaking. I wanted to perform the rite as quickly as possible so that I could let my legs run like hell as my instincts were telling them to do. I could barely see a thing, but I brought out some matches and the piece of paper that contained the spoken ritual.

I gritted my teeth and took a deep breath as I mustered the strength to begin the *Wild Hunt*. I needed to succeed in this endeavor since I felt I would never reach my full potential if I did not. Spirits or no spirits, large wild animals or no, I was going to win. Standing up I took a deep breath and read the *Call of the Lord of the Hunt* aloud. My voice reverberated eerily on the silent pine trees and the foreign Welsh words sounded arcane and barbarous. A chill shot pointedly up my neck and my hands began to shake. When I had finished the spell, a chill wind crept down the mountain out of nowhere.

Hastily I lit the charcoal in the bowl, and as soon as enough amber light began to glow I set the cloth bag of the mandrake upon it. It smoldered and then began to catch fire. I let it burn for a moment then wafted it out making sure I didn't leave a flame going in the forest while I was absent. The blackened root in the remains of the bag began to smoke and a large cloud of it rose in the air. I stared at it a moment and then a memory came flooding back to my mind. The smoke of the mandrake is meant to manifest my opponent. As if struck, I leapt back from the smoke and dashed like a deer through the trees to the small animal trail that marked my rout. I ran hard while trying to remain silent and alert, my hands clenched into fists. I had a few miles to run and not enough time to take any breaks. Not that I would want to linger too long out in this night anyway.

The cold midnight wind seemed to pick up and the trees began making creaking noises as if they were all bending beyond what the passing wind was forcing them to do. Images of a stalking mountain lion kept pressing its way into my mind and I felt the most vulnerable and afraid I ever had in my entire life. No fear had really come close to this particular evening. I was alone and no one was near who could possibly hear me if I needed help. Otherworldly beings aside, I doubted I could fend off a large predator who might be hunting at this time of night. I swore I heard footsteps racing toward me around every curve of the trail as I wound my way deeper into the woods. My usually comforting and familiar forest was now somehow hostile and foreboding. I remember whispering harshly loud for God to please protect me.

"Some magician," I thought. "I am weak and completely at the mercy of whatever is out there." The darkness continued to deepen as I made my way through the thick pine forests. Not even the residual glow of the distant city lights penetrated this point of the trail. I was panting and dreading parts of the run that even looked ominous in the full light of day when I saw a

shadowed limb slip from the trail right ahead of me. I froze in place and tried to discern what I was looking at from my position. It didn't move so I listened for movement through my wheezing breaths. The wind moved around me and the trees continued to creak. "What the hell is that?" I thought. It had to be some sort of animal but I could not tell what. It was dark and appeared to have dark fur. I tried to listen for it to move somehow and give away its position but it did not move. I stood frozen in place for as long as I could.

I thought I could always turn around and head back, forfeiting this insane game, but I doubted the night would be considerably less threatening just because I gave up. I took a few cautious steps forward and whatever it was quickly vanished from sight. What had I really seen? I didn't care to find out so I bolted. I ran until the trail dipped suddenly and the trees completely covered the skyline right above the trail. It appeared more like a tunnel than a trail, and the passage through was black as pitch before slight shadows appeared at the far end. I really didn't want to go through there. It seemed ridiculously threatening to my sanity. I thought I heard movement somewhere behind me though so I continued forward, completely going by feel since my eyes could not see anything in front of me.

Did I mention you couldn't bring flash lights on these insane magical games? It wouldn't have mattered anyway; I wouldn't have wanted to use one. I'd have only been able to see up to ten feet around me and any other creature of this world or the other would have been able to spot me in a second. I tried to press on as stealthily as I could until I got to about the center of this dark path. About thirty feet away, a figure stepped slowly and deliberately onto the trail in front of me. The form stood on two legs and moved with grace but definitely did not look human. It stood and stared down the center of the trail. It knew I was there.

The shiver that ran down my neck to my stomach almost made me sick. This couldn't be real. It was all black with huge arms that it spread from its body slightly. It seemed to have a head but no neck because it just melded right into its body as if it were a muscular hunchback. Two large protrusions stood out from its head that could have been ears or horns. I did not yell this time; I didn't have a voice. I felt my breathing begin to quicken to a panic as I decided what to do. I felt caught and about to be killed. I'm not sure what insane instinct possessed me, but in the midst of my frozen panic, I lurched forward all of a sudden and screamed wildly thrusting forth my hands. I ran

headlong at the shadowed form and it did not seem intimidated in the least. I got a final glimpse of just how huge the thing was when I was about five feet from it, and then I closed my eyes and ran at it like a blind fool. This was it, it was going to kill me and I didn't want to see it coming. I ran straight forward with my eyes closed screaming and almost went down when I hit the curve of the trail. My voice caught in my throat as I somehow managed to regain my balance, and I shot like a bullet down the remaining length of the trail. I didn't care if it was an illusion, hallucination, or just a monster that had sidestepped me in the last instant. I really didn't care if I was indeed losing my mind; I just wanted to be as far away from that area as I could. I had the singular thought that I'd rather face a cougar than see that thing again.

Real or not, I was terrified beyond reasoning. I must have been running at top speed because I came upon the trail to the lower reservoir before I knew it. I made my way quickly but carefully down the side of the trail toward the body of water, and the distant sight of the manmade body of water was somehow comforting. All I had to do was make it through the few trees around the water, up the other side to the second upper reservoir and back toward home. "Please let me live through this one," I prayed. I took the last few steps into the densely populated pine and made my way in the direction of the rock slide mountain side.

I was headed in the correct direction where terrain and land features were more recognizable and navigation should be less of a challenge. At least I thought I was headed in that direction but it seemed to be taking a lot longer than I remembered it taking before. The trees around me seemed to be taking on weird shapes and angles as I walked steadily onward. I admit I was winded and frazzled by my encounter just moments ago but now I was honestly perplexed. Even in this darkness I should have been able to see the edge of the reservoir or the sides of the mountain face but I could see neither. In fact all I could make out were the huge pine trees all around me. I stopped for a moment to get my bearings and just stared at the trees all around me. I knew it had to be an illusion of my poor night sight because the trees appeared to have formed a perfect square all around me. It looked so odd that I tried to walk up to one of the trees and see beyond it. As I walked the box seemed to grow or shift because I never came any closer to the tree I was heading toward. I simply cannot explain what was really happening at this point. I only know that I remember clearly not being able to reach the edge of the trees, no matter which direction I went. I actually tried running for

the edge, spinning around, changing directions just to reach the edge. Every way I tried, I always seemed to be in the center of this "box". The trees just seemed to stay about four yards out of reach. I was completely lost and disoriented. It made no sense; I began to make frustrated and bewildered noises as I tried to get some sense of where I was and how this was happening. I had just *seen* the reservoir and now I couldn't find it anywhere. The forest floor looked exactly the same everywhere I went. I thought, "This is not possible and must be some sort of otherworldly trick." Trapped again. I swear I must have spent a good hour trying to get out of that box of "shifting trees". Finally I threw up my hands, and sat down. My brain had had enough; my reasoning was not good enough to handle these sorts of situations.

No amount of book reading had prepared me for this. I closed my eyes, no longer afraid but feeling completely helpless. I swayed back and forth after a short while and then started to roll around on the forest floor. I didn't even bother to open my eyes; I just rolled like toddler would do in the back yard. I don't know why I did it; I don't think my mind was working well enough to analyze my behavior. It seemed to help though because at one point I smacked my butt right into a tree trunk. When I opened my eyes and stood up, I was able to see the lower reservoir clearly beyond, not forty feet away. With a shake of my head and a laugh that sounded like a crazy person, I jogged toward the edge of the water and then around near the mountain side. The reason I called this mountain side "rock slide mountain" was because of the multitude of overturned cars and debris that had fallen over the side of the street above. It was a nearly vertical incline of large boulders and stones. The owners of the wrecked cars had lost their lives in plummet downward. A few memorials to them had been created near the mountains' base. The place gave me the creeps, especially that night. I tried not to stare in the direction of the mountain face and instead made my way around the lower reservoir towards its higher cousin. When a sudden scream and crashing sound reverberated off the cliff face, I didn't even look in that direction even though I about jumped out of my skin. I scurried to the second body of water and caught my breath. I was half way there.

I certainly wasn't feeling any braver; in fact I felt like I was developing a panic disorder. I spent a few moments at the base of the manmade lake and looked around. I had no idea what time it was but I was not going to be caught out here when daylight came. I was *not* going to go through this for nothing. All I had to do was make it through the ravine, past what I named

"the maze trails" to the field and back up to the finishing line, to home. Wild Hunt be damned, I just wanted to make it back home safe. I think I had enough convincing that the magical/paranormal world was indeed real. I took a deep breath and darted back along the trail toward the ravine. I was sincerely hoping that no more terrifying events would befall me on my return loop home.

The way down into the ravine was spooky and still but nothing jumped out at me and for that I was glad. I was moving swiftly with a more than healthy supply of adrenaline to help me on. The moon light was good enough to navigate the maze trails without incident, and the creaking of the trees did not have the same effect on me as it did in the beginning of my run. I was about to take the trail that led out to the field when I heard a gross chomping and snapping sound coming in front of me. Something was eating...something, and it didn't sound pretty. I was just hoping it was your typical cougar or bear that had killed a deer and not some sort of otherworldly monster. I couldn't turn back so I tried to make myself sound as crazy as I felt and I dashed through like a wild man. I heard a large creature scamper off but I never saw what it was. I'm still okay with that fact today. I made my way into the open field and felt for the first time of my life glad to be "out of the woods".

Nothing frightening happened for the rest of the way and I landed at my finishing point out of breath and out of my mind. This was by far the most terrifying experience of my life up to this point. No movie and probably no other experience could impact me as this had. I didn't feel the surge of confidence and power I thought I would when I began. Actually, the only thing I felt upon returning home was humility and bewilderment. I learned so much about myself on so many levels. I'd love to be able to say that I felt some enormous surge of power and authority after my ordeal, but it didn't turn out the way I expected. I had indeed won my first Wild Hunt but it was an award of humility and responsibility more than what I initially imagined. Indeed the entire area of forest seemed to be "friendlier" toward me and I later came to know the spirits of the place in more dynamic ways. Things were about to get even more interesting. The "Spirits" seemed to honor the wager.

Magic and spirituality have never been areas of escape or fantasy. They were never areas where I wished to hide myself in the confines of a room and indulge in fantasy. Simply conducting rituals where my experiences were the subject of loosely subjective, imagery exercises was never good enough for

me. I wanted to know this stuff worked, and could work under extraordinary circumstances. The Night Run was the first taste of removing myself to a wilderness location solely for magical/spiritual endeavors, and it was the most intense experience I had ever encountered. However, such a risky and dangerous undertaking may not be suitable for all seekers. Although highly complementary and comparable to the intensity of the wilderness HGA invocation, the aims are not the same. You are not pitting yourself against nature in the case of the HGA invocation, nor challenging spirits or nature, only yourself.

The ritualistic retreat to gain knowledge and conversation with my HGA was even more intense in many ways, bringing me to the very limit of my abilities, and sanity.

The paradox of conflicting elements will become all too clear during the course of this experiment. To properly bond with your highest genius, an utter dissemination and abandonment of expectation and attachment to any outcome must be accepted. It is only then that your HGA will be able to reveal itself and communicate with you directly, unhindered by the controlling dictations of your conscious mind. The Wild Hunt or Night Run is a quicker albeit intense way to undergo this phenomenon.

In the case of preparing to contact your HGA, the retreat is not about hardening your will in order to endure the exhausting and rather terrifying experience of bonding with your angel but a complete surrender of conscious assumptions. It is best to embrace a sense and openness to experience the truth of what may or may not occur during your ritual. Just as it is with the vision quest, you must deal with what is. A complete trust in something other than your comprehension is what you are seeking and will not be found till all attachments to fantasy and ego are released.

Undergoing this type of transformation is quite literally a death and rebirth, where thoughts and fears of death, of failure, or attachments and ideals of important are all brought to the surface, reexamined and typically disposed of. This is and should be quite an emotional upheaval if undergone properly. Many of us find that we are seeking a perfected self, but can hardly stand ourselves when we are forced to sit and be with our own thoughts. We may find ourselves entering the wildness expecting a magical light show, when what we are confronted with is the rhythm of our own heartbeat and distracted images of our minds. The psycho-shock experiment is undergone willingly and without any assistance from substance or stimuli.

The best examples we have of a tradition of a magicians retreat is the Shamanic vision quest mentioned earlier. Intensely devotional and sincere prayer must be at the height of your focus and genuine feeling, nothing held back, nothing reserved a complete outpouring of your heart and soul. The Native Americans said you should pray for a vision in literal tears. *Abremelin* and other sources speak of praying with the exact same measure of sincerity. Please remember my earlier warning that such extreme magical undertakings can have severe consequences for those who are not ready for them.

Readying to Receive: Locating the Area to Receive Contact from your HGA

> *"Consider then the safety of your person, commencing this Operation in a place of safety, whence neither enemies nor any disgrace can drive you out before the end because ye must finish where ye begin."*
>
> —*Abramelin*

The first step should be in selecting an area of wilderness that is as far removed from the possibility of encountering another human being as possible. This may be the most singularly difficult and frustrating initial prerequisite. For the big-city dweller who has absolutely no availability to travel to such a location, there may be some measure of alternative for this but none that I can trust enough to suggest at this point. The area should be concealed, so a forest makes for the best natural option, but a valley or area with many boulders or land features which makes an enclosed surrounding could also work. Obviously a wide open field would *not* be well suited to this operation. Ideally you should be removed from any habitation or city for several miles, and far away from any roads or trails which are frequented by others. The area should be selected with the utmost attention to detail and no small measure of intuition. It should be a concealed area large enough to walk around in. preferably a space no smaller than 9 feet in diameter should be selected for this operation. For my experiment I arranged a stone circle, similar to the ones found through Ireland, England and parts of Europe, to serve as natural boarders to my magical circle.

> *He who commenceth this Operation in solitude can elect a place according unto his pleasure; where there is a small wood, in the midst of which you shall make a small Altar, and you shall cover the same with a hut (or shelter) of fine branches, so that the rain may not fall thereon and extinguish the Lamp and the Censer. Around the Altar at the distance of seven paces you shall prepare a hedge of flowers, plants, and green shrubs, so that it may divide the entrance 2 into two parts; that is to say, the Interior where the Altar and Tabernacle will be placed after the manner of a Temple; and the part Exterior, which with the rest of the place will be as a Portico thereunto.*
>
> —*Abramelin*

The area should be remote as such that you should be able to speak aloud at the very top of your lungs without someone hearing you and coming over to investigate. This is crucial for the sake of your entire ceremony remaining private, and for the psychological reasons that you will know you are not being heard by anyone else besides the spiritual forces you are intending to speak with. This area once found should be meditated and have time spent in well ahead of the operation time to become familiar, and also to begin forming a relationship with the land and any local land spirits, genius loci, and flora and fauna.

Any personal preemptory rites leading up to the invocation to your HGA, should be ones which would not seem "offensive" to any nearby land spirits. Simple meditation, prayers, and opening yourself up to the subtle impressions of the environment is well suited to preparing this space. Remember, regardless of magical tradition or religious viewpoint, you are not demanding or trying to control anything or any being in this area.

The recommendations for this are not to be a pagan sympathetic practice or nature worshiping exercise, but to make you open and receptive to the forces around you. Connecting with your HGA will be done in a location which is not controlled or constructed by the dictates of your conscious mind and therefore not done under the pretenses of your usual security and comfort. This initiation of selecting a space to connect and converse with your highest manifestation will be done in the raw arena of the elements. You are consciously surrendering measures of "control".

Plans should be made if possible to spend the seven to nine days of retreat in this place. So many days completely void of your normal routine, from work, phone, and responsibilities may seem like a tall order. For the true seeker, no sacrifice would be too high to achieve this most important undertaking however. Keep in mind that the *Abramelin operation* is six months of steadily increasing isolation and rigorous ritual. I wager that by today's standards, complete fasting and isolation for nine days would take most westerners to their limit.

The minimum luxuries for wilderness survival are allowed for this ritual. Items which may include a tent for shelter and sleeping, magical instruments if needed, an emergency kit which might contain a cellular phone but which is strictly left off and only used in an emergency situation. No reading material of any kind or anything else which might be used as a distraction. Rations suitable to fasting should last you the days leading up to the final day or three of the operation.

Further Preparation

Basic bush-craft or camping skills may need to be learned if you are completely new to being out in the wild. This ceremony is simply not intended for the city dweller who has no knowledge of the land outside of manmade constructs. There is definite risk involved in this procedure but basic survival and wilderness skills highly reduce the possibilities of doing something stupid or life threatening by not being prepared. I would not recommend building too elaborate a structure or "oratory" on the chosen piece of land unless you are very fortunate to own the land and several acres that surround it.

The operation should begin after the spring equinox for a few reasons: One, the weather will be warmer and more suitable to outside dwelling and be less of a risk of exposure to harsh cold elements. Two, the cycle of the seasons is in its natural "rebirth" time of the sun when light is renewed to the whole world, which makes for excellent timing for your union with your HGA. There are some obvious solar references and allusions to the HGA but it is not an invocation of a solar intelligence or angel being. Therefore, no magical timing nor hours need to be adhered to for this process. For the devoted religious mage, the final day of invocation may be selected on a Sabbath for reasons of spiritual significance.

This effort of undertaking is only for those who would have the will necessary to achieve what the ritual promises. The eighth day should be spent in the undertaking of the ceremony which should last the entire evening and conclude the following morning. The challenges which arise during this time of isolation are nothing to take lightly. Deep-seated and destructive patterns such as additions, fears, senses of hopelessness, boredom, loneliness, confusion, irritability, and doubt can plague our thoughts, threatening to sabotage even the belief in the existence of our HGA. Fasting and removal from any luxuries of consumption and shelter can push us to our physical limits as well. The heightened levels of agitation, physical and emotional stress will be the ultimate transformative elixir that will ascend determined mages to their union with their most divine nature.

For an exact adherence and recommendation from the *Key of Solomon*, I offer:

> *The places best fitted for exercising and accomplishing magical arts and operations are those which are concealed, removed, and separated from the habitations of men. Wherefore desolate and uninhabited regions are most appropriate, such as the borders of lakes, forests, dark and obscure places, old and deserted houses, whither rarely and scarce ever men do come, mountains, caves, caverns, grottos, gardens, orchards; but best of all are cross-roads, and where four roads meet, during the depth and silence of night. But if thou canst not conveniently go unto any of these places, thy house, and even thine own chamber, or, indeed, any place, provided it hath been purified and consecrated with the necessary ceremonies, will be found fit and convenient for the convocation and assembling of the spirits.*

> *These arts or operations should he carried out at the prescribed time, but if there be no time specially appointed it will be always better to perform them at night, which is the most fit and proper time for the operations of necromancy; this is also a symbol that it is just and right to hide them from the sight of the foolish, the ignorant, and the profane.*

But when thou shalt have selected a place fitting, thou mayest perform thine experiments by day or by night. It should be spacious, clear, and bounded on all sides by hedges, shrubs, trees, or walls. Thou shalt thyself cleanse it thoroughly and render it neat and pure, and while doing this thou shalt recite Psalms:

(Ps2=KJV2) Quare fremuerunt gentes (Why do the heathen rage....)
(Ps66=KJV67) Deus misereatur nostri (God be merciful unto us....)
(Ps53=KJV54) Deus in nomine tuo salvum (Save me, O God, by thy name....)

After this thou shalt perfume it with the odours and suffumigations of the art, and shalt sprinkle it with the water and the hyssop; and after this thou mayest in this place make all the necessary preparations for an operation.

But when, later on, thou shalt go unto this place, to complete and accomplish the operation, thou shalt repeat on the way thither the following prayer in a low and distinct voice:

The Prayer.

LAZAY, SIMAY, NONZAY, ORION, NAZARION most powerful, OCCIDAMON most strong, SEDON most mighty, YOD HE VAU HE, IAH, AGLA, *I assist me an unworthy sinner who have had the boldness to pronounce these holy names which no man should name and invoke save in very great danger. Therefore have I recourse unto these most holy names, being in great peril both of soul and of body. Pardon me if I have sinned in any manner, for I trust in thy protection alone, especially on this journey.*

Let the master as he goeth sprinkle the path with the water and hyssop of the art, while each of his disciples shall repeat in a low voice the prayer which we have enjoined for the days of fasting and preparation.

Once your area is chosen and careful planning and routing is selected, you should only revisit it under very controlled conditions, intending to pray, meditate, and enter into this space as you would the most sacred temple of your soul. If at any time you receive any negative or hostile feedback from the area, (such as continual unpleasant weather or frightening animals showing themselves) or notice people coming around, you may have to abandon that location in search of another more suitable one. If all goes well then you can continue your planning, setting a proper time and date to conduct your most potent ritual in magical working. The final stage of the invocation should begin at night, under cover of darkness. Fasting and praying for nine days leading up to the actual invocation is highly recommended.

Purification and Psalms used in Solomonic bath. *KoS* procedure:

"He who wisheth to apply himself unto so great and so difficult a science should have his mind free from all business, and from all extraneous ideas of whatever nature they may be."

Hereafter, for three days at least, thou shalt abstain from all idle, vain, and impure reasonings, and from every kind of impurity and sin, as will be shown in the chapter of fast and of vigil. Each day shalt thou recite the following prayer, at least once in the morning, twice about noon, thrice in the afternoon, four times in the evening, and five times before lying down to sleep; this shalt thou do on the three ensuing days.

These three days having passed, thou must have all things in readiness, as hath been said, and after this a day appointed and set apart. It will be necessary for thee to wait for the hour in which thou shouldst commence the operation; but when once it shall be commenced at this hour, thou shalt be able to continue it unto the end, seeing that it deriveth its

> *force and virtue from its beginning, which extendeth to and spreadeth over the succeeding hours, so that the master of the art will be enabled to complete his work so as to arrive at the desired result.*

If you are one to adhere to Themela and Crowley's instructions, you can utilize rituals devise by him and also taken from the *Abramelin operation*. His instructions for preparation for the Invocation of your HGA are thus:

> *Let the Adeptus Minor be standing in this circle on the square of Tiphereth, armed with his Wand and Cup; but let him perform the Ritual throughout in his Body of Light. He may burn the Cakes of Light, or the Incense of Abramelin; he may be prepared by Liber CLXXV, the reading of Liber LXV, and by the practices of Yoga. He may invoke Hadit by "... wine and strange drugs" if he so will. 1 He prepares the circle by the usual formulae of Banishing and Consecration, etc. He recites Section A as a rehearsal before His Holy Guardian Angel of the attributes of that Angel. Each phrase must be realized with full concentration of force, so as to make Samadhi as perfectly as possible upon the truth proclaimed.*

The Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel:

The magician should create a space of ever heightening divinity in his selected location for the ritual. I will not go over all the methods of erecting a magic circle and invoking the presence of the divine into the space. In ceremonial magic alone there are now several methods which stem from the most reliable and complete source of the *Abramelin operation*, to the Thelema's *Liber Samekh*.

If you are well practiced and established a foundation using the Golden Dawn's Banishing rituals as well as Middle Pillar and Invoking rituals, you should use those without hesitation. If you have developed your practice in another tradition, you should practice the rites of your tradition with fervent adherence.

However, if you are either without a tradition or new to the practice of ritual/ceremonial magic, you should not attempt any of these rituals. The

practices mentioned above will be confusing and distracting at best, or severely unbalancing. The objective is to connect with the most personal expression of your true, exalted self. Foreign words, concepts and gestures will hinder this process rather than aid it. Only ritual practices which have only been intimately integrated into the magician's personal energetic patterns and perceptions are of any use in this instance.

A simple meditation while focusing on the purpose of the ceremony will suffice in the right set of circumstances. Walking around in a circle scattering holy water and praying the Psalms or works from your religion are also appropriate. I cannot stress enough the need for personal affinity for everything that you say or do in this instance. If it is religious in nature it should be passionately felt and assumed during the entirety of the ritual. Regardless of the ritual format, the intention should be to stay completely within this space of isolation and openness till the conclusion of the operation. In most circumstances this would be the dawning of the next day. Make no mistake, the operation I am describing is extremely taxing and meant to push the seeking magician to his/her limit.

To reach a broader scope of ceremonial magicians who are looking to experience this most phenomenal undertaking but may have varying degrees of approach, I am including a few differing invocations to achieve knowledge and conversation with your Holy Guardian Angel. I do this not as an easy access to simply pick and choose the one that sounds most agreeable, but instead to offer an example of how these varying approaches may lead to similar ends. The examples I propose are from classical works of magical traditions, most notably from one of the famous grimoires which create the foundation for the practicing western ceremonial magician.

The setup for my personal Invocation was not very elaborate and consisted of a ring of stones about my height in diameter with a small altar I made in the center and some incense I brought with me for the final invocation. You may consider attempting something more similar to the *Abramelin* rite, but as I mentioned, I never conducted this ritual in its entire form. Besides building the outside oratory if you chose to do so, the other items which could be employed for the arrival of the HGA are a wood altar, a white linen Robe used to approach the Angel, and an additional red silk over-robe, with a white silk belt. There is also included a set of funerary garments—consisting of a robe of sackcloth (called a robe of mourning) and two silk veils (black and white). Although it is more intended for use dealing with demons

and lower spirits, you may also wish to have a wand made of almond wood. A blank Talisman made from a square of silver is a focal point for your HGA and may serve as a scrying device or beacon.

You may, if you choose, wear a dark-colored robe, sackcloth, or simple garb and black silk scarf or dark hood to signify the initial phase of the death of the ego and seeker who is releasing the old self and mind in search of the new and divine. This is to be warn during the entire fasting and praying portion of the ceremony and only removed during the final portion of the ceremony. The white linen robe and red silk over-robe could be worn once you began the final phase as you welcome your HGA. The silver plate talisman should be set upon the altar and not touched during the span of the ritual. It should be kept covered by a white silk cloth or vestment linen. If used as a scrying device as Magus Aaron Leitch suggests it may have been, it should be placed upon the altar in a way which makes it accessible for viewing. Since there is no mention of the silver talisman being inscribed or marked in any way, it seems to make sense as a scrying device.

I typically stress the need to abide by a work and follow it exactly to the letter, but I am not writing on following a particular set ritual and instead am offering what I know of coming in contact with your divine helper. An effort which I believe has been achieved by daring seekers across many different cultures, customs, and beliefs. As I mentioned before, no other magical working could be more personal or more unique to you. Every action for this endeavor must test, challenge, and open you completely to receive the truth of your being. Rigidly following structured outlines are done so for the purposes of discipline and trial alone, not for forming a working model of the universe. It's more important that you step beyond your own boundaries and limitations than confine yourself in a foreign one. The only paradox in the above statements has to do with the argument of the ego and trying to convince oneself to discard the difficult or frightful in exchange for the comfortable and familiar.

Prayer

The determining factor in my success and ability to endure the challenges of the isolation and retreat was "prayer". A practice which at first seems a romanticized necessity of the procedure, then becomes a preoccupation of speaking thoughts aloud to an unseen and unknown listener, then develops

as an ecstatic pouring out of the heart and inner recess of the emotional mind. Only at the peak of this last function does the prospective mage learn what true praying really entails. If you're able to open your heart you will find yourself releasing all that you are and all that you've hidden to your creator, whether or not you truly believed in "him" or not. You will cry out your fears, your hopes, your sorrows, regrets, and confessions of a life unrealized up to this point. You will issue it forth without care or concern of anything, or any appearing that they have heard your cry; you will do it anyways, with some hidden knowing that the universe is finally seeing you as you are. That being in truth that you are finally seeing you as you are. The feeling of emotional, energetic and spiritual release cannot be explained, only experienced. You may laugh and cry at the same time. You may feel like you are at the edge of losing your mind or possibly already have by this point. You won't care and will welcome the following reactions to occur naturally on their own accord without trying to control or guide them. At this point your mind and heart will finally be open enough to receive the true embodiment of your highest genius, your connection to the universe, the divine, to Spirit, to your true Will. In all that I can surmise, it is this which Crowley is referring to when he says to "enflame thyself with prayer". In the sections below I offer prayers suitable to this operation which are found in respective grimoires. If you find your mind wondering or have difficulty getting into the ecstatic states of prayer mentioned above or in such works as the *Abramelin operation*, I encourage you to pick one of these prayers and recite it several times during the days and evenings.

Prayer is not typically something we consider being skilled in or to have any certain level of ability. Even if it is something we do on a semi-regular basis, we may not be aware of how much prayer is an art and spiritual expression. It is certainly linked with magical ritual on a most intimate level. I am willing to go so far as to say a magician's ability to pray will equal his ability to call up the necessary will to be successful in any works of ceremonial magic. Discard any distasteful stereotypes of modern religious institutions and the portrayals of modern religious masses on bended knee. Your prayer has nothing to do with this and involves no other human being to witness it.

You'll realize so much of what you sought and strived for previously was NOT dictated by your true will or HGA, but by lower consciousness seeking to gratify its need for acceptances, power, position, importance, security, affection, and fear of the lack of all of them.

The process is literally exhausting in mind, body, and spirit. The methods used by our lower consciousness and Shadow self to preserve the illusions we've created around ourselves are dreadfully powerful. Breaking free of them is no small matter. The true freedom gained by making it through to the other side or being "reborn" or "awakened" is second to none.

I guarantee that no matter what happens, if you make it through the trials set by this timeless initiation through the unknown; you will gain paramount insight into the truth of your being. During my retreat, I experienced all of the above sensations and more. I cannot say if it will be the same for all who undergo this process or if it will be in the same order or contain all the same elements. From what I have discovered though, there are many similarities across time and culture. For me, there was a very real fear that my expectations would not match the reality of what would occur. The irony was that's exactly what occurred. Indeed there were several points which I thought nothing would occur at all. I found this to be the most unsettling of all my rising fears as I sat isolated, for hours on end, praying for a divine guide I wasn't sure really existed. I thought, "What if I've come out here, all this way, after all this preparation, and nothing happens?" Eventually this doubt was wiped away with the rest of my ego-driven fears, and I released the matter to the cosmos entirely.

Below I've listed a few prayers which may help the beginning seeker develop a report with the power of prayer and the intended recipients. They are by no means imperative to use but are highly structured toward the goal of an *Abramelin*-type encounter with your higher genius. I'm sure there are countless other prayers which will be suited for the particular seeker adhering to a particular tradition or culture. These are given purely for the alignment of the western ceremonial magician.

Invocation Prayer for Dr. Dee:

The Morning and Evening Oration: for Wisdom:

> *In the Name of God the Father, of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit. Amen. Almighty, Everlasting, True and Living God stretch forth, now, to my help: Lord of Lords, King of Kings, Jehovah Lord of Hosts, hasten to my assistance. Glory to*

God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, and is now, and will be always, even unto the Age of Ages: Amen. Teach me to properly sense, and to rightly discern, (O Father of all things,) For I desire your Wisdom, because it is all that is: Give your word to my established practice,(O Father of all things,) and fix your wisdom in my heart O Lard Jesus Christ (who art the true wisdom, of your eternal, and Omnipotent Father) Most humbly I entreat your Divine Majesty, that you might think myself worthy, in respect of my general piety, to promptly send forth your Wise and tested Philosophical assistance, to that fulfillment of understanding and perfection, that will be of the greatest value towards the enlarging of my praising and glorification to you. And when no one is subject to Death, and at last there is Life in the Earth, to which office is it that I will have been fitted: In particular to whom, according to your eternal foresight, will your beneficent eminence have assigned me: Moreover, truly and most humbly it is my most burning and most steadfast quest to your Divine Majesty, that you would think worthy to send forth from heaven to me, your good Spiritual Ministers and Angels, Namely Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and even Uriel: and (in accordance with your Heavenly favor) as often so ever as any other of your true and faithful Angels, who might completely and perfectly inform and furnish me, in the true and accurate, knowledge and understanding of your Secret Mysteries and Mighty Works (Concerning the properties of all of your Creatures and the best use of those natures) and of the unavoidable necessity for the Decree of our Deaths; to the praising, honoring, and glorification of your name; and to confirm to me, and of others (through me) of your many faithful encouragements: and to the disorder and ruin of your enemies. Amen.

Let the Will of Jehovah Zebaoth be done: Let the Will of Adonai be done, let the will of Elohim be done, O Blessed and Most Beneficent Almighty Trinity, yield to me (John Dee)

this request, for such a method, whereby to most appease you. Amen.

Invocation and instructions from Abramelin:

Firstly: Having carefully washed one's whole body and having put on fresh clothing: precisely a quarter of an hour before Sunrise ye shall place yourselves upon your knees before the Altar, turning your faces towards the window; and devoutly and with boldness ye shall invoke the Name of the Lord, thanking Him for all the grace which He hath given and granted unto you from your infancy until now then with humility shall ye humble yourselves unto Him, and confess unto Him entirely all your sins; supplicating Him to be willing to pardon you and remit them. Ye shall also supplicate Him that in the time to come He may be willing and pleased to regard you with pity and grant you His grace and goodness to send unto you His Holy Angel, who shall serve unto you as a Guide, and lead you ever in His Holy Way and Will; so that ye fall not into sin through inadvertence, through ignorance, or through human frailty.

In this manner shall ye commence your Oration, and continue thus every morning during the first two Moons or Months.

Know ye that although in the beginning your prayer be but feeble, it will suffice, provided that ye understand how to demand the Grace of the Lord with love and a true heart, whence it must be that such a prayer cometh forth. Also it serveth nothing to speak without devotion, without attention, and without intelligence; nor yet to pronounce it with the mouth alone, without a true intent; nor yet to read it as do the ignorant and the impious. But it is absolutely necessary that your prayer should issue from the midst of your heart, because simply setting down prayers in writing, the hearing of them will in no way explain unto you how really to pray.

This is the reason that I have not wished to give unto you any special form of prayers and orations, so that ye yourselves may learn from and of yourselves how to pray, and how to invoke the Holy Name of God, our Lord; and for that reason I have not been willing that ye should rely upon me in order to pray. Ye have the Holy and Sacred Scripture, the which is filled with very beautiful and potent prayers and actions of grace. Study then herein, and learn herefrom, and ye shall have no lack of instructions how to pray with fruit. And although in the commencement your prayer may be weak, it sufficeth that your heart be true and loyal towards God, Who little by little will kindle in you His Holy Spirit, Who will so teach you and enlighten your Spirit, that ye shall both know and have the power to pray.

When first ye shall enter into the Oratory, leave your shoes without, and having opened the window, ye shall place the lighted coals in the Censer which you shall have brought with you, you shall light the Lamp, and take from the Cupboard of the Altar your two Vestments, the Crown, the Girdle and the Wand, placing them upon the Altar. Then take the Sacred Oil in your left hand, cast some of the Perfume upon the Fire, and place yourself upon your knees, 1 praying unto the Lord with fervour.

THE ORISON.

O LORD GOD of Mercy; God, Patient, Most Benign and Liberal; Who grantest Thy Grace in a thousand ways, and unto a thousand generations; Who forgettest the iniquities, the sins, and the transgressions of men; in Whose Presence none is found innocent; Who visitest the transgressions of the father upon the children and nephews unto the third and fourth generation; I know my wretchedness, and that I am not worthy to appear before Thy Divine Majesty, nor even to implore and beseech Thy Goodness and Mercy for the least

Grace. But, O Lord of Lords, the Source of Thy Bounty is so great, that of Itself It calleth those who are ashamed by reason of their sins and dare not approach, and inviteth them to drink of Thy Grace. Wherefore, O Lord my God, have pity upon me, and take away from me all iniquity and malice; cleanse my soul from all the uncleanness of sin; renew within me my Spirit, and comfort it, so that it may become strong and able to comprehend the Mystery of Thy Grace, and the Treasures of Thy Divine Wisdom. Sanctify me also with the Oil of Thy Sanctification, wherewith Thou hast sanctified all Thy Prophets; and purify in me therewith all that appertaineth unto me, so that I may become worthy of the Conversation of Thy Holy Angels and of Thy Divine Wisdom, and grant unto me the Power which Thou hast given unto Thy Prophets over all the Evil Spirits. Amen. Amen."

This is the Prayer which I myself made use of in my Consecration; the which I give not here to confine you (to a certain form), nor to oblige you to employ the same, nor to tell it you over as I would to a parrot whom I should wish to teach to talk; but only and solely to give unto you an idea of the manner in which we should pray.

Having finished your Orison, rise from your knees, and anoint the centre of your forehead with a little of the Sacred Oil; after this dip your finger into the same Oil, and anoint therewith the four upper corners of the Altar. Touch also with this Holy Oil the Vestments, the Girdle, the Crown, and the Wand, on both sides. You shall also touch the Doors and the Windows of the Oratory. Then with your finger dipped in the Oil you shall write upon the four sides of the Altar these words, so that they may be perfectly clearly written on each side:--

"In whatever place it may be wherein Commemoration of My Name shall be made, I will come unto you and I will bless you."

This being done the Consecration is finished, and then ye shall put the White Tunic and all the other things into the Cupboard of the Altar. Then kneel down and make your ordinary prayer, as is laid down in the Third Chapter; and be well ware to take no consecrated thing out of the Oratory; and during the whole of the ensuing period ye shall enter the Oratory and celebrate the Office with naked feet.

Magical tools required: Altar, wand, oil, crown or miter, clean robe and water to wash in.

Invocation from Ars Paulina:

The Conjuration of the Holy Guardian Angel

O thou great and blessed N. my angel guardian vouchsafe to descend from thy holy mansion which is Celestial, with thy holy Influence and presence, into this crystal stone, that I may behold thy glory; and enjoy thy society, aide and assistance, both now and forever hereafter. O thou who art higher than the fourth heaven, and knoweth the secrets of Elanel. Thou that rideth upon the wings of ye winds and art mighty and potent in thy Celestial and superlunary motion, do thou descend and be present I pray thee; and I humbly desire and entreat thee. That if ever I have merited Thy society or if any of my actions and Intentions be real and pure & sanctified before thee bring thy external presence hither, and converse with me one of thy submissive pupils, By and in ye name of the great god Jehovah, whereunto the whole choir of heaven singeth continually: O Mappa la man Hallelujah. Amen.

Magical tools required: Altar, sigil lamen, and crystal seeing stone.

In the next session I account for what occurred during my own retreat and experiment contacting my HGA. As I stated earlier in this work, I cannot claim to know what will work for anyone else. This is just what I experienced and what occurred afterward for me. The bonding with your ascendant angel

is intensely personal and will be set upon parameters uniquely structured for you. If my accounts encourage sincere seekers to find their own ultimate divinity, then the effort was not wasted. Beyond that I cannot guarantee what will or will not occur for anyone attempting to replicate my practice.

A Soul Reborn or a Soul Remembered

Strong winds blew through the trees and grasses as I struggled to keep my focus in late hours of the night. It was difficult to keep my attention on the prayers and meditations I recited in order to converse my Holy Guardian Angel. The possibility of a personal angel actually existing seemed more elusive than ever. I was tired and alone, and tired of being alone. I was hungry, and feeling drained of all motivation and purpose. My thoughts were so scattered and my emotions so detached I didn't see how I could possibly conduct any magical rituals under these circumstances. My awareness and senses did not seem heightened at all. In fact they felt the exact opposite. The previous evenings had kept me awake, constantly thinking I was hearing or seeing things from the periphery of my senses.

I caught myself zoning out and tried to refocus my efforts. If I had the energy, I think I would have begun cursing, or crying but my emotional outlets were complete exhausted during the earlier days of my retreat and fast. I continued on, because doing anything seemed equally useless. If I was unable to achieve union with my HGA, I could at least say that I tried and put a sincere effort forth. Not that anyone but me would know the difference but I suppose that's all that really mattered.

For the final evening I was going to give it everything I had and pour out what little I had left of my inner strength to beseech my guiding angel to come into direct contact and bond with me. I wanted it to be in a way where I knew beyond any measure that this divine guide was with me. I had always felt a helping presence, a muse which encouraged me on the magical path, something which made encounters with the teachers I found possible. Something besides my own determination helped me muster the courage to succeed through past challenges. After I had decided on the HGA operation and constructing the ritual to the best of my ability, I got to work setting it in motion, determined not to let anything stand in my way.

I gazed up into the night sky seeing a multitude of stars in unfamiliar brilliance through the erratic sway of tree branches above. Was this going

to be the experienced I had hoped for, or just a completely exhausting and ludicrous camping trip? My mind was so hazy; I remember closing my eyes while looking up at the stars, remembering the days leading up to this point.

I had been siting within a little clearing in the forest I found for several days. I arranged some stones I found to construct the perimeter of a small circle and a central stone altar which was simply a slab stone set upon four smaller stones. The first day of my retreat was exciting and beautiful as I arranged my magical working space to contact my divine genius. The sun was warm and the scents of the forest mixed with the slight breeze to create an ideal atmosphere.

The serene setting was short lived as the first night dramatically changed as did the appearance of the grove. It was bit cooler and windier than I had expected, and it made trying to focus and enjoy the silence nearly impossible. I attempted to stay late into the night, determined to pray until I feel asleep. The morning was cold and the sun was welcoming but also blinding.

For some reason I had expected mystical sights and sounds to occur or challenge me during my initial days of fasting and praying, but nothing stirred save for the natural elements doing their best to distract me from my goal. Long hours were spent in meditation, resisting the urge to walk around and explore or think about food.

My lack of discipline, focus, and attention was coming into painful display as I witnessed the minute measure of my "will". I was constantly fighting myself to not be distracted, trail off into unimportant thoughts and memories. After the next day I was shocked to see how easily feelings of anger, self-loathing, disappointment, irritability, and other unpleasing emotions came effortlessly to the surface, ready to express themselves to their fullest capacity. After episodes of crying, meditation, muttering to myself, or to God, I began feeling lonely. I felt very small, isolated, and rather pathetic. Still I continued to stay within my circle, my eyes, and words often turned to the heavens.

A day or two nearing my final Invocation to my ascendant angel, I began hallucinating or witnessing fleeting scenes and beings from the corners of my eyes. Sometimes I thought I heard and saw animals approach me from various directions. Other times I thought I saw horrors which had to be spiritual manifestations of one sort or another. The time I would whip my head around to look at them directly, I became severely dizzy and nauseated. I was surprised how quickly I became frightened or alarmed and how each

sense seemed to go into hyper-drive, making my head feel as if it were going to split in two.

Despite being literally exhausted and reaching my limit, I didn't sleep much that night if at all and felt myself pass into a new state of being. The experience was so nebulous and indefinable I could not explain it if I tried. All I know is that the next morning and throughout the day, I sat in stillness. My previous fears and worries were gone. I could still see images and movement from all areas outside my circle, but I didn't bother looking. If a large predator animal was almost upon me, I had no strength to fight it off anyways, so I stayed, rooted in my spot. I was unwilling to move for any emotion, thought, or sight which occurred. I breathed and sat because that's all I could do or cared to do.

The day passed into evening and at some point I became aware of the hour of which I was to invoke my guardian angel. I set about arranging the stone alter with a white linen sheet I had brought along with two candles, candleholders, and an incense burner with "Abramelin incense" for burning. I also had with me oil of Abramelin which I anointed my forehead and hands with. Afterward I undressed from the robe I was wearing to the new white linen robe I brought for this occasion. I remember thinking it was odd I actual had the energy to perform all the above steps without passing out.

When both candles and incense were lit and it appeared to be nearing somewhere in the hours before dawn, I began calling out to the heavens with all my might, for my angel to come unto me and bond with me for life. I spoke without hesitation, from the deepest part of being. I may have wailed at one point, nearly laughed at another, and somehow verbalized the truth of my being in the still dark.

During the prayer I somehow had no worry or care if anyone or anything was hearing my plea or not. I had no concern for expectation or what my situation would look like to a normal rational person. I didn't know or care what to expect. I just prayed, confessed, and invoked.

At some undefinable moment in this occurring I felt a rather sudden jolt begin from the base of where I was kneeling and shoot through me to the top of my head. My insides seemed to catch fire and reverberate at high frequency like a struck bell. I did not have the consciousness enough to determine whether I was dying or had actually been physically struck by something. It wasn't so much painful as it was alarming and sudden. I experienced a light entering my head and vision which I knew was not external.

I had a flash of staring at myself in the mirror as a child in the dojo. The same sensation of being completely enveloped in a white light which blotted out every other sense in the most comforting way possible was occurring but a thousand more times intensive. Every sense of where I was and who I was faded into silence. My complete awareness was replaced by a brilliance of unquestioning perfection. If my life had ended at that time and I had stayed in that moment of brilliance, I would not have minded or looked back with regret.

The white brilliance eventually condensed itself into a recognizable shape that I knew without question to be the one I had sought so long to behold. In a momentary flash beyond what mortal man is allowed to know, I saw the truth of our union that extended past memory and incarnation in a way which could not be fathomed while in physical form. The feeling of that knowledge is one beyond description but one which encourages praise to the designer of the universe for compassion beyond measure.

The experience and interaction was something beyond explanation, beyond expectation, and beyond imagining. The difficulty of returning to my physical senses, mind and aching body cannot be overstated. However, I briefly recall overflowing with gratitude for being so. For simply being. Even though my heart ached to join permanently with the being I had witnessed in that space of no time, I knew that I would return, I always had.

Results of HGA Integration TO Keep Silence of Mind and Spirit

Conversing with others who have undergone this process or one similar has led me to ascertain that the effects of KC/HGA are multifold. If one underwent the process with an astute adherence to a religious or spiritual tradition, the effects were that it revealed the innermost mysteries of that tradition and that the beauty of it was integrated in a way that was unimaginable previously. Beyond any dogmatic and political refuse, the tradition is enlivened in the magi in a way that makes them an embodiment of the sacred truths for which the religion and/or tradition was designed. Conflicts or prejudices with other philosophies or beliefs are laid at rest and do not enter into the newly awakened magician's consciousness.

Maintaining Your Relationship With Your HGA

A magician may undergo several "deaths and rebirths" as spiritual maturity and time moves him along his path. A common side effect of being in harmony and true communication with one's angel is that there will be less conscious and physical effort to force change upon others and surrounding environment and more of a harmony and seemingly "magical" coincidence of meaningful events. The awakened magician in relationship to his angel does not "work his will" against the tides of creation, but rather blends with them his masterful and artful ways. This is not to say that frustration and challenges will not occur for this individual; on the contrary, it is likely that more intense challenges may await. However, there will be completely new and intuitive ways of responding and handling situations than before knowledge and conversation was achieved.

Nothing in the spiritual as well as physical worlds is in stasis or unchanging. So is it with one's relationship and experience with the HGA. As with any successful and prolonged relationship, it must be one that is nurtured and acknowledged regularly to receive the full benefits thereof. Quiet meditation, introspection, and communication (prayer) should be initiated on a regular basis to continue the clarity to which you are guided by your genius. The world and life is full of distractions and changing events which may cause us to lose the closeness with our HGA and the truly beneficial experience that is their proximity to us, connecting us to the divine Source. My experience of working within the direct guidance of my HGA is truly one of unlimited power and possibility. It is unlimited because it is structured within the patterns of divine creation. Paradoxically this entails "my will" working precisely as it was meant to by the mind of divine creation itself. Truly there is no ego in this, and in its highest ecstasy, there really is no "me" at all, just the inevitable workings of Divinity itself.

The statement that the true aspiration and highest achievement for the magician or an ascendant human being is knowledge and conversation with his HGA is completely founded. Once this is accomplished in the truest sense, every other faction of life is secondary in comparison. However, while still alive in your physical form, or unless one achieves ascension beyond movement, you are still subject to the changeability of life and circumstances. Challenges will still arise, turmoil will continue be present in the world, and you will still be an active participant in all of it whether you would wish it otherwise or not. Connection with your HGA will not make you exempt

from the workings of the world but rather a more conscious and clear participant in it. The makeup of your humanity may sometimes make you act against the influence and guidance of your HGA which is the conscious aptitude of our free will. However, it will be nearly impossible to turn a blind eye to the obvious consequences and repercussions of our actions. Being connected with your HGA is being in full responsibility and awareness of your actions, reactions and the reasons behind each and every one. Self-actualization is an inevitable byproduct of this union.

There is no ending to the learning and methods to developing your relationship with your HGA. As I stated before nothing is static or stagnant whether physical or spiritual, so expect an ongoing flow of continual conflict and change which are the working laws of the universe, but enjoy the singular connection you feel to your place among the cosmos by your HGA, whose limits in teaching you exist only in your limits to learn and daringness to explore.

The successful bonding of your HGA to your consciousness and superconsciousness will bring with it many benefits in your life's journey. Greatest of all will be the divine guidance and direct link to totality, clearing the path for your ultimate purpose—your true Will. Despite this, receiving exact instruction on how to do magic will cut away from the mental and emotional frustration. Across cultures and traditions, another similar benefit to direct contact with your HGA is your angel being able to instruct you or literally assist you with summoning and contacting any other spiritual beings as well. In Shamanistic circles your guide is able to call forth other spiritual assistance to help in whichever tasks you require. All other magical pursuits and tasks will be inspired and directed by your HGA as well. In this instance, tradition as we as previously held beliefs can be sidestepped as your HGA will lead you on the path that is particular to your destiny and purpose.

The only worry from here on will be any actions or decisions which go against the advisement and council of your HGA. Once the relationship is formed and the bond between you secured, you will still have a choice to pursue life as you wish. However, going against the council of your highest self will be quite obviously against your own interest and most likely have severe consequences.

After the operation for gaining knowledge and conversation with your HGA is secured and completed, efforts should be made to carefully

disassemble the working area and put away all the components. If you built a structure for your ritual on land that is not owned by you, it should be completely erased, leaving as little evidence as possible.

If the experience has not completely changed your thinking, habits, behavior and outlook on life, something has gone awry. Fasting and prayers should continue at least a few days after knowledge and conversation has been achieved to completely come into your new mode of being. No longer can the old simply be returned to; your old habits and lifestyle are dead, and no longer of any use.

The immensely powerful and dynamic spiritual encounter with your HGA should stand out as one of the most moving points in your life. However, you will notice with time that the HGA's voice and presence may seem faint or not as close as it initially was. Have no fear for I assure you that once formed, the bond will always remain so long as you listen with your soul and do not act against the council of your angel. During some significant or possibly difficult points in your life, it will be possible to invoke your HGA to full brilliance again, just as you did during the initial ceremony. The magical ritual may look much like it did initially but not take as long or be as draining. Before attempting another invocation of this sort, you should consult your HGA on the particulars of the ritual and how and when it should be performed.

Life should take on new meaning; experience which seemed rudimentary or mundane should now be experienced as sacred moments in creation. A true awakening and enlightenment are the effects of coming into communion with your HGA. Each moment contains a universe of expressed life and happening.

After

To be awakened or enlightened is not necessarily to be happy or successful. One must be able to understand the dreams within, the awareness of others, and what the relating nature of the world is in all its methodologies. This leads a magus to various revelations and the involvement thereof. The scope of proper living is the ongoing discovery of the awakened magi. There is often much initial conflict as the habitual consciousness of the magician will often challenge the intentions of the divine teacher (or consciousness) even after ascension is obtained. The HGA will be your foremost source of

influence, instruction, and intuition in which to pursue not only magical workings but life choices as well. However, the ability to choose will not be overridden and there will be no permanent separation of your lower consciousness either.

The experiences undergone by gaining knowledge and conversation with the HGA will undoubtedly stand out as one of the major turning point in the unfolding of your destiny. It will dictate not only the way you perceive magical work but also guide everyday events in ways never considered before. Despite all this, life may encourage you to undergo several rebirths, reconsiderations, and deviations to preconceived plans. Often, we will be lead to break away from the comfort and safety of our beliefs to once again experience raw reality without preconception or judgment to look upon our lives with fresh eyes. This is the law of life for the seeker who continues down his path, refusing to settle into a life of predictability and normalcy.

As magicians we should continually evaluate our state of being and our appreciation for the mysteries. Pursuit of the unknown should never arrive at the point where we feel there is nothing left to uncover. Magic is never and should never be a practice of predictable components. Interaction with any being incarnate or disincarnate should never be taken as a matter of course. Most magicians, once they have undergone the spiritual awakening of bonding with the embodiment of their True will, refuse to settle for the dreamy lethargy of the masses. Albert Einstein said, "He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed." I found this to be a most powerful and true statement, more so for those whose eyes have been opened to the truly magical reality which is life. The journey never ends; there are countless spiritual peaks to ascend, the darkest and deepest caves of the spirit-world to brave, for true magicians are those who's *will* leads them to dare to know the lessons of the Silent Self.

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PART 3

THE HGA IN THE MAGICKAL SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS

OF THE WARWICK VALLEY

The Voice Of The Light

The Holy Guardian Angel in the Ogdoadic Tradition

Derik Richards

The Quest

At the culmination of the Third Hall Rite of Elevation in the Ordo Astrum Sophiae, the initiate receives the *Palingenesis*, the Regeneration. In this act he is made Adeptus Minor: his heart becomes a crucible for the sublimation of his lower nature, and the light divine irradiates his soul. The Lapis Philosophorum shines with topaz brilliance from his breast, and when the next day dawns all he sees is bathed in the light of his New Life, clad in the Gold of the Sun.

But despite the years of work leading up to this point, the many magical and personal triumphs won through his work as a Neophyte of the First Hall and a Servitor of the Second Hall, the initiate is only now beginning the real quest. All that he has done and earned will gird him in this new endeavor, though he must ultimately make this journey alone. The words of his initiator will echo in his mind: "...thou shouldst alone discover the secret name which even now abides with thy heart as the Voice of the Light...."[1] He must attain to the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Genius.

Following his elevation, the newly made Adept is given one additional point of guidance in this quest: a poem. The 18th century *Tarji`-Band* by

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1 Osborne Phillips, *Aurum Solis Initiation Ceremonies and Inner Magical Techniques* (Loughborough: Thoth, 2001), 217.

Hatif Isfahani – considered one of the finest examples of Persian mystical poetry – is to serve as a final waymark as he sets out on this endeavor. The poem is not intended to be a rite or formula in the usual magical sense – but beyond this the Adept may employ it as his ingenium directs.[2]

The title, *Tarji`-Band*, is a general term for the style of verse in which it is written, indicating a recurring refrain that ties together the stanzas. Isfahani's refrain, as translated by Melita Denning, is as follows:

One is he unchangingly,
one, and being's all in one:
He, the peerless sole and sun,
one in all of deity.[3]

Another translation of this key is given by Professor Mehdi Nakosteen:

Come and with inward eyes of soul
Awakened, see his path and goal
Perceive in all plurality
His inward ties of unity
For naught exists but he in each
And all in him their goals will reach
His soul through waves of change persists
For he, and he alone, exists
Abandon thoughts of 'that' and 'this'
One God, alone, is all that is![4]

The poem thus bound together by this refrain chronicles the quest of the poet for the Beloved. In the stanzas, Isfahani first seeks out the truth of unity in religious practices: the fire rites of the Zoroastrian Magians and the soteriology of the Catholic Church. Finding in each the same kernel of Divine Essence as expressed by the refrain, the poet then relates a seemingly mundane encounter with a group of tavern revelers who share their wine with him:

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2 Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips, *Mysteria Magica* (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1992), 391.
3 Ibid., 393.
4 Mehdi Nakosteen, *Return Ties of Existence of Hatef of Isfahan (A Sufi Strophic Poem)* (Boulder: Este Es Press, 1975), 13.

I drank. Reason and strict purpose their bonds
At once loosened, and fled far from my mind.
With new consciousness then clearly I saw,
The One Truth I beheld filling all forms,
And lo! Out of the vast height of the skies
A swift angel I heard. Thus was the song: …[5]

And his Angel proclaims again the same refrain of divine unity.

The last two stanzas of the poem are far more abstract, and exhort the reader in rapturous words to discover the true nature of "the Friend," "the Soul-of-Things," "the bright Sweetheart-of-All." The poem concludes with assurance that each of its narratives are symbolic, and

The veiled signs of a high secret they show.
And when you in your life surely attain
The full mystery, know this is its heart: -

One is he unchangingly,
one, and being's all in one:
He, the peerless sole and sun,
one in all of deity.[6]

Our purpose here is not to explicate the meaning of this veritable key (which in every case will be somewhat unique to each Adept who makes use thereof), but rather to trace this transcendent idea through the antecedents of the modern Ogdoadic system and thereby come to understand several of the influences that inform its praxis, and by extension, Hermetic magick in general.

Before proceeding it will be helpful to adopt a definition of the Holy Guardian Angel such as that given in *The Magical Philosophy*:

The Holy Guardian Angel is a beam transmitted from the imageless Yechidah, when the Adept has attained sufficient ripeness, outwards through the Chiah and Neshamah … and thence projected through the still-concealed Daath-Gate

5 Denning and Phillips, *Mysteria Magica*, 395.
6 Ibid., 397.

> *which, however, gives to that beam its own likeness, not visual but exaltedly intellectual, as Child.*[7]

It is beyond the scope of this work to thoroughly detail the Qabalistic "Parts of the Soul" referenced above. These constituent components of Man are treated extensively in *The Triumph of Light*, which comprises Book III of the first edition of *The Magical Philosophy*, later consolidated as the second half of Volume 2, *The Sword and the Serpent*. The reader is encouraged to review this work for a thorough understanding of the occult dynamics of the psyche and the attainment of adepthood.

Fedeli d'Amore

The essence of Sufi thought as expressed in Isfahani's poem and in much earlier and more famous examples by Rumi and others is the essential oneness of all existence with God. This continual interplay between Being and Becoming has ever been portrayed as an act of Love.

This love is not the earthly love of two mortals, but rather the insatiable yearning of the material toward the spiritual: Lesser Saturn (Malkuth) to Supernal Saturn (Binah). This impetus, as Denning and Phillips note, can be viewed as the dynamism underlying the European Renaissance. These spheres are an Octave – the same "note," yet different – representing the regeneration of the first matter to the spiritual Eighth Sphere, or Ogdoad. From a Jungian perspective, this is the love of the conscious mind for the Anima or Animus, the Ruach for the Neshamah (seen as Triune, i.e., comprehending the Chiah and Yechidah also). The consummation of this love is what we term the Knowledge and Conversation.

But long before this flame would kindle the hearts of Europe it was nurtured in the mysticism of the Middle East. The "history lecture" recited to the Ogdoadic initiate in the Second Hall Rite of Integration recounts a mystical Ismaili Order (*tariqa*) of Sufis which we call "The Faithful Ones of Love," who perpetuated the Mysteries of Regeneration through divine love in their own era. The name of this group of initiates is an embellishment of sorts for ceremonial purposes, but in all likelihood the actual Sufi Order referred to here is the *Ruzbihaniyya*, the disciples of Ruzbihan Baqli.

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7 Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips, *The Sword and the Serpent* (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1992), 361.

Baqli ranks among the greatest of Sufi mystics. Remarkably, Baqli composed a detailed journal of his extensive spiritual experiences titled *The Unveiling of Secrets.* Therein we learn that these profound mystical incidents occurred from a very young age. When he was a teenager, Corbin recounts that Ruzbihan had a vision of Khidr – the "Green One," who was identified with Hermes Trismegistus – in which he proffered the young man an apple, advising him to eat it all as he himself had done. Corbin identifies that the symbolism here is that Baqli must attain to the same initiatic status as Khidr himself and that,

> *Through this initiation, Ruzbehan reaches the 'khidr of his being.' There is an essential link between the concept of the personal spiritual master, the figure of Khidr and the concept of the Celestial Twin,* Spiritus Rector *(in Manicheism), 'the Witness in the Sky' mentioned by Najmoddin Kubra, the transcendent spiritual I, our I in 'the second person', the one alluded to in the famous sentence, 'He who knows himself knows his Lord'.*[8]

This interaction between subject and object in the context of mystical attainment has been much explored in Western Esotericism, perhaps most notably by Crowley and his adaptation of Buddhist and yogic concepts. And yet in the Sufism of Ruzbihan (and others) there is a beautifully explicated and thoroughly western presentation of these concepts. For if the mystic would witness God directly, it presupposes that there is both God and Not-God (or "the Other"). To the Sufis, the *tawhid* of Islam – the principle of the unity of God – contains a further esoteric aspect beyond mere monotheism: the divine oneness precludes the existence of the Other. There is no Not-God.

Ruzbihan characterizes this great realization as the "Test of the Veil," which can only be passed once the veil between subject and object is rent. The mystic

> *must realize that if he is the Witness of God, it is because he is the mirror, the eye through which God contemplates himself.*

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8 Henry Corbin, "The Jasmine of the Fedeli d'Amore: A Discourse on Ruzbehan Baqli of Shiraz," *Sphinx 3: A Journal of Archetypal Psychology and the Arts* (London: Convivium, 1990), 198-199.

> *Because God alone can know God, and only God can witness God, the Contemplating* (shahid) *becomes the Contemplated* (mashhud), *the lover becomes the beloved. … When the veil has become mirror, then the test is overcome.*[9]

The Ogdoadic Third Hall initiation, The Rite of Elevation, contains a literal presentation of this holy mysterium: the initiate is granted sight and the *velum celante* is parted revealing the *speculum veneris* – the mirror; but it is not his self which he beholds.[10]

For Ruzbihan, as for the Neoplatonists, the concepts of mortal beauty and human love represented in-roads to understanding the nature of divinity. In one of his visions, Baqli was told to seek God "in the mystical abode of love." He thus distinguished between Sufis who had never experienced human love, calling them ascetics, and those for which earthly love served as an entry point to the Divine, who he termed *'ashiqan'* or "faithful ones."

About 70 years after Ruzbihan's death and about three thousand miles away, Dante Alighieri was inducted into a different group of "faithful ones," the *Fedeli d'Amore*. This was a society of poets whose initiates were engaged in exploring the spirituality of love. The similarities between these poets and the Ruzbihaniyya (and other Sufis such as Rumi, who were likewise impassioned by the concept of divine love) are far from coincidental. Whether the transmission of ideas happened by means of the influence of the Troubadors and Minnesingers – who were certainly impacted by the love poetry of Islam – as they spread their romantic and chivalric utterance, or whether the *Fedeli d'Amore* did in fact carry an initiatory succession from Sufi orders, as some Dante scholars have argued[11], the society which Dante joined was a cult of the divine beloved as both veiled and manifested by human love.

The experience of Dante's induction to "the Faithful Ones of Love" (sometimes translated as "Love's Lieges") is chronicled in his *Vita Nuova*[12], a collection of sonnets interspersed with an autobiographical narrative. Just as Dante's admission to the group occurred following exchanges of poetry,

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9 Ibid., 208.

10 Cf. Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips, *The Foundations of High Magick* (Edison: Castle Books, 2000), 110.

11 See Luigi Valli, *La Chiave della Divina Commedia*, and René Guénon, *Insights into Christian Esoterism*.

12 Italian for "New Life," an important term in the Ogdoadic Tradition representing the regenerated life of the adept.

so did Guido Cavalcanti set forth much of the core philosophy of this group in his poem *Donne me prega*, or "A lady bids me." Cavalcanti makes it clear that to align oneself with Love is to possess a constant reminder of the essence of human nature, and to thereby have the faculties needed to rule one's own life:

> *Love's potency will often lead to death*
> *because it can obstruct the vital spirits*
> *working towards the opposite effect;*
> *not that Love is opposed to human nature,*
> *but who diverges from the perfect good*
> *can hardly claim he lives life well,*
> *he lacks authority to rule himself,*
> *like those who may forget that good.*[13]

Throughout the initiation cycle of the Ogdoadic Tradition, the Ruach, or rational consciousness, of the aspirant is gradually prepared to receive the influx of this highest spiritual Love from the Triune Neshamah. Only thus, with the attainment of the Angel and the descent of the Intuitive Mind – the Briatic Intelligence – can man proceed from a basis of true self-authority.

The initiatic lineage of the Ogdoadic Tradition holds that Marsilio Ficino was likewise an initiate of the *Fedeli d'Amore*. Even as Dante was introduced to this sect by Guido Cavalcanti in the thirteenth century, Ficino was initiated to its mysteries in the fifteenth century by Giovanni Cavalcanti. Denning and Phillips state that "Ficino's own words attest"[14] to this initiation, likely referring to the following dedication of Ficino's *De Amore* to Cavalcanti:

> *Marsilio Ficino to Giovanni Cavalcanti, his unique friend.*
> *Good luck! Since a long time, my sweetest Giovanni, had I learned from Orpheus that love existed and that he possessed the keys of the universe. Next, Plato had revealed to me the definition and the nature of this love. But that this god love possessed such power was concealed from me for thirty-four*

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13 Guido Cavalcanti, *Selected Poetry of Guido Cavalcanti: a critical English edition*, trans. Simon West (Leicester: Troubador, 2009), 51.

14 Denning and Phillips, *Foundations of High Magick*, xxxiii.

> *years. Then a hero* [Cavalcanti], *a man who was already divine, looked favorably upon me with his heavenly eyes, with a wonderful bending of his head towards me, he showed me the extent of love's power. Afterwards, therefore, I composed this book on love, assuming I had now been instructed to the full in matters of love. And since I wrote it in my own hand, I decided to dedicate it to you before all others, and so give back to you what belongs to you.*[15]

Wouter Hanegraaff and others have pointed to this and the many amatory letters from Ficino to Cavalcanti as evidence of Ficino's alleged homosexuality. Whether true or not, their relationship clearly transcended merely physical expression and was truly a spiritual initiation for Ficino.

De Amore was Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, comprising seven speeches expounding the nature of love, built upon the original speeches of Plato's characters. This is a work of exceptional depth and beauty, which is not possible to fully treat here. At its core, *De Amore* argues that love leads the Mind from a state of "ugliness" to a state of "beauty" (*Tiphareth*), and has the power to join the two. Though some Gnostics had made the leap from the ugliness of Matter to its evilness, the concepts arise from the same dichotomy: Matter is ugly, Spirit is beautiful. Love is the means by which Matter may be transmuted to Spirit.

Nine years before penning *De Amore*, Ficino was charged with the task of translating the *Corpus Hermeticum*. This effort was requested by Ficino's patron, Cosimo de Medici, and would lead to not only the revival of the Platonic Academy in Florence but also to the birth of its inner group of initiates, referred to in the Ogdoadic Tradition as the "Careggi Circle." These initiates, under the leadership of Ficino, would draw from the love-cult of the *Fedeli* but also from the rediscovered Hermetica to express their understanding of the soul's quest for regeneration, and in so doing regenerated society as no others have.

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15 Wouter Hanegraaff, "Under the Mantle of Love," *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 187.

Perfect Nature

Another text from which Ficino and the Careggi circle would draw inspiration is the *Gayat al-Hakim*, better known by its infamous title *Picatrix*. One particular passage in the Picatrix that would not have failed to capture Ficino's attention is as follows:

> *Socrates said that Perfect Nature is the Sun of the wise and its root is light. Certain people inquired of Hermes the sage, asking: 'With what are science and philosophy joined?' He answered, 'With Perfect Nature.' They asked again, saying, 'What is the root of science and philosophy?' He said, 'Perfect Nature.' Then they questioned him more closely: 'What is the key by which science and philosophy are opened?' He answered, 'Perfect Nature.' They then asked of him, 'What is Perfect Nature?' He answered, 'Perfect Nature is the spirit of the philosopher or sage linked to the planet that governs him.*[16] *This is that which opens the closed palaces of knowledge, and by which is understood that which cannot otherwise be understood at all, and from which workings proceed naturally both in sleep and in waking.'*[17]

The "closed palaces of knowledge" are the realm of the Atziluthic archetypes. They are inaccessible to man's normal modes of knowledge (the rational Ruach and the emotional-instinctual Nephesh, as well as the physical sensory inputs), and thus cannot be understood at all without a new faculty. This is the descent of the Intuitive Mind, at which point the Ruach of the individual is finally able to turn outward and progressively access knowledge of the true spiritual reality by the medium of his Angel.

The "sun of the wise" spoken of is the Spiritual Sun – the sun "behind" the earthly sun – which is so central to the Ogdoadic Tradition. The *Clavis Mystica*, a palindrome inscribed around an image of the sun in the Baptistery of San Giovanni reads: *En giro torte sol ciclos et rotor igne*, which Ogdoadic initiates translate as "The Spiritual Sun has turned the Ages in a Circle and is their Mover with Fire."

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16 Or, "united with his star."

17 John Michael Greer and Christopher Warnock, *The Picatrix* (Adocentyn Press, 2011), 153-154.

Picatrix also describes Hermes' encounter with his own Perfect Nature. Hermes entered a cavern whose impetuous winds extinguished his lamp. Perfect Nature appeared to him and guided him to place the flame under glass to shield it. Then he was told to dig in the center of the cave, where he would uncover a certain image. Removing the image would silence the winds, at which point he was instructed to dig in the four corners of the cave as well in order to uncover the knowledge of the mysteries of Creation.

Corbin points out that the very same account appears

> [in a text attributed to Appollonius of Tyana in which] *the ordeal of personal initiation consists of the efforts of the man of light,* Phos[18]*, before whom the Darkness of the primordial secret is transformed into a Night of light. It is in this effort toward the center, the* pole*, and 'the Darkness at the approach to the pole,' that the Guide of light, Perfect Nature, suddenly shows itself to him and tells him what to do to bring light into this Night: to dig for the Image which is the primordial revelation of the* Absconditum*. Having put his lamp under a glass, as prescribed by Perfect Nature, the initiate enters the subterranean chamber; he sees a Shaykh, who is Hermes and who is* his own image*, sitting on a throne and holding an* emerald tablet *... The identification of the man of light and his Guide of light is established by making Phos into the light-bearer,* φωσφόρος*, for it is both to him and through him that Perfect Nature, his guide, reveals that it is in itself the secret: the secret of the light of the inaccessible divine Night.*[19]

The winds represent the external circumstances of mundane life that would seemingly extinguish the flame. The lamp has to be nourished in a contained environment, which can be related to the magical personality as used in the Ogdoadic system: a constructed persona adopted for the purposes of ritual work which supplements the mundane personality. Thus shielded, the flame can shed light in the inmost cavern, leading to the revelation of the Image of the Hidden God (*Deus Absconditum*). The digging in the four corners represents the power of the magician over the elements of his lower

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18 "Phos" means both "man" and "light" in Greek.

19 Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism* (New Lebanon: Omega, 1994), 18.

nature which mandate is derived from his personal revelation of the Center: the pole, and the revelation of the Midnight Sun which is so central to Corbin's Sufism and the *Palingenesis* of the Ogdoadic Tradition. And again we see the theme of the Mirror and the identification of the initiate with the Other who is Not-Other.

The archetypal "man of light," Phos, appears also in the 3rd century writings of Zosimos of Panoplis. Here, Phos is the celestial archetype and counterpart of earthly man, "Adam," the man of flesh. Zosimos demonstrates that the letters A-D-A-M correspond to the four cardinal points (and thus the four elements): *Anatole* (E – Air), *Dusis* (West – Water), *Arktos* (North – Earth), *Mesembria* (South – Fire). We might also point out that the three letters of Phos (φώς) further point to his celestial correspondence in contrast to Adam, specifically by relation to the Triune Superstructure of the House of Sacrifice – a key symbol in the Ogdoadic Tradition.

Zosimos tells of how Phos was deceived by the archons (the representatives of planetary force) into donning the clothes of flesh and thus becoming subject to the Fate of the Stars and manifesting as Adam. Zosimos would have been familiar with the teachings of the Chaldaeans on this topic as well, which not only described the descent of archetypal man into earthly form but also charted a course of return.

Anagoge & Aion

In his masterful exegesis of the Chaldaean Oracles, Lewy writes,

> *The Chaldaeans held that when the human soul enters the body she is no longer in the pure original state in which she was created. In the course of her descent from the supramundane region, when she traverses the zones of the ether, of the sun, of the moon and of the air, she is clothed with portions of these four substances. She enters the human body provided with these 'raiments'; they are the 'vehicle of the soul'.*[20]

Just like Zosimos' tale of Phos, the man of light, the Chaldaeans saw the descent of man through the spheres as a process of enrobing – of bringing into manifestation. Therefore, the soul must likewise ascend through

20 Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 182-183.

these same realms, disrobing, in order to attain to the Divine Source. And indeed, the chief ritual practice of the Chaldaeans was known as *anagoge* (ἀναγωγή), meaning "ascent," the goal of which was nothing less than the immortalization of one's soul.

This rite is in some sense comparable to the practice of "Rising on the Planes" as employed in the Third Hall mysteries of the Ogdoadic Tradition. Therein the adept must similarly rise through the key gate-sephiroth that leads from World to World until the gate of Tiphareth in Briah is truly opened. There, at the apogee of the full form of the rite, he may aspire to dialogue with the Intuitive Mind in the ambiance of the Briatic light.

In the Chaldaean Oracles, it is this solar/Briatic light which in fact provides the impetus for the initiate's ascent. Lewy notes that "the solar ray, which draws the soul upwards, brings about its union with the ruler of the cosmic harmony, the splendor of which is praised by it."[21] This is the solar fire which was spoken of, in the palindromic *Clavis Mystica*, with which the Spiritual Sun turns the Ages.

This solar force in the Ogdoadic Tradition is that of the winged serpent, Knouphis-Agathodaimon. This figure is related to Phanes in the Orphic traditions, and to Aion in the Mithraic and Chaldaean mysteries:

> [Several passages in the extant Chaldaean Oracles] *describe the soul's ascent 'towards the light and the rays of the Father', Whose fire descends and 'enkindles' the soul of the initiate: 'The mortal who approaches the fire will obtain light from God'. 'The illuminated souls repose in God, inhaling the potent fires which descend from the Father'. Thus, the illuminating fire descends from the 'Father' towards 'God', so that the initiate 'obtains light' not from the Supreme Being himself, but from 'God', that is to say, from a subordinate potency. The Chaldaeans (as well as the Oracle of Apollo) distinguish between the inaccessible 'Father' and the fiery Aion, whom they designate elsewhere as the 'Father-begotten Light'. This Aion must accordingly be considered as the transmitter of the mystic fire.*[22]

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21 Ibid., 200.

22 Ibid., 20-21.

The highly syncretic nature of Aion in several traditions points to its efficacy as a god-form and vehicle of gnosis. Two such presentations of Aion are worth highlighting here.

Quoting a pseudo-Neoplatonic text, Joannes Lydus states that the Dioscuri (the Gemini twins, Castor and Pollux) were in fact Aion and Physis ("nature"): Aion was immortal and Physis was mortal.[23] This readily brings to mind the recurring motif of the Celestial Other that we have been considering: the immortal Aion can be seen as the celestial man, the firstborn (*protogenos*, an epithet of Phanes, another god-form closely allied with Agathodaimon), and Physis as the earthly man, whose redemption by return to and identification with his celestial counterpart is truly the alchemical perfection of "nature." Notably, Aion is also frequently portrayed with the Earth goddess Tellus, signifying the same dichotomy between spirit and matter.

Secondly, Aion became an object of personal worship in the city of Alexandria. In his *Panarion*, Epiphanius recounts the great festival of January 5th and 6th – likely the date of the winter solstice in the unified Theban calendar – which took place in the great temple called the Koreion. After an all-night vigil, the faithful entered a subterranean cavern at dawn, bearing torches. They returned with a wooden effigy marked with five crosses (the forehead, the hands, and the feet). The worshippers carried the effigy around the temple seven times, hymning and rejoicing, before returning it to the cavern. Epiphanius tells us that this rite celebrated the birth of Aion to the virgin maiden (Kore).[24]

We also learn from Pseudo-Callisthenes the legend that Aion Plutonius was the patron deity of the city of Alexandria and was identified with Agathos Daimon. This is echoed in the Greek Magical Papyri:

> *'Come to me, you from the four winds, god, ruler of all, who have breathed spirits into men for life, master of the good things in the world. Hear me, lord, whose hidden name is ineffable.... Heaven is your head; ether, body; earth, feet; and the water around you, ocean, O Agathos Daimon. You are lord, the begetter and nourisher and increaser of all.*

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23 Arthur Darby Nock, "A Vision of Mandulis Aion," *Harvard Theological Review 27* (1934), 87.

24 Ibid., 91.

> *'Who molded the forms of the beasts [of the Zodiac]? Who found [their] routes? ... What Aion nourishing an Aion rules the Aions? One deathless god. You are the begetter of all and assign souls to all and control all, king of the Aions and lord...'*[25]

A number of interesting associations are present in this invocation from the Greek Magical Papyri. Agathodaimon is identified with Aion, of course, but also as ruler of the four winds (and by extension, the elements and directions) and the zodiac. The celestial body of Aion/Agathodaimon is composed of four regions or materials very similar to those through which the soul descends in Chaldaean lore, though clearly the god is not bound by these materials as earthly man is, but permeates them in a panentheistic fashion.

The Alexandrian ceremony in the Koreion also contains elements of death and rebirth: of the descent into the underworld and ascent so key to the myth of Kore/Persephone. These components are also critical in the Chaldaean system. Proclus says that the Chaldaeans "separate the soul from the body preserving the latter from dissolution, while they confer upon the soul the power to be delivered from the body and to cast off the bonds of nature."[26] In other words, the soul can transcend "nature" (physis – as typified by the four elements) and thereby triumph over death, becoming immortalized by participating in separation from the body before death. This is the Sufi interpretation of the Prophet's words, "Die before dying." This is the Palingenesis, a ritual participation in "death" and a return to the light. This is the removal of the garments of worldly existence, which brings the adept to the threshold of attainment. But in the Ogdoadic system, the Palingenesis does not of itself bring the adept to this fulfillment. To remove the garments and reassume them is a vital exercise of his new and developing selfhood, but it is not enough to bring the Beloved to the threshold of consciousness – as Ishtar of Tammuz. Interestingly the corresponding Sumerian myth of Inanna required that, in order to rescue Dumuzi, she leave someone in his place. What is needed is a container with which the adept can return, bearing the Olympian fire.

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25 Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago, 1996), 162-163. (PGM XII. 235-250).

26 Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 187.

Then, when the Voice of Light finally does reveal itself and speaks its Name to the adept, he finds himself at the pinnacle of his theurgic ascent, embraced in the arms of his Beloved. This marks the beginning of a lifetime of progressive revelations of spiritual reality from the newfound Intuitive Mind: the identification of the True Will, and the ability to achieve it.

This concept of the Name, which is the adept's true word of power, also has a fascinating parallel in the mysteries of Chaldaean theurgy. One fragment of an Oracle appearing in Psellus echoes this:

> *The Paternal Intellect does not receive [the soul's] volition, until she have issued forth out of forgetfulness and have spoken the word, having taken in the remembrance of the paternal holy watch-word.*[27]

Lewy's commentary on this Oracle is a sublime elaboration in keeping with the Ogdoadic considerations we have given:

> *The realization of the soul's wish to return to the place from which she was sent down by the Paternal Intellect is only possible, when she has remembered the magical 'watchword' forgotten by her at the moment of entering the body. This* 'synthema' *which being uttered disposes the Supreme Intellect in favor of the soul's wish is identical with one of the 'symbols' (i.e. the* voces mysticae*) which this Intellect, according to another Oracle, 'has sown throughout the world' and which are assimilated to the 'ineffable beauty' of the Ideas. The metaphysical terms used in this Oracle fail to mask a fundamental doctrine of Chaldaean theurgy: the magical formulae by means of which the theurgist brings about the 'unification' with the deity are identical with the thoughts of the Supreme Father disseminated by Him throughout the world with the intention of preserving its harmonious existence.*[28]

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27 Ibid., 190.
28 Ibid.

The Gnostic

In tracing these themes through the milieu of Gnosticism we find two ritual and initiatory experiences which especially inform the Ogdoadic Tradition's conception of the Holy Guardian Angel: the baptismal rite of the Sethians, and the bridal chamber of the Valentinians.

The Gnostic text known as the *Trimorphic Protennoia* describes the Sethian rite of baptism as fivefold, which can be demonstrated to relate to the fivefold pattern of the House of Sacrifice in the Ogdoadic system:

1 Enrobing (*Pneuma*): "And I delivered him to those who give robes… and they covered him with a robe from the robes of light…"

2 Baptizing (*Sarx*): "… and I delivered him to the Baptists and they baptized him in the spring of the water of life."

3 Enthroning (*Dike*): "And I delivered him to those who enthrone … and they enthroned him from the throne of glory."

4 Glorifying (*Eleos*): "And I delivered him to those who glorify… and they glorified him with the glory of the Fatherhood."

5 Snatching away, i.e., ascent to heaven (*Kudos*): "And those who snatch away snatched away, the servants of the great holy luminaries and they took him into the light of his Fatherhood. And he received the five seals from the light of the Mother."[29]

The baptism of the Sethians is not merely a physical immersion in water, but rather the bathing of the soul in the "living water," the light of *Barbelo* or the divine feminine. In the *Apocryphon of John*, Jesus says "Now this father is the One who beholds himself in the light surrounding him, which is the spring of living water, and provides all the realms. He reflects on his image everywhere… The father's thought became a reality and she who appeared in the presence of the father in shining light came forth."[30]

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29 Darren Iammarino, "Similarities Between Sethian Baptism and the Bridal Chamber of Thomas Gnosticism and Valentinianism," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies 1*, no. 1 (2009), 28.

30 Ibid., 29.

As with the Chaldaeans, the ritual ascent represents a critical practice for the Sethian Gnostic and the concluding phase of his baptism. In this "snatching away," the Gnostic achieves union with the divine as he assumes his true celestial identity:

> *After receiving their own personal revelation from the first human (his or her archetypal form), the Gnostic who makes it this far in ecstatic ascent will literally attain a degree of foreknowledge. This foreknowledge comes because he knows his destiny after death, which is to return to the One. Also, he will be incorruptible, know the truth and have life eternal, in which he shall abide in the Good and contemplate the Good.*[31]

Again we have the triumph over death; the completion of the cycle of matter by perfection (sublimation) of it, resulting from the soul's unity with its celestial twin. This theme runs throughout the Gnostic literature of Valentinus and Thomas. Jesus completes his description of the baptism in the *Apocryphon of John*, stating "that the Gnostic will be raised up and sealed in luminous water with five seals, 'that death might not prevail over the person from that moment on.'"[32]

The Gospel of Thomas propounds this same teaching:

> *Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being... For there are five trees for you in paradise which remain undisturbed summer and winter and whose leaves do not fall. Whoever becomes acquainted with them will not experience death.*[33]

In his excellent essay, *Sethian Baptism* , Iammarino connects these five trees with the five seals of the baptismal rite. Further, from the Ogdoadic perspective we can likewise relate them to the House of Sacrifice. There is also an interesting potential relationship between the Qabalistic doctrine of the Five Worlds which has been mostly untouched by Hermetic Qabalists; this is simply the "traditional" Four Worlds plus the primordial Fifth

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31 Ibid., 30.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.

World of Adam Kadmon, the celestial Adam. The five trees appear in another Gnostic text known simply as the "Untitled Apocalypse" contained within the *Codex Brucianus*:

> *...there are Five Trees, and in the midst of them an altar. An Alone-begotten Word stands upon the altar, having the twelve countenances of the Mind of all things, and before him are the prayers of all beings placed. The Universe rejoices over him because he has manifested himself. He it is that the Invisible World has struggled to know, and it is on his account that the Man has appeared.*[34]

Iammarino, having established the form and function of the baptism itself, next traces the connection between this much earlier Gnostic rite and the spiritual marriage of the "bridal chamber" in the Gospel of Thomas and Valentinian tradition. This brings us full circle to the cult of love and of the Beloved previously discussed. In contrast to the *Fedeli d'amore*, however, the Gnostics had a rather technical and alchemical view of exactly the type of love under consideration. For instance, one of the most popular verses from the Gospel of Thomas reads, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside ... when you make the male and the female one and the same ... then will you enter the kingdom."[35]

Indeed, the distinction between the Sethian baptism and the Valentinian bridal chamber seems very closely related to that which we have traced between the Palingenesis (the Third Hall initiation) and the Knowledge and Conversation:

> *Baptism is the holy building. Redemption is the holy of the holy. The holy of the holies is the bridal chamber. Baptism includes resurrection and redemption. Redemption happens in the bridal chamber, but the bridal chamber is part of something superior to it and the others because you will find nothing like it.*[36]

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34 F. Lamplugh (transl.), *The Gnosis of the Light: A Translation of the Untitled Apocalypse Contained in the Codex Brucianus* (Berwick: Ibis, 2006), 28.

35 *Gospel of Thomas*, logia 22.

36 Iammarino, *Sethian Baptism*, 36.

Another Gnostic text, the Hymn of the Pearl, provides a beautiful presentation of these mysteries that unifies the rites of baptism and the bridal chamber into one allegory of attainment. In the Hymn, a prince finds himself lost in Egypt when he hears a call from the divine feminine (Barbelo – symbolic of the Triune Neshamah) who says, "Remember that you are a child of kings."

Next the Prince strips off his robe and ascends through the spheres. From this exalted view he sees his robe again:

> *When suddenly I saw my garment reflected as in a mirror, I perceived it in my whole self as well, and through it I recognized and saw myself. For though we were derived from one and the same we were partially divided; and then again we were one, with a single form.*[37]

The Prince then again dons his robe and is taken to "the realm of peace which belongs to reverential awe."[38] Finally he is taken into the celestial palace, where he prostrates himself before his father and king.

The Ritual Formula of the Gnostic

To conclude our brief survey of the Angel in the Ogdoadic Tradition we append a rite intended to aid the Minor Adept in his quest. This rite is derived from the formula of "The Gnostic" as outlined in *Mysteria Magica*. As with all of the ritual formulae of the House of Sacrifice, each magician is expected to design their own workings around the provided skeletal structures. The present rite is distilled from one of the author's own elaborations of "The Gnostic."

It should be emphasized that this material is traditionally intended for Third Hall initiates, and even then the formulae should be worked out by each individual Adept in accordance with his own understanding of his Work. This specific iteration of one magician's formula is here presented to demonstrate the potential for dynamic synthesis of the foregoing threads within the context of the Ogdoadic system as well as to suggest a mode of working which may be adapted to other magical systems.

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37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 38.

Preliminaries

Magician: Basic robe; Topaz Lamen (the symbolic jewel of the Adeptus Minor, bestowed in the Rite of Palingenesis).

Bomos (altar): East of center. White drape.

Equipment: Mystical Tessera (a talismanic focal-point for the Inner Plane powers of the Ogdoadic Tradition: a square tile of wood upon which are interlaced a white square and a red lozenge, symbolizing the Great Work); Great Wand (the chief invocatory weapon of the Ogdoadic Tradition, symbolizing the powers of the Supernal Father: an arm-length wooden shaft surmounted by a golden spear-head); Grail, with Rose of Concealment (symbolic of the Supernal Mother: a silver chalice with gilded interior, covered by the Rose – a linen cloth emblazoned with the *Rosa Nigra*); Coronal (wreath) of flowers/foliage.

Incense: Cinnamon and frankincense.

I. Pneuma (Breath)

Perform the Setting of the Wards of Power.[39]

Perform the 2nd Formula of the Clavis Rei Primae.[40]

Make invocation of the Highest Spirit by intoning the Triple Trisagion[41]:

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39 The principle opening rite used in the Ogdoadic Tradition. Complete instructions for this and other rituals are given in Issue 5 of *The Ogdoadic Journal,* in *Mysteria Magica* by Denning and Phillips, or at www.adocentyn.net.

40 A formula for energizing the magician. See previous note (39).

41 *Corpus Hermeticum* I:86-96. Translation as given in Phillips' *Aurum Solis: Initiation Ceremonies...*, 124-125.

ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς, οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται
ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι
βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται
τοῖς ἰδίοις.

ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος
τὰ ὄντα.
ἅγιος εἶ, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφυ.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὃν ἡ φύσις οὐκ
ἐμόρφωσεν.

ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως
ἰσχυρότερος.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ κρειττων τῶν ἐπαίνων.

δέξαι λογικὰς θυσίας ἁγνὰς
ἀπὸ ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας,
πρός σὲ ἀνατεταμένης,
ἀνεκλάλητε,
ἄρρητε, σιωπῇ φωνούμενε.

O thou the holy God, Father of the All, self-completed in wisdom!
O thou the holy God who willest to be known and who by the devoted art known!

Holy art thou who by giving voice hast established the existent beings.
Holy art thou from whom all nature took form.
Holy art thou to whom nature gave not form.

Holy art thou who art mightier than all might.
Holy art thou who dost transcend all transcendence.
Holy art thou who art exalted beyond all exaltation.

Accept thou the sacrifices of pure utterance coming directly from the heart and soul which are centered upon thee:
O thou surpassing words!
O thou surpassing all expression!
O thou who art invoked by a cry which is silence!

Move to East of Bomos, and face East.

Perform again the 2nd Formula of the Clavis Rei Primae.

Invoke the male and female aspects of the "Constellation of the Worshipped" – the principle god-forms of the Ogdoadic Tradition:

Visualize Leukothea, the White Goddess:

> *She appears as a gentle and dignified woman, with high forehead and cheekbones, clad in an Ancient Greek peplos-robe of shimmering white, part of which veils her hair. Upon the veil rests a silver circlet with a single cabochon of beryl.*

> *Her right hand grasps the sacred Double Axe just beneath the silver blades, upon its shaft of dark wood. Her right wrist bears a bracelet of gold with transverse rectangles of multi-colored stones. Upon her raised left palm is a common gull with wings spread.*

Once the image is established, magically charge it by intoning:

ἡ πέλεια καὶ ἡ ὑγρά The Dove and the Waters

Now visualize Melanotheos, the Black God:

> *He appears as a muscular indigo-skinned man, youthful and dancing wildly. He is naked except for a long silver cloth draped from his upper left arm which flows about him as he moves. His long dark hair is enwoven with flowers and blossoms of varied colors, while upon the top of his head appears a silver crescent of light.*

Once the image is established, charge it by vibrating:

ὁ ὄφις καὶ τό ᾠον The Serpent and the Egg

Turning deosil, face West across the Bomos and recite the following lines which tell of the Mystery of Union[42]:

> Make haste to open the House, Milady! Make haste to open the house!
>
> The pure one, the Mother, hearing her, went, and said:
> Verily you are his spouse, he is your spouse,
> Verily you are for him; Verily he is for you.
>
> Make haste to open the House, Milady! Make haste to open the house!

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42 Derived from "Dumuzi's Wedding," an ancient Sumerian poem translated in Thorkild Jacobsen, *The harps that once...* (New Haven: Yale, 1987).

And the Lady at her mother's bidding bathed in water, anointed herself with sweet oil, decided to put on for outer garment the grand queenly robe; She took also her amulets, and straightened the stones of lapis lazuli on her neck, and held her seal in her hand. The lady stood waiting – The Lord opened the door, and like a moonbeam she came forth to him out of the house. He looked at her, rejoiced in her, took her in his arms and kissed her.

The lord came to his Master, saying:
O my master, I have come home
O my master, accompanied by my bride
May she duly bear forth my son
O my master, I shall go into her house.

And the Lord sayeth O my bride,
To the chapel of my personal god I have brought you.
To the chapel of my personal god,
You will sleep before my personal god, and on the seat of honor of my personal god, my bride, you will sit!

And then The Lord she embraced
And the Lady, who hath pure splendor, glowed as the morning Star on heaven,
She glowed as the morning Star on heaven.

II. Sarx (Body)

Move to the center, face East across the Bomos.

Perform the *Accessio Lucis*: raise your thoughts in aspiration to HA – the All-Highest deity – and feel yourself growing huge in size; formulate the *Corona Flammae* (the crown chakra above the head) in full realization that this center is one's undying connection with the Divine – with HA. See the Corona grow in effulgence until the operator is suffused with Divine Light.

Withdraw from the visualization and re-focus on the magical personality.

Place the left hand upon the Topaz Lamen and the right hand on the Tessera. After a pause, raise the right hand to cover the left and leave it there while uttering:

> The Mysteries of the All-Highest gave a Time, and behold,
> I am provided for that Time: for I am *(make a proclamation of one's magical name and basis of authority)*.[43]

III. Dike (Justice)

Perform the Calyx.[44]

Make invocation of Leukothea as the Mother of All: [45]

Consistit Columna in barathris,	Established is the Column in the
Unde res occultae donec prima ultima	depths, whence secrets shall not be
fiet non ostenderentur.	shown forth until the first becomes
Sedem regiam qui ibi tenet ubi	the last. Who here holds the royal seat
pendent inter ramos stellae?	where stars hang amid the branches?
Silentes eae gressus omnia invisae	She is not seen, but all things adorn
decorant.	her silent steps.
Ibi asylum, ibi umbrifera nox.	Here is sanctuary, here is shadowy
Ut in silvis immortalibus ibi	night. As in immortal forests, here
innumera folia.	are numberless leaves.
Ibi numen: ibi mortalitatis nihil	Here is divine presence: that which is
unquam intus incolet.	mortal shall never dwell within.
Unus autem intus manit:	But One is within:
Exornans Matrem Flamma.	Adorning the Mother is a Flame.

Raise the right hand in salutation to the East, then turn deosil and proceed to the Western limit of the circle. Kneel, facing East.

Meditate in silence upon the power, beauty, and glory of the Great Mother.

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43 The traditional formula of the magician's authority and identification used in the ritual formulae of the House of Sacrifice (see *Mysteria Magica*). The text itself is derived from the records of Dee & Kelly's "Spirit Actions."

44 See previous note 39.

45 Denning and Phillips, The Robe and the Ring (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1974), 10-12. This hymn concerns the "Arbor Crystallina" or "Tree of Crystal," and is based on the ancient Akkadian Cuneiform Texts 16, 46, which begins: "In Eridu a stalk grew over-shadowing... Its root was of white crystal which stretched toward the deep..."

Arise and move again to stand before the Bomos, facing East. Raise arms in the gesture "Psi," (Ψ) willing your own receptivity to the Powers of Light.

Take up the coronal of flowers with both hands, intoning:[46]

ἐγὼ εἰμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονὸς καὶ ὂν καὶ ἐσόμενον	I am all that has been, that is, and that will be.
καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν πέπλον οὐδεὶς πω θνητὸς ἀπεκάλυψεν	No mortal hath yet lifted the veil which covereth me.

Place the coronal upon your head.

IV. Eleos (Mercy)

Perform the 2nd Formula of Clavis Rei Primae.

Intone:[47]

οὐρανός τε γαῖα τ' ἦν μορφὴ μία	Heaven and Earth were one form
ἡ πέλεια καὶ ἡ ὑγρά	The Dove and the Waters
ὁ ὄφις καὶ τό ᾠον	The Serpent and the Egg

Remove the Rose of Concealment from the Grail in silence.

Take the Great Wand in the left hand, the Grail in the right, and raise both on high, proclaiming:

γαῖα καὶ ὁ ἰχὼρ του οὐρανοῦ	Earth and the Blood of Heaven

Conjoin the Wand and the Grail, vibrating:[48]

ὕε – κύῃ	Rain – Conceive!

Replace the implements upon the Bomos.

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46 The inscription at the Temple of Sais, as recorded by Plutarch in *De Iside et Osiride*.
47 Euripides, fragment (TGF 511).
48 The culminating cry of the Eleusinian mysteries: the Dew of Heaven fertilizing the Womb of Earth.

Replace the Rose of Concealment in silence.

IV. Kudos (Glory)

Eulogize the Constellation of the Worshipped[49]:

ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε τόν ἐν τῷ ἀοράτῳ σκότει καθήμενον καὶ ἄνα μεσῶν ὄντα τῶν μεγάλων θεῶν δύνοντα καὶ παραλαμβάνοντα τᾶς ἠλιακάς	I invoke thee who art seated in the invisible darkness and who art in the midst of the great gods sinking and receiving the sun's rays

Trace the letter Psi (Ψ): first the "bowl" from left to right in silence. Then aspirate the name "HA" on the downstroke.

καὶ ἄνα πέμποντα τήν φαεσφόρον θέαν Λευκοθέα	and sending forth the light-bringing goddess Leukothea,

Trace a horizontal line in the air before you, from left to right, as you intone Leukothea's name.

θεον μέγαν Μελανοθεός	the great god Melanotheos,

Trace a vertical line from top to bottom as you vibrate "Melanotheos."[50]

αὐτή γάρ εστιν ἡ παρθένος ἡ ἐν γαστρί όχοῦσα καὶ συλλαμβάνουσα καὶ τίκτουσα υἱόν, οὗ ψυχικόν, οὗ σωματικόν, ἄλλα μακάριον αἰῶνα αἰώνων	For this is the virgin, who bears in her womb, conceives, and gives birth to a son, who is neither of the soul nor the body, but is the blessed Aeon of Aeons.
Ἀγαθοδαίμων	Agathodaimon

Trace the circle around the equal-armed cross, from top going clockwise, as you intone "Agathodaimon."

Turn deosil to face West. Visualize yourself growing cosmically vast.

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49 Adapted from the Leyden Papyrus, Col. IV: 10-19.

50 Hippolytus, *Elenchos*, V, 8, 41ff. Quoted in Hans Leisegang, "The Mystery of the Serpent," *The Mysteries: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks* (Princeton, 1990), 237.

Formulate the ophiomorphic god-form of the Agathodaimon:

> *A large serpent with iridescent white scales arises from a coil behind the magician. The serpent has yellow eyes with black pupils, and his head extends in a horizontal position just above the magician's, darting forth twelve rays of brilliant golden light. The great aquiline wings are of vibrant green plumage, with golden feather-tips. The wings come forward from the serpent and are folded across the magician's body.*

Vibrate with all the intensity of your being:

KNOUPHIS-AGATHODAIMON

Maintaining the visualizations, become aware of waves of rainbow fire flashing all about and caressing you. Build this visualization in intensity until it replaces the serpent god-form.

Inhale and exhale the rainbow fire, communing thereby with Knouphis, the Guardian of the Cosmos. Continue until a state of mystical *ekstasis* is reached, which may be accompanied by visions of splendor.

When normal consciousness returns, re-center on the magical personality.

Turn deosil to face East. Perform the Calyx.

Conclude by reciting the Hymnodia Krypte[51]:

αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν ἐμοί,
ὑμνεῖτε τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ πᾶν·
συνᾴσατε τῷ θελήματί μου
πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις.

γνῶσις ἁγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ,
διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν φῶς ὑμνῶν
χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ.
πᾶσαι δυνάμεις ὑμνεῖτε σὺν ἐμοί.

O Powers within me,
hymn the One and All:
chant in harmony with my will,
all ye Powers within me!

Holy Gnosis, illumined by thee,
through thee I hymn the light of
thought, I rejoice in the joy of the
mind. All ye Powers, chant with me!

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51 *Corpus Hermeticum* XIII: 18; translation from Denning and Phillips, *Mysteria Magica*, 267.

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Knowledge and Conversation of The Holy Guardian Angel

One Thelemite's Perspective

Kevin Abblett

The subject of this paper is the attainment of Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel from a Thelemite's perspective. This being the case, I think it appropriate to offer a few words of background for myself and how I came to identify as a Thelemite. I first came to Thelema in 1997, at the age of 17. Still in high school I had become exposed to the writings of Aleister Crowley and the esoteric heritage that had birthed him; I fell in Love with his writings, particularly with *The Book of the Law* and the story of its reception. Since that time I have lived every day as a Thelemite, taking *The Book of the Law* and the writings of "The Beast," i.e. Crowley, as the cornerstone of my spiritual path. Crowley himself was a student of the 19th century Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and his own magickal writings and system are derived from the spiritual and initiatic heritage of that Order. Though I am loath to offer an explanation of just what Thelema is for anyone else, I can say that it is relatively new religio-magickal movement of the 20th century that follows in the footprints of many of the greatest religious movements of the past in that it is centered upon a Word, or rather a

particular text, *The Book of the Law*. This book, properly called *Liber Al vel Legis sub figura 220*, comes equipped with its own prophet, Crowley, who in 1904 heard the call of his own Angel and through him revealed this new religio-magickal system.

Crowley relates in his *Equinox of the Gods*, also available in his magickal opus *Book 4*: part 4, the entire process of the reception of *The Book of the Law*. To summarize some of the key aspects of the story, Crowley was a young, cocky, and headstrong member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and he was on his honeymoon in Cairo with his new bride Rose Kelly. On a visit to the great pyramid at Giza, within the King's Chamber, Crowley performed a rather simple magickal operation which resulted in Rose spastically reporting that some type of occult intelligence was trying to get ahold of him, something about "the child..." she'd said. As Crowley relates it, he did not at first trust these voices coming through his new bride; she being almost completely ignorant of the processes of magic or any other occult science, this behavior was beyond uncharacteristic for her. But after his initial hesitations and the unwavering persistence on the part of Rose, Crowley was able to ascertain to his own satisfaction the authenticity of her claims; he thus set about constructing the proper conditions for these voices to manifest.

For anyone remotely familiar with magickal consciousness, the fact that Crowley sought to engage this behavior on the part of his wife should not be at all surprising. His training in the Golden Dawn would have completely prepared him for the methods whereby to not only experience, but also to test the voracity of the message being communicated. Following a rigorous series of tests, Crowley set about a ritual to bring about communion with Ra-Hoor-Khuit, the god Rose identified as the source of the revelation. From this magickal operation Crowley received instructions for engaging in what would become for the Thelemites of my generation our "High Holy Days," April 8th, 9th and 10th. Over the course of these three days, in the hours of exactly Noon to 1 p.m., Crowley in a secluded room of their flat dictated the words that he heard spoken to him from an un-known, discarnate voice identifying itself as Aiwass, "The minister of Hoor-par-Kraat," a figure whom Crowley would eventually come to identify with his own HGA. The result of this revelation is what we today call the Three-fold Book of the Law.

Now, this book presents itself as a revelation of three of the principle gods of ancient Egypt, the sky-goddess Nuit, the winged disk Hadit, and

Ra-Hoor-Khuit, himself comprising a dual nature of Ra-Hoor and Hoor-Par-Kraat, or Harpocrates. The book is divided into three chapters, each revealing the nature and worship of its respective god. The book was initially received with no punctuation and is later edited by Crowley who, following instructions contained within the text itself, added punctuation, pagination and versification as well as inserting certain initially misheard passages, or passages directed by his Angel for later insertion. The text delivers in its pages a number of mysteries both mundane and sublime each to be experienced for the individuals themselves, or to be studied in the writings of the Beast, Crowley who wrote a number of commentaries thereon, and whose magickal philosophy and spiritual heritage are all traced back to this central revelation. It is stated at the end of the work, "The study of this Book is forbidden. It is wise to destroy this copy after the first reading. Whosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril. These are most dire. Those who discuss the contents of this Book are to be shunned by all, as centres of pestilence. All questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself. There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt." I have always found it interesting that this passage ends with the quote, "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt." a phrase which seems on its surface to stand against the charge just given, doubly interesting when one considers that in the writings of Crowley himself, we are continuously instructed to study the book and its mysteries rigorously and repeatedly.

Within its pages, *Liber Al* is provided with an internal cosmology, Triune in its fundamentals wherein the goddess Nuit, "Infinite Space and the Infinite stars thereof" is locked in an eternal love dance with her consort Hadit, "The flame that burns in the heart of every man and in the core of every star..." The union of these two results in their child, the dual natured Ra-Hoor-Khuit: Harpocrates, the Babe in the Egg of Blue, traveling along the Nile, continually besought by the crocodile Sebek and Ra-Horakty, or Ra, the Sun in his glory as the Warrior Lord enthroned in his war-chariot. Through the writings of the Prophet the revelation of these three gods and their relationship to their Universal counterparts are related, as well as their relationship to the Microcosm, the psycho-spiritual composition of Man.

One of the most prominent passages in the corpus of Thelema derived directly from *The Book of the Law* is "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." This eleven-word phrase sits at the very heart of Thelema and that of its adherents alongside that of "Love is the law, love under Will." These

two phrases comprise in their simplicity the entirety of the Great Work of the adept and bring us finally back around to the subject of Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. In the past this phrase, "Do what thou wilt," has been the subject of a number of spurious translations, often used to illustrate the more libertine and controversial aspects of Crowley's personality. In the writings of the Beast himself however, quite the opposite is indicated; "Do what thou wilt" becomes the battle-cry and the great challenge of the adept who is tasked with submitting his earthly or mundane Will, with that of his higher self, or HGA.

As I am sure that many of you are by now aware, this Holy Guardian Angel is not an invention of Crowley's. In fact this Angel has a very old pedigree, originating as it did in the grimoire *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. The text of Abramelin dates back at least to the 17th and possibly as far back as the 14th century and provides a system designed to bring its practitioner into contact and union with a figure identified as the Holy Guardian Angel. The work's protagonist begins a magical retirement of either 6 or 18 months, depending on the translation, comprising an enduring stream of diligent prayers, adorations, purifications and consecrations, the culmination of which finds him delivered into the arms of his Angel. This act is the crux of the text, though the material is full of additional magical gifts given at the moment of spiritual climax, the most important of which is that the mage is given dominion over the denizens of Hell, or the lower world: the power to both summon them and to bind them to his newly integrated Will. Crowley, who joined the Golden Dawn in 1899, attempted this operation himself early in his magickal career, trying the formal Abramelin working first in 1901 prior to his break with the Golden Dawn and long prior to the founding of his own magickal order, the A.A., *Astrum Argentum* or *Silver Star*. Crowley's personal experience of Knowledge and Conversation, and the method by which he achieved it, can be studied in his Liber Samekh, a ritual built upon the basis of Abramelin, but edited to be in sympathy with the new Aeon revelation of *Liber Al*, and to be more easily adapted to the hustle-and-bustle life of the modern magician. It can be studied as well as in his diaries, published in his magickal journal *The Equinox* as John st. John and detailing his own magickal retirement towards this aim. These works and a majority of other writings of Crowley's are now available in numerous online forums. The attainment of Knowledge and Conversation would become for Crowley the central goal and one aim of all aspiring Adepts,

the first mystical checkpoint within his magickal system and the culmination of all of the preliminary magickal training that one undergoes through his works.

As we have stated, Knowledge and Conversation is one of, if not THE principle aim of the life of the adept. The phenomena of the Angel being unique to these late mystery schools, some understanding of just what is meant by the term is now in order. For Crowley, the HGA represents the creative source at the center of each of our individual beings. Reflected above, the celestial source of our Angel is derived from the creative light of the Sun in all of its radiant glory. In the cosmology delivered by *The Book of the Law*, Ra-Hoor-Khuit represents the sun its full strength as the source of Light and Life of all things existing on our planet; in the animal kingdom this creative principle is represented by the generative impulse in mankind, the phallus, the source of Love and Liberty within each of us and our world. Now, the common understanding of the word Phallus is the male generative organs; however, the phallus is representative not of the penis itself, and particularly not of the flaccid penis, but rather the fully ERECT penis, or likewise the clitoris of the female: the engorged experience of arousal itself and the passionate impulse that lies behind generation. Aligning oneself with the source of this impulse is one of the great mysteries of initiation and is drawn back to again and again in Crowley's writings. Israel Regardie himself once said, quoting the Beast: "From the realization that god is a symbol for the sex drive it's a small step then, that the sex drive is actually god."

Now, in Crowley's writings the nature of the HGA has changed from what it was in the old Aeon, or Age. In the old ways of thinking, as exemplified by the Golden Dawn, the HGA, or Heirophant is identified as Osiris, "Asar-un-nefer" or "myself made perfect," through the process of death and re-birth. This formula as we are continually reminded in the written literature has been overthrown by the new Aeon of Horus, wherein the true nature of the Sun is realized, and though our perceptions change, Ra remains ever in his heavenly throne no matter what revolutions our Earth endures. In the new Aeon, as in Thelema and the writings of Crowley himself, the formula of Osiris has been replaced by the child Horus (*Liber AL* ch. I v. 49,), and the candidate is no longer the man led through death to a new life, but rather, his initiation mirrors life, and the child is brought through a form of spiritual puberty wherein he and his higher self are brought into

communion and eventually right-relation with one-another (Liber Samekh, Point II.)

Regarding the nature of the rituals designed to bring about this end, Crowley writes of Liber Samekh that its principle aims are as follows:

- to keep them (His bodily, mental and astral consciousness) so busy with their own work that they cease to distract him

- to separate them so completely that his Soul is stripped of its sheaths

- to arouse in him an enthusiasm so intense as to intoxicate and anaesthetize him, that he may not feel and resent the agony of this spiritual vivisection, just as bashful lovers get drunk on the wedding night, in order to brazen out the intensity of shame which so mysteriously coexists with their desire

- to concentrate the necessary spiritual forces from every element, and fling them simultaneously into the aspiration towards the Holy Guardian Angel

- to attract the Angel by the vibration of the magical voices which invoke Him.

These are accomplished through right performance and apprehension of the Invocation and adorations being performed of which much study and application is required, as well as a thorough practical education in the practices of Asana, Pranayama, and the higher aims of Yoga; a thorough track record of success in the higher forms of ritual ecstasy; and perhaps most importantly of all, the complete integration of the adepts' Astral double, to a point where one is as comfortable moving therein as they are in their physical skin. With these tools held firmly in his arsenal, the adept is well-equipped to begin the long and arduous process of reaching True Knowledge and Conversation.

One common misconception that I've encountered with regards to the ritual of Knowledge and Conversation is the idea that the communion experienced between oneself and one's Angel is a singularity: a point event that once achieved becomes an integral part of the adept's integrated

consciousness, accessible in one's waking life just as viscerally as it is in one's Secret Temple. In my experience this does not seem to be the case, and Crowley himself writes about the experience of Knowledge and Conversation as a form of religious ecstasy experienced at the height of inspiration. He relates again in Liber Samekh that the Angel reveals himself to the Adept in a manner comfortable to his own character, and that the experience of K&C is not easily defined; for a musician, the Angel may appear as the rapture of a majestic melody, and to a man of Science he may appear as the solution to a long and difficult problem that has plagued him—there is no sure test. The phenomenon is as inexpressible as the experience of Love. It is the adept's devotion to his Angel, and his tenacious return to the conditions favorable to Knowledge and Conversation that makes the experience familiar. For this reason, mastery in all aspects of Crowley's system is integral to fully integrating the HGA into one's life.

This now brings me to the concept of "True Will," another technical term encountered within the literature of Thelema that draws on and influences our approach to the Angel. At the close of Crowley's Gnostic Mass a benediction is offered by the Priest: "The Lord bless you. The Lord enlighten your mind, comfort your heart and sustain your bodies. The Lord bring you to the accomplishment of your True Wills, the Great Work, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness." The Lord, as many of you are probably aware, refers to Adonai and is a name concealing that of the Angel. It is an ancient qabbalistic formula used as a stand-in for tetragramaton in the Old Testament. This name, Adonai, enumerates through gematria to 65 (A=1 + D=4 + N=50 + I=10) and for most Thelemites brings to mind *Liber 65*, one of a collection of Holy Books received by Crowley in a state of inspired ecstasy. Again and again in relation to the HGA Crowley instructs us to study therein in *Liber 65: Liber Cordis Cincti Serpenti*, or *The Book of the Heart Girt with a Serpent*. In relation to this Holy Book, Crowley writes, "This magical treatise describes particularly the relation of the aspirant with his Higher Self." Now this Lord is called upon to bring us "to the accomplishment of our True Wills…" Through the continued experience of Knowledge and Conversation, brought about by the repeated performance of Samekh and the devotion of the adept to his work, the Angel becomes an internal beacon helping to guide the adept toward the course dictated by his secret creative self.

With this concept of the True Will, the idea of a point event again seems to be implicit: an experience wherein the adept receives a vision of the perfect path which lays bare the falseness of all his life's previous actions and sets his course firmly to his highest aim… this seems to me to be woefully unrealistic. Those I've known who could be said to most clearly exemplify the right-relation to the universe that is Knowledge and Conversation do not live without danger and difficulties. Internal decisions, external forces, all things under the Sub continually conspire to draw the adept away from the perfect communion of his Angel. The experience of aligning with one's True Will is rather like a continuous re-orienting towards the abode of the Angel, a beacon that one continually aspires to in all willed actions. A fellow Thelemite once spoke to me of this orientation using the analogy of sailing, describing the phenomena of "beating," wherein one has a point that they are traveling towards, but the winds or waters do not flow in a continuous thread right to one's destination; so we zig-zag, being of necessity drawn off course, experiencing life and drifting our way back towards our goal. This continues again and again until finally we find that one thing of which we were seeking. Once there we may choose to abide, or to continue on, but either way, the guiding principle behind our actions and the directions we choose to strike-out in is the experience of our communion with the Holy Guardian Angel.

When I say that Knowledge and Conversation is an intrinsic goal for each Thelemite, I understand that every action and rite that I might perform is done with the single goal in mind of achieving that aim. Crowley states in *Magick in Theory and Practice* at the beginning of Chapter XXI that "the Single Supreme Ritual is the Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. It is the raising of the complete man in a vertical straight line. Any deviation from this line tends to become black magic. Any other operation is black magic." In the same breathe, Crowley reminds us that from our fractured state, we cannot well determine what actions will or won't bring us to this central aim, but once the path has been laid bare any deviation therefrom likewise takes the adept away from himself and from right relation with his Universe. I hope the preceding thoughts can help to make clear at least one Thelemite's understanding of the nature and methods whereby we become conscious of and married to our own Holy Guardian Angel.

PART 4

THE 2011 BLOGOSPHERE DEBATES

Holy Guardian Angel(s)?

Thursday, August 25, 2011

Conjureman Ali

One of the central aspects of western occultism is the idea of the Holy Guardian Angel. This concept is alternately referred to as one's higher self, or as a spirit guide of sorts with whom conversation and communion is considered of great importance. For the longest time people mistook attaining conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel (from here on referred to as HGA) as the epitome and even end-result of magical practice. This stance has been shifted to where conversation with the HGA is but one rung on the ladder of spiritual progress and magical practice. Yet, the nature of this being remains highly controversial.

There are a variety of opinions on what the HGA is in nature, from being one's higher self to being an Angel of the Lord assigned to guide the aspiring magus. In my opinion, Frater RO said it best, "it's complicated" (in fact I am of the opinion that Frater RO is one of the few people online who truly exhibits having achieved conversation and communion with the HGA and his discussion of his Supernal Assistant/HGA accurately portrays the relationship).

I propose to present a perspective on the HGA that is not commonly heard online, but one that is in line with Near Eastern spiritual practices and what may have been the source from which later magi drew inspiration for their concepts of the HGA.

In Near Eastern (which includes the Semitic religions and cultures) each individual is assigned a group of spirits which act as the guiding influences in life. Depending on the sources, the number varies from 2 to 4 to much more. However, what is consistent is the varying natures of the spirits attached to the individual and how relationship between the spirits and the person contributes to magical work.

The first spirit is what has come to be commonly called the Holy Guardian Angel. This entity is viewed as separate from the magician and not the "higher self." However, the Holy Guardian Angel acts as a receptacle for the divine power that is man's birthright. As man descended through the spheres he forgot his link with the divine and so the Holy Guardian Angel holds in trust the true powers of man until he once more is ready to take them up. In this paradigm the conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel is but the first step. The HGA acts as a guide and comforter for the magi, helping them once more rise up through the spheres and finally absorb their birthright from the HGA. In this way this spirit is intimately connected to the individual, yet also remains "other."

Because the HGA, which has also been alternatively called the Genius Spirit in this tradition, holds in trust the true power of man, it is through the HGA that authority to work with the angels and the divine sphere is achieved. The HGA can act as a guide, a comforter, and an emissary to the divine realm.

The balance to the HGA is the second genius spirit which comes from the ranks of the chthonic. Just as individuals are assigned a Holy Guardian Angel so too do they have a djinn. This is the spirit that is used as an emissary to the sub lunar and chthonic realms. We find evidence of this type of working in the Greek Magical Papyri, the familiar spirit of the Witch of Endor, and it is carried on in works like the *Grimorium Verum* where Scirilin acts as the primary intermediary spirit.

In the spiritual practices of the Near East, the mage is recognized as having the ability to cultivate both of these relationships: one with the Holy Guardian Angel and the other with the djinn spirit. Each represents a side of the coin that contributes to all around wholeness. However, what is lacking in this system is the idea that one power needs to restrain the other. While the Holy Guardian Angel provides the mage with authority until he or she is able to reclaim his or her own innate authority, the Holy Guardian Angel, or any angel for that matter, is not used to restrain the powers of the chthonic.

Instead if one were to work with the dead, or djinn, then the mage would turn to his or her personal djinn or genius to act as intermediary—a practice that is illuminated in the manuscript of Charles Wycliff Goodwin called *Fragment of a Graceo-Egyptian Work upon Magic* where the Egyptian mage uses his two genius spirits, or djinn to help him contact other spirits in an armadel operation. In this working the authority to work with such spirits comes directly from the intermediary spirit who is able to traverse the underworld and call other spirits forth.

While the concept of the personal deity of the Near East, more commonly known to today's mages as the Holy Guardian Angel has become one of the more distinguishable aspects of western occultism, the familiar spirit, on the other hand has not received the same attention. It is my opinion that a more holistic approach to magical practices would be to get back to this older and more complete paradigm where both spiritual guides are cultivated, one to restore man's innate connection with the divine, and the other to restore man's innate connection to the underworld—it is the connection to both that distinguishes the mage from the mystic and priest.

This concept of multiple guiding spirits is one that also makes an appearance in the African Diasporic Traditions with the ATRs often alluding to each person having a "head" which can be equated to the Holy Guardian Angel and each also having a series of other guiding spirits often in the form of spirits of the dead. Similarly in ancient Rome, each person was guided by a holy ancestor while having the personal lares who carried out the function of a familiar spirit.

My experiences with both my Holy Guardian Angel and my personal djinn have led me to believe that the incomplete approach that has become popularized by Abramelin may indeed actually contribute to the disparity in results achieved by those traditions still connected to their folk roots versus those that have lost that connection. This can be seen in the results achieved by Arabian mages and people in the ATRs versus the less than spectacular results achieved by western occultism. It comes down to the approach.

If our focus is entirely on the Holy Guardian Angel, then our magic by very nature will take a more mystical aspect. The Holy Guardian Angel is beyond a doubt a powerful force in our lives, but the results often alluded to in the grimoires are a result not of Angels who focus on more cosmic matters, but the sub lunar or chthonic spirits who hold a strong connection to our natural world. For the magus to achieve the level of success that is often

fantasized, he or she must also cultivate the power of the chthonic and this is done through the intermediary spirit of old.

In my opinion it is time for this old familiar spirit to once more be recognized as a valid source for the power for the mage and take its place in the western world along with its counterparts in the ATRs.

Holy Guardian Angels, Helpful Spirits, S.A.'s and The Genius

Wednesday, August 31, 2011

Mike Cecchetelli

Recently there's been an overwhelming amount of discussion with regard to the nature of the Holy Guardian Angel and the many other "Helpful Spirits" who share some commonalities with it. This, I believe, began with the blog entry[1] by one of a few practicing Magician's whom I respect deeply, Conjureman Ali, and most recently popped up over at Head For The Red, where, as usual, RO offers a great deal of insight and wisdom, helping the reader to differentiate the HGA from the Genius from the Supernatural Assistant from… you get the point.

As this has become the "topic of the day" amongst many for whom I hold a high regard, I will weigh in as well, sharing my own experiences and truths. While I have indeed worked with several of those that RO classifies as Helpful Spirits, there remain some that I have not yet endeavored to seek out, so I won't speak on those.

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1 Immediately preceding this section in the present book.

First, with regard to the Supernatural Assistant[2], of which I first learned during my initial foray into the PGM. I first evoked this spirit in 2004, and have worked with him since. While I am guilty of grouping him and other helpful spirits under the title HGA in casual conversation and of failing to voice a contrary opinion when others say that the S.A. and HGA are the same spirit, that is partially because I am loath to get into an extended discussion on the nature of each thus turning a simple conversation into a debate. Another reason is that I truly think it's best for each to find his own way to the HGA, and if he has managed to evoke the Supernatural Assistant and is convinced that this entity IS the HGA, he may not be ready for what he is going to encounter if he does succeed in making conscious contact with the real deal.

The Supernatural Assistant, called in the PGM a god, is not the Holy Guardian Angel. While it shares many qualities with the HGA, for example being bound by its nature and creation to serve as a protector and guide to the individual, they also have hugely varying methods and, for lack of a better term, rules under which they operate.

The S.A., although there are some who would argue this point and perhaps some source docs that imply otherwise, does not seem to be a spirit assigned to man at his birth. Rather, mine was assigned at the moment when I finally succeeded in calling him. In the nanosecond of our time wherein we are successful in making contact with the god, daimon, power (call it whatever suits your will) which oversees this endeavor, it looks upon the individual, evaluates them and their character, strengths and weaknesses, talents and skills, personality and mentality, and chooses a spirit that best suits you and who balances your weaknesses with its own strengths and vice versa. The S.A., as I know it, is intended to fill in the gaps in your composition and make you a well rounded and balanced man and magician. The spirits who become S.A.'s are as individualistic as we are; some are proud and egotistic, some strong and yet of lesser intelligence. The god who assigns an S.A. to a man, in that instant which unto us seems a fraction of a minute, looks at where you are strong and where you are weak and matches you with an S.A. whose strengths are your weaknesses and vice versa.

Another characteristic of the S.A which distinctly separates it from the Holy Guardian Angel is that it serves your will. Your goals are its goals, your desires are its desires and your quest is its quest. If your desire is to harm

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2 http://hermetic.com/pgm/assistant.html

another, that is the S.A.'s desire. It doesn't look beyond the request and suggest that it may have adverse or damaging consequences; it merely does what you need it to do in the moment. Whether your actions are just or unjust, will bring you success or harm, the Assistant's role is to help you get where you want to go without regard to what's going to happen to you when you arrive. If you Evoke the S.A. and tell it that your will is to kill a rival, that becomes its will. It doesn't say, "If you embark on this path, you will likely end up in prison, so let me show you a better way to accomplish your goal." It just says. "Okay." Likewise, if your goal is to learn the secrets of the heavens, to be taught of cosmology and the hierarchy of the universe, the S.A. is not the one to call on. While he may know all of this, it is not his function to teach you; it is his function to assist you in whatever you set out to do.

Yet a third distinguishing trait is that the S.A. does, as RO suggests, work on both a celestial and terrestrial level. While HGA is primarily concerned with your spiritual development, learning and ascension, and thus is unconcerned if you are dying to get a BMW, are in dire straits financially or in need of a lover, the S.A.'s entire purpose is to get you where you want to be by being the ying to your yang, and being strong where you are weak. If you want a new car, he wants you to have a new car, and can use his abilities to help you get one. Don't get the idea that by meeting your S.A. and asking him for a fortune he is going to cause a million to appear, or carry a treasure from the nearest hole in the ground; that's not how it works. He opens the way for you, whether by unlocking doors or by kicking them in. He is everything you are not, and you are everything he is not. He thinks in a fundamentally opposite way then you, and thus is able to see what you don't. While you're looking for ways to win the lottery to buy your car, or who you can borrow from, he's looking at the baseball card collection your grandma left you and how it's easily worth enough to get you that new Beamer. While you're thinking logically and rationally, he's thinking abstractly and outside the box.

On now to the Great Granddaddy of all Helpful Spirits: The Holy Guardian Angel. Let me first say that of all those who claim they have established "Knowledge and Conversation....", 70% are lying, 15% have interpreted the aforementioned S.A. or another helpful spirit AS the HGA when in fact it is not and therefore truly believe they HAVE Knowledge and Conversation... etc..., 10% have no contact with any spirit and are under the new age proliferated misconception that contact with spirits evoked comes in the form of

"clear messages, like really reeeaallly clear messages in my head" or another such abominable lie.

5%, then, are those who genuinely have made conscious, true contact and have attained what Abramelin and Abraham von Worms call "Knowledge and Conversation of The Holy Guardian Angel". And that's a liberal number. In the majority of cases, those who are among this 5% and have ascended to this level, will know recognize one another in conversation or when reading each others' writing on the subject. This is because the experience of meeting this transcendent being is absofuckinglutely changing, and there are no circumstances under which one having done so could not be utterly, permanently changed. That change is therefore reflected and recognizable in everything that person does.

Before I segue too far off track and into the mind of the magus, let me return to the subject matter at hand; The Nature of the Holy Guardian Angel. This is an entity that is purely, utterly and indisputably divine. Wholly celestial. The first time I actually succeeded in calling and standing before my Holy Guardian Angel I felt as if I was standing miles and miles too close to the Sun, such was the radiance and power. Not heat, for there was no discomfort at all, but just the magnitude of power. The HGA can appear in any form it desires and can manifest in many ways. It can take the shape of a man, woman or anything else. Nonetheless, whatever form it does take, however much its appearance is identical to that of something else, you will always know exactly what it is, simply by the sheer power and, for lack of a more suitable adjective, light, radiated by him. He can dim it down a bit, making his visage and appearance more palatable and discernible to us, but you will still feel as though you are staring at the sun on a clear and sunny day, its rays enveloping you. You can be in a closed room in your house, others present in the home, standing before him and convinced that everyone is seconds away from bursting in the room believing it to be aflame and in amazement at the inestimable light coming from under the door, and be sure that no one in the house could possibly have missed that light, only to walk out of the room and discover no one but you saw or felt a thing.

The HGA, unlike the Supernatural Assistant, is NOT "at your service". He will be of much, much greater use to you in the course of your life, and take you to new heights spiritually, magickally and as a man, teaching you all the secrets and wisdom you'll ever need, but he does NOT serve at your pleasure, is not at your service and is wholly unconcerned with your worldly

and material desires. His Will is that of the Source, the Father, the one who preceded all the gods and goddesses. Not YHVH, Not Allah, Not Buddha, Not Asar or Aset, Not Marduk or Krishna, but something of which we cannot possibly conceive from whom all of those at some point descended. The will of the cosmos, and the divine is the HGA's will. He has been created solely to facilitate your development spiritually, to teach and guide, but not interfere. your free will is your own and he will never, under any circumstances circumvent it. If you ask for counsel or advice he will provide it, but you need to ASK. He won't just offer up guidance, even if the course you set out on is a dangerous one, because if he offers advice that causes you to change your mind, he has interfered with your will. He will teach when you ask to be taught, insofar as what you want to learn is beneficial to your spiritual development and not contrary to the divine plan. He will aid you in Magickal work and provide an astounding boost in power, as long as the work is in some way in furtherance of your development and ascent, and again, not in contradiction to the will of the cosmos. Material things, wealth, possessions, etc... are beneath him, and he will aid you in obtaining them only when lack thereof prevents you from seeking the divine. If 18 hours of your day have to be spent at work in order to survive and feed your family, he can help you into better circumstances in order to allow you more time to devote to ascent, but he doesn't care if you have a mansion or in ground pool.

Ultimately, the Holy Guardian Angel is a creation of the highest, it is of an essence and power beyond that of gods and goddesses because it is a tool and instrument OF the highest, and can move mountains on your behalf, but will not do so unless the mountain impedes your development. He serves the source, not you, and the Will of the source is that he guide, protect and illuminate you as you seek to return TO the source.

Finally, let it be known that the HGA is, at least in my own experience, in every way everything Abramelin makes him out to be. Those who claim that his importance is exaggerated in that book or that he plays a comparatively minor role and contact with him is not something a Magician needs to seek with all his might, are fools or have not achieved it. A surefire way to determine if someone is bullshitting about having "K&C of HGA" is if they underplay its importance or value, or make it sound simple.

It is NOT fucking simple. The rites we use to obtain it may be simple, such as Samekh, but the fact is that the rites, words and conjurations used are meaningless when it comes to achieving contact with the HGA. Samekh

is a bullshit rite. Crowley basically took the corpus of one single ritual from PGM, because he recognized it as real magick, assigned meanings through Gematria to words which do not have meanings we can interpret, replaced the original names with some that fit his own system, and said "Here, let's use this for any purpose at all". People do and have actually achieved success in contacting the HGA with this rite, notably Frater RO, just as many like myself have achieved it using rites they designed themselves. That isn't because Crowley, or I, am a genius and figured out the specific formula and wording that brings success, it's because the rites don't matter.

Unlike obtaining an S.A. which is a pure act of Magick where a well designed rite such as RO's is necessary, when we seek contact with the HGA we are NOT doing Magick. We are beseeching the ultimate, the highest, to find us ready and worthy and to grant us this privilege. If you are ready for it, you are sufficiently developed and have ascended on your own to the level whereat this is given, you will succeed. A sincere prayer to the highest will be as effective as Samekh or anything else. It's the preparedness, the worthiness and the intent that matter, if those are there the highest frankly doesn't give a shit if we're doing the LBRP or singing I'm a Little Teapot. And if they aren't there, there is no ritual, no words, no amount of memorization of others writing that is going to make it happen.

Some Clarifications on Previous Post

Friday, September 2, 2011

Mike Cecchetelli

Following my previous post with regard to the natures of the Holy Guardian Angel, the Supernatural Assistant and other helpful spirits, I received a small amount of criticism and a large amount of praise. By in large, the response I received most often is "Great post, my sentiments exactly, very true but damn don't you think you're going to piss a lot of people off?" to which I reply simply, yep. For further explication, please divert your gaze to the immediate right of this post, to the "About Me" section, where I forewarn every reader that the content of this blog will be informative and of value to him, but may also piss him off.

There are, however, a few valid points received from people I respect which I'll address here for clarification's sake.

First, the following received in comments from a fellow blogger:

(Note – The actual comment has been redacted to preserve the author's implied copyright, as permission to reprint it here was not sought. The gist of the comment was that to imply that anyone who has achieved K&C can spot another such achiever is hard to believe.)

Okay, but I didn't say I could recognize everyone who has reached this point. What I said was "In the majority of cases". Definitely didn't say I have never missed one, or many. Clarifying further, the intent of that statement

was to express that **in the majority of cases**, not ***all***, but most, those who have reached this level can listen to people talk about their own experiences with their HGA, their means of communication with him (or her, lest I be thought gender-biased) and we'll have a pretty good idea of who is relating genuine experiences and who's full of shit. Put simply, we have a much better inherent "bullshit detector" with regard to this subject than those who haven't been there and done that. We've HAD the experience, so we usually recognize when someone is speaking FROM experience as opposed to speaking on things they've heard from others or read in books.

Second point,

(Again, the actual verbiage of the comment has been redacted but the gist of this one was that the HGA is not solely available to those whose path is one specific western tradition, but is rather available to all and anyone able to perform the requisite work.)

Again, never said it was limited in availability to those who perform a specific type of magick in the west or anywhere else. In fact what I said is quite the contrary – that the rites you use and words involved really don't mean anything at all and you can succeed with Samekh, a song from sesame street or a simple prayer.

Next point is when I said achieving contact with your Angel is "NOT fucking simple". Well, yes, I did say that. And I was 100% correct in that. The rite you use that finally brings you in contact with this being may be as simple as a prayer, but if you think that's all there is to it you haven't done it. It's what leads up to the rite that is "NOT fucking simple", to wit, the years of work, study and practice of magick which prepare you FOR the simple rite with which you succeed. THAT'S what's difficult, folks, not the hour-long rite whereupon your angel finally manifests to you. That's the culmination of years of work, not just something you decide to do on a whim. I'll go one step further by saying that those who imply they've actually MADE conscious contact with their Angel in such a way, picking up a copy of Samekh or another such shortly after beginning to practice magick, and succeeded, are indeed full of shit. Maybe not intentionally, hell, maybe they have reached out and touched another helpful spirit or maybe they've picked up a trickster type, but they damned sure haven't met their HGA.

Next point, as to the percentages I used, (i.e. 70% are lying, 5% have succeeded, etc...) there was no scientific data behind those numbers and they may well be inaccurate. It was an educated guess intended to illustrate the

point that the majority of those who claim to have done this are lying, the minority actually have, and somewhere in the middle are those who haven't but for one reason or another truly think they have.

Another question that's arisen, this time from one of my G4J brethren, and one for whom I have a lot of respect, is that of Free Will vs. Fate/Destiny and the reconciliation thereof. My answer to this is simply that I have never bought into fate or destiny, except that destiny which we make for ourselves. I do think there are events in our lives which are fated to happen for some cosmic reason beyond our scope of comprehension, but by in large it is our Free Will that dictates how we handle them and thus what the outcome will be. In that way, we do determine our own destiny. I also think that it is in our power to change any circumstance within our lives and any direction they seem to be heading. I don't believe there is anything about our lives or the course they will take that is written in stone, and every action we take is what determines what comes next. I went from the Cellhouse of USP Lewisburg to the Penthouse of the Nashville Hilton in 26 months, NOT because that's what was cosmologically planned for me, but because I sat, evaluated the directions in which I could proceed and decided the business world was the most prudent and then went at it full steam like a fucking locomotive. I incorporated willingness to work 16 hour days 7 days a week with techniques of Magick, and just about 2 years later I am in a better position than people who've been in this company for over a decade. Fate didn't do that, I did.

On another, lesser point, it was noted by 2 that throughout the whole of my post I referred to both the Magus and the HGA as HE or HIM, and not as She, or Her. Well, I am a man, not a woman, and while Angels don't seem to have genders as such, they do have decidedly masculine or feminine traits and personalities, and mine is about as masculine as anybody I've ever met, and since I'm talking about me and him, I'm using masculine forms of these words, not feminine. That's not to say a female can't be a magus or that there are no female Angels. Hell, I've worked with an angel who was as feminine as any lady I know.

2 Years Later,
The HGA Revisited

MC

Two years after authoring the preceding two essays, my own views and experiences with the HGA have evolved a bit, in some ways my convictions becoming ever more firm, and in others loosening a bit having benefitted from the wisdom shared by my peers and those with whom I work Magickally.

As the discerning reader no doubt observed from the prior two essays of mine, my own experience with my Holy Guardian Angel diverges a bit from those of my contemporaries, including some whose viewpoints are expressed within these same pages. Whereas Aaron Leitch was in some ways disappointed that the culmination of his own Abramelin working was not the earth-shattering experience our shared forefather Abraham of Worms led us to believe it would be, I fall on the opposite end of the spectrum. My initial encounter with my Angel, or rather my first significant encounter with him, was quite the event Abraham prepared me for, although the methods I used to reach it were quite different from those he prescribed. The road to that destination, however, was not quite so encouraging as its end result. The words I chose just a few lines ago, "my first significant encounter" were chosen carefully, as prior to my having brought to fruition the full evocation, there were dozens of lesser "contacts" while in practice of the rites I'd designed and chosen for the purpose. The wind would pick up quite suddenly, carrying with a whisper or a voice. I would receive an unseen, yet unmistakable embrace. The smoke would seem to take shape, only to dissipate when I began to grow excited. Dreams, far more clear and memorable than

anything I had previously experienced, would come and bring with them messages and instructions. All of this was progress, as I saw it, yet none of it represented the full potential of this entity and his place in my life.

When it did happen, it took me quite by surprise. It was as if a switch had been flipped, whether within or without of me, and where once I was blind, I now could see. As it was explained to me by my angel, and as I have faithfully recounted in the previous essays, the "switch" that was flipped was that I had finally been deemed "ready". The rites I chose, however cleverly crafted, implementing all of the principles of Abramelin and molding them into something quite personal based on the PGM, were wholly irrelevant, and the end result could as well have come by way of a few choice words directed to the heavens, so long as I had come far enough in my ascent and training to perceive what would then come.

In the time that has passed since I achieved this, and in all of my subsequent work, I have come to a certain few realizations with regard to the factors that are most critical for one to employ in seeking the Holy Guardian Angel. What I did not know until beginning the work of editing this volume, was that these seem, for the most part, to be in agreement with the core principles set forth by my peers in their own contributions here. This, too, is telling, and implies that however fluid the HGA is and however differently we all go about undertaking pursuit of him, there are certain key points that lend greatly to the likelihood of success.

1 The first suggestion I would give any aspiring HGA evocator is to heartily and diligently study all extant accounts of the operation, in all of its forms. Observe and note similarities and crossovers between them, removing the extraneous portions and identifying those elements that appear more frequently.

2 Dig deeply into your own worldview, cosmological beliefs, faith and religion, and, considering all of the above elements you deemed necessary, begin to craft for yourself, or choose from the predesigned, rites for attainment.

3 Set for yourself a routine consisting of meditation, contemplation, inner and outer purification, confession (to your own HGA or Deity), and self discipline.

4 Pray devoutly. This need not be to any of the mainstream forms of deity, let alone the judeo-christian sort, and can be to your own conception of the HGA, whether it be the higher self, the secret lover, or the daimon assigned you by Zeus.

5 Seek with your all contact with this entity. Make its pursuit and apprehension your sole motivating factor, and above all do not become discouraged. When the cosmos deems you ready, it will happen, not a second before.

6 Evoke, Evoke, Evoke! And when you are exhausted, beyond fatigue and unable to continue, EVOKE! Call, call and call until your call is heard and heeded. Be not deterred! It is your right as an image of the true and unknowable God!

7 Pay no heed to the innumerable charlatans who claim they have attained to that which you seek. Learn to know who is genuine and sincere, who has had this experience and separate them from those who merely seek to lead the blind and deaf. Remember the admonition in my previous essay –

.....of all those who claim they have established "Knowledge and Conversation....", 70% are lying, 15% have interpreted the aforementioned S.A. or another helpful spirit AS the HGA when in fact it is not and therefore truly believe they HAVE Knowledge and Conversation... etc..., 10% have no contact with any spirit and are under the new age proliferated misconception that contact with spirits evoked comes in the form of "clear messages, like really reeeaallly clear messages in my head" or another such abominable lie...

Once again, while I am no devout Thelemite, I acknowledge the words of wisdom with which Crowley expounded on this subject:

> *It should go without saying that until the Magician has attained to the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel he is liable to endless deceptions.* [1]

Unlike others, I do not read this to mean the aspirant is liable to deceptions in every corner of his life or praxis, but rather as to what constitutes true Knowledge and Conversation of his Angel, and whether or not it has been attained. Likewise he is quite liable to self-delusion whereby he, having accepted the false teachings spoken of above, believes another, lesser, or even malicious spirit to be his Angel. All of this delusion and potential for deception, however, is removed when he encounters for the first time the genuine article.

8 There is no substitute for experiential knowledge. While reading this and other tomes containing information on the subject of your desire is invaluable, what is most crucial is to DO. Experiment. Modify, Adapt, Restructure and DO. Seek, and do not stop seeking until you find.

The above points having been made, another piece of advice I would like to offer is for the aspiring HGA evocator, before beginning his evocations and prayers in earnest, to evaluate the various extant methods of attempting to identify the "name" of your Angel. While many such practices exist in print, I find a large number of them to be wholly useless, and caution the reader against employing any of the new age, touchy feely, no-work-needed variations. We are dealing with a magickal concept and entity from the remotest antiquity, not some McWiccan thoughtform created by the collective imaginations of the new agers. As such, I encourage the reader to make use of one of the few methods whose basis in antiquity can be verified, or has been structured appropriately from the praxis of ceremonial magick, evocation, and Qabalah.

One such practice is provided by my contemporary and fellow contributor to this work, Scott Stenwick, in his excellent paper in the present volume, wherein he expounds a system that is both logical and, in his experience, effective, making use of traditional Qabalistic attributions and the Tarot. Like Scott, I firmly believe that the "name" we ascribe to our Angel through this,

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1 Magick In Theory In Practice

or another such method, is not the formal or static name given the Angel by its God, but rather a name, magickally and logically created, to which the Angel, upon hearing it called, will respond.

Besides from Scott's method, there are others of which we can make use, including those that form his name based on the numerical values of the letters of the evocator's name, the state of the stars and planets as reflected at the time of his birth, and many more.

The "name", for lack of a better term, once known, can be used in innumerable ways: as a tool in chant, as the focus of meditation, and in the making of offerings. Sigilization of the name is also indicated, as this will serve to create a subconscious bond between it and you, and provide a visible representation of your goal. Here is an appropriate place to remind you of #6 outlined above, EVOKE, EVOKE, EVOKE.

Further study on the subject at hands has led me to stand even more firmly in my assertions of the previous essays, and brought to light supporting historical viewpoints. One such example is in my contention that the Holy Guardian Angel, of whom spoke Abramelin, is an entity quite separate from the many other helpful spirits with which he is at times merged. Sarah Kofman mirrors this belief in her assertion that the Genius described by Socrates is, by nature, not the Holy Guardian Angel as such, but rather a personal, internal oracle of his.

In what will be my final Crowley quote of this volume, and indeed my final word, I leave you with the following which sums up the whole matter far better than any synonymous way of which I could conceive:

> *It is impossible to lay down precise rules by which a man may attain to the knowledge and conversation of His Holy Guardian Angel; for that is the particular secret of each one of us; a secret not to be told or even divined by any other, whatever his grade. It is the Holy of Holies, whereof each man is his own High Priest, and none knoweth the Name of his brother's God, or the Rite that invokes Him.*[2]

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2 One Star In Sight

About The Authors

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Scott Michael Stenwick has been practicing ritual and ceremonial magick for more than twenty-five years. He is a Thelemite and was initiated into Ordo Templi Orientis in 1995 after many years of solitary experimental work. He is the author of the Mastering Enochian Magick series, Mastering the Mystical Heptarchy and the soon to be released Mastering the Great Table, in addition to Arcana, a modern-day occult novel. His magical motto is Ananael Qaa, meaning "the secret wisdom of creation" in the Angelic language revealed to John Dee and Edward Kelley in the sixteenth century. Under that motto he maintains a blog called Augoeides dedicated to the discussion of magical techniques, the Western Esoteric Tradition, and current events related to magick and spirituality at http://ananael.blogspot.com.

Fr. R.O. studied the Great Work for roughly fifteen years before performing Liber Samekh and contacting his HGA. Today, he uses the skills, insights, and techniques he gained from his experiences with his HGA as a professional Hermetic magician and teacher of the esoteric arts. He has authored several eBooks on the practical application of Hermetic Principles, and teaches the Red Work series of courses, an in-depth study of the process of the alchemical Great Work. Today RO is a firm believer that magical study should result in tangible, practical manifestations of a better life, not only for the magician, but for everyone they come into contact with. For more information, see his blog at http://headforred.blogspot.com

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Kevin Abblett_is an artist and devoted student to the mysteries of the Western Esoteric Tradition and its tributaries. He is a Thelemite and an avid reader, seeking through classes and workshops both publicly and through his local OTO affiliations to impart his research to his surrounding peers. Kevin has taught continuously over the past 10 years on subjects ranging

from Kabbalah and Tarot, to Practical Magick, Art theory and practice and to the History of the Western Mysteries in general through his on-going Hermetic Thread workshops.

Kevin lives in Arizona with his long-time partner Sondra and his beautiful step-daughter Dylan.His hopes with contributing to this anthology is that something of his experience with the phenomena of the Holy Guardian Angel might be imparted and might help goad others along the road to Knowledge and Conversation with their own higher selves.

Darren Scriven is a magician, an occultist, a father and a writer who's particular interest lies in Solomonic grimoire magic, ancient Egyptian magic and Greek magic. He has a very keen eye for interpreting and understanding mythology, sacred writings and philosophy. He uses these subjects to enable himself to practice and understand the esoteric and occult significance of the magical arts. He is one of the few individuals to work the Arte Goetia in its traditional form with all the ritual paraphernalia. He is currently writing a book about his experience and findings of the Arte Goetia, which will show it to be a complete system of spiritual development! You can read about his ideas and experiences with grimoire style magic on his blog at http://the-occultscrivener.blogspot.co.uk/. He currently lives with his son by the sea in Dorset on the South West coast of Great Britain.

ConjureMan Ali, also known as Dr. Raven, is a long-time student of the occult and esotericism. Born and raised in a family with ancient ties to the magi of the Near East and the prophets and seers of antiquity, he began his journey into the occult at a young age. At birth the elders of his family recognized a spiritual calling in him and he was deemed the spiritual heir of his family's patriarch.

The inkling that his elders had about him turned out to be true: from a young age he took up the studies of the occult and made his foray into spiritual practice even beyond what was taught to him by his elders. He became an avid student of traditional occultism and took up the classical studies of Astrology, Hermeticism, Alchemy, and the Qabalah. He was adopted into the hoodoo tradition by his first conjure teacher, who also gave him the name of Dr. Raven, which he has kept in her honor. This name was later confirmed to him by his spirits.

More info and resources of his can be found on his website, http://theconjureman.com/

Michael Cecchetelli, or MC has he has taken to being called due to the frustration that ensues among those trying for the first time to pronounce his name, is a Grimoire Magus whose practice includes traditional work from sources as diverse as The PGM, The Solomonic Grimoires, and the systems of the Coptic Egyptian Sages. He is the author of Scarlet Imprint's "Crossed Keys", winner of Balkan's Esoteric Book of The Year Award, and of Nephilim Press' Book of Abrasax. In addition to mentoring the occasional student, he has recently taken initiation in and accepted a teaching role in a Magickal Brotherhood claiming roots in the Coptic Egyptian Magickal systems from which he restored The Book of Abrasax, His blog is to be found at thelionsdens.blogspot.com, and his website is www.grimoiremagick.org

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