

All on one page

Chapter I

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Chapter I

The Magical and Philosophical Commentaries on The Book of the Law

Most of the text below has been entered by Frater H.B., except for the text of Liber AL (entered by Frater Ebony and proofread by many others), The Old Comment and portions of the New Comment omitted by L. Wilkenson in his abridgement. This text of Liber 220 has been restored by comparison with an early surviving typescript of the work, except for Chapter II, the portion not covered by the typescript available at this time.

The Old Comment has been restored by BH, except for Chapter II, from the TS. In that portion, the Old Comment has been restored from less reliable sources and may need further revision to Crowley's text. The New Comment to Chapter II also needs further revision and expansion beyond the Wilkenson abridgement.

Some verses of Liber AL have were not individually commented by Crowley in this text. Some have only a New Comment, and not an Old one.

Crowley's footnotes have been moved up into the text and enclosed in double angle brackets: «Crowley note». Again, for the comment to Chapter II, these may be in need of further correction to the original.

All other notes are enclosed in curly brackets, with attribution of origin: {WEH NOTE: ...} if no attribution of origin is given, the content of the curly brackets is an interpolation of a gap in the TS. These gaps were intended to be filled by hand-written symbols and foreign letters not available on the typewriter used to prepare the TS. They are in a variety of hands, sometimes missing altogether. The accuracy of these interpolations is very high, but not certain.

L I B E R A L
v e l L E G I S
s u b f i g u r a C C X X

as delivered by (LXXVIII) XCIII unto DCLXVI with a commentary by

T H E B E A S T

TO MEGA THERION 666
(Part I, comment to Chapter I)

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Title:

In the first edition this Book is called L. L is the sacred letter in the Holy Twelve-fold Table which forms the triangle that stabilizes the Universe. See "Liber 418". L is the letter of Libra, Balance, and 'Justice' in the Taro. This title should probably be "AL", "El", as the 'L' was heard of the Voice of Aiwaz, not seen. "AL" is the true name of the Book,

for these letters, and their number 31, form the Master Key to its Mysteries.

In order that the ethical and philosophical comment should be “understood of the common people”, without interruption, I have decided to transfer to an Appendix {WEH NOTE: The Appendix has not yet been recovered.} all considerations drawn from the numerical system of cipher which is interspersed with the more straightforward matter of this Book. In that Appendix will be found an account of the character of this cipher, called “Qabalah”, and the mysteries thus indicated; because of the impracticability of communicating them in verbal form, and of the necessity of proving to the student that the Author of the Book is possessed of knowledge beyond any yet acquired by man.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

AL I,1: “Had!The manifestation of Nuit.” THE OLD COMMENT.

1. Compare II.1, the complement of this verse. In Nu is Had concealed; by Had is Nu manifested. Nu being 56 and Had 9, their conjunction results in 65, Adonai, the Holy Guardian Angel. Also Hoor, who combines the force of the Sun with that of Mars. Adonai is primarily Solar, but 65 is a number sacred to Mars.

See the “Sepher Sephiroth”, and “The Wake World” in “Know Om Pax” for further details on 65.

Note moreover, the sixty-five pages of the MS. of Liber Legis.

Or, counting NV 56, Had 10, we get 66, which is (1-11). Had is further the centre of the Key-Word ABRAHADABRA.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The theogony of our Law is entirely scientific, Nuit is Matter, Hadit is Motion, in their full physical sense. «The Proton and the Electron, in a metaphysical sense, suggest close analogies.» They are the Tao and Teh of Chinese Philosophy; or, to put it very simply, the Noun and Verb in grammar. Our central Truth – beyond other philosophies – is that these two infinities cannot exist apart. This extensive subject must be studied in our other writings, notably “Berashith”, my own Magical Diaries, especially those of 1919, 1920 and 1921, and “The Book of Wisdom or Folly”. See also “The Soldier and the Hunchback”. Further information concerning Nuit and Hadit is given in the course of this Book; but I must here mention that the Brother mentioned in connexion with the “Wizard Amalantrah” etc. (Samuel bar Aiwaz) identifies them with ANU and ADAD the supreme Mother and Father deities of the Sumerians. Taken in connexion with the AIWAZ identification, this is very striking indeed.

It is also to be considered that Nu is connected with North, while Had is Sad, Set, Satan, Sat (equals “Being” in Sanskrit), South. He is then the Sun, one point concentrating Space, as also is any other star. The word ABRAHADABRA is from Abrasax, Father Sun, which adds to 365. For the North-South antithesis see Fabre d'Olivet's “Hermeneutic Interpretation of the Origin of the Social State in Man”. Note “Sax” also as a Rock, or Stone, whence the symbol of the Cubical Stone, the Mountain Abiegnus, and so forth. Nu is also reflected in Naus, Ship, etc., and that whole symbolism of Hollow Space which is familiar to all. There is also a question of identifying Nu with On, Noah, Oannes, Jonah, John, Dianus, Diana, and so on. But these identifications are all partial only, different facets of the Diamond Truth. We may neglect all these questions, and remain in the simplicity of this Her own Book.

AL I,2: “The unveiling of the company of heaven.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

2. This book is a new revelation, or unveiling of the hold ones.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This explains the general theme of this revelation: gives the Dramatis Personae, so to speak.

It is cosmographically, the conception of the two Ultimate Ideas; Space, and That which occupies Space.

It will however appear later that these two ideas may be resolved into one, that of Matter; with Space, its 'Condition' or 'form', included therein. This leaves the idea of 'Motion' for Hadit, whose interplay with Nuit makes

the Universe.

Time should perhaps be considered as a particular kind or dimension of Space.«In “Berashith” all qualities soever are considered as so many dimensions.I see no reason, 19 years later, for receding from this view.»

Further, this verse is to be taken with the next. The 'company of heaven' is Mankind, and its 'unveiling' is the assertion of the independent godhead of every man and every woman!

Further, as Khabs (see verse 8) is “Star”, there is a further meaning; this Book is to reveal the Secret Self of a man, i.e. to initiate him.

AL I,3: “Every man and every woman is a star.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

This thesis is fully treated in “The Book of Wisdom or Folly”.Its main statement is that each human being is an Element of the Cosmos, self-determined and supreme, co-equal with all other Gods.

From this the Law “Do what thou wilt” follows logically.One star influences another by attraction, of course; but these are incidents of self-predestined orbits.There is, however, a mystery of the planets, revolving about a star of whom they are parts; but I shall not discuss it fully in this place.

Man is the Middle Kingdom.The Great Kingdom is Heaven, with each star as an unit; the Little Kingdom is the Molecule, with each Electron as an unit. (The Ratio of these three is regularly geometrical, each being 10 to the 22 times greater in size than its neighbour.)

See “The Book of the Great Auk” for the demonstration that each 'star' is the Centre of the Universe to itself, and that a 'star' simple, original, absolute, can add to its omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence without ceasing to be itself; that its one way to do this is to gain experience, and that therefore it enters into combinations in

which its true Nature is for awhile disguised, even from itself. Analogously, an atom of carbon may pass through myriad Proteus-phases, appearing in Chalk, Chloroform, Sugar, Sap, Brain and Blood, not recognizable as “itself” the black amorphous solid, but recoverable as such, unchanged by its adventures.

This theory is the only one which explains “why” the Absolute limited itself, and why It does not recognize Itself during its cycle of incarnations.It disposes of “Evil” and the Origin of Evil; without denying Reality to “Evil”, or insulting our daily observation and our common sense.

I here quote (with one or two elucidatory insertions) the original note originally made by Me on this subject.

May 14, 1919, 6.30 p.m.

All elements must at one time have been separate – that would be the case with great heat.Now when atoms get to the sun, when we get to the sun, we get that immense, extreme heat, and all the elements are themselves again. Imagine that each atom of each element possesses the memory of all his adventures in combination. By the way, that atom, fortified with that memory, would not be the same atom; yet it is, because it has gained nothing from anywhere except this memory.Therefore, by the lapse of time and by virtue of memory, a thing (although originally an Infinite Perfection) could become something more than itself; and thus a real development is possible. One can then see a reason for any element deciding to go through this series of incarnations (god, that was a magnificent conception!) because so, and only so, can he go; and he suffers the lapse of memory of His own Reality of Perfection which he has during these incarnations, because he knows he will come through unchanged.

Therefore you have an infinite number of gods, individual and equal though diverse, each one supreme and utterly indestructible. This is also the only explanation of how a being could create a world in which war, evil, “etc”. exist. Evil is only an appearance because, like “good”, it cannot affect the substance itself, but only multiply its combinations.This is something the same as mystic monism, but the objection to that theory is that God has to create things which are all parts of himself, so that their interplay is false. If we presuppose many elements, their interplay is natural.It is no objection to this theory to ask who made the elements – the elements are at least there;

and God, when you look for him, is not there. Theism is “obscurum per obscurius”. A male star is built up from the centre outwards, a female star from the circumference inwards. This is what is meant when we say that woman has no soul. It explains fully the difference between the sexes.

{WEH NOTE: Although Crowley evidently felt that this characterization was true simply, it should be noted that this comment is not CLASS A. The idea of center outwards and circumference inwards may actually have described the impression received by a male of the Victorian age in regard to men and women. Certainly every male mystic has the state here described as “circumference inward”, “...no soul” and “female” at the time of reception — vide Liber LXV. Equally, every woman who acts positively from awareness of her identity would qualify for “center outwards”, “soul” and “male” in this sense. What Crowley identified as sex-linked may better be considered as modality linked, with the sexual linkage as much an accident of culture as anything else.}

AL I,4: “Every number is infinite; there is no difference.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

This is a great and holy mystery. Although each star has its own number, each number is equal and supreme. Every man and every woman is not only a part of God, but the Ultimate God. “The Centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere”. The old definition of God takes new meaning for us. Each one of us is the One God. This can only be understood by the initiate; one must acquire certain high states of consciousness to appreciate it.

I have tried to put it simply in the note to the last verse. I may add that in the Trance called by me the “Star-Sponge” – see note to v. 59 – this apprehension of the Universe is seen as an astral Vision. It began as “Nothingness with Sparkles” in 1916 E.V. by Lake Pasquaney in New Hampshire, U.S.A. and developed into fullness on various subsequent occasions. Each ‘Star’ is connected directly with every other star, and the Space being Without Limit (Ain Soph) the Body of Nuith, any one star is as much the Centre as any other. Each man instinctively feels that he is the Centre of the Cosmos, and philosophers have jeered at his presumption. But it was he that was precisely right.

The yokel is no more ‘petty’ than the King, nor the earth than the Sun. Each simple elemental Self is supreme, Very God of Very God. Ay, in this Book is Truth almost insufferably splendid, for Man has veiled himself too long from his own glory: he fears the abyss, the ageless Absolute. But Truth shall make him free!

It must be understood from the beginning that this book contains the keys of all the knowledge necessary for the operation of the Magical Formulae of the world during the Aeon which it initiates. In this very early verse is already given a Master Key to mathematics and metaphysics. On applying this to current problems of thought, it will be discovered that the long-fast doors fly open at a touch.

Let us briefly examine the implications of this statement. It should not occasion surprise to find that the Book of the Law not only anticipates the conclusion of the greatest modern mathematicians like Poincare, but goes beyond them. It was necessary that this should be the case, so that the book might be, beyond question, the expression of a mind possessed of superior powers to any incarnated mind soever.

It may clarify the subject if we venture to paraphrase the text. The first statement “Every number is infinite” is, on the face of it, a contradiction in terms. But that is only because of the accepted idea of a number as not being a thing in itself but merely a term in series homogeneous in character. All orthodox mathematical argument is based on definitions involving this conception. For example, it is fundamental to admit the identity of 2 plus 1 with 1 plus 2. The Book of the Law presents an altogether different conception of the nature of number.

Mathematical ideas involve what is called a continuum, which is, superficially at least, of a different character to the physical continuum. For instance, in the physical continuum, the eye can distinguish between the lengths of one-inch stick and a two-inch stick, but not between these which measure respectively one thousand miles and one thousand miles and on inch, though the difference in each case is equally an inch. The inch difference is either perceptible or not perceptible, according to the conditions. Similarly, the eye can distinguish either the one-inch or the two-inch stick from one of an inch and a half. But we cannot continue this process indefinitely – we can always reach a point where the extremes are distinguishable from each other but their mean from neither of the extremes. Thus, in the physical continuum, if we have three terms, A, B, and C, A appears equal to B, and B to C, yet

C appears greater than A. Our reason tells us that this conclusion is an absurdity, that we have been deceived by the grossness of our perceptions. It is useless for us to invent instruments which increase the accuracy of our observations, for though they enable us to distinguish between the three terms of our series, and to restore the theoretical Hierarchy, we can always continue the process of division until we arrive at another series: A', B', C', where A' and C' are distinguishable from each other, but where neither is distinguishable from B'.

On the above grounds, modern thinkers have endeavoured to create a distinction between the mathematical and the physical continuum, yet it should surely be obvious that the defect in our organs of sense, which is responsible for the difficulty, shows that our method of observation debars us from appreciating the true nature of things by this method of observation.

However, in the case of the mathematical continuum, its character is such that we can continue indefinitely the process of division between any two mathematical expressions so-ever, without interfering in any way with the regularity of the process, or creating a condition in which two terms become indistinguishable from each other. The mathematical continuum, moreover, is not merely a question of series of integral numbers, but of other types of numbers, which, like integers, express relations between existing ideas, yet are not measurable in terms of that series. Such numbers are themselves parts of a continuum of their own, which interpenetrates the series of integers without touching it, at least necessarily.

For example: the tangents of angles made by the separation of two lines from coincidence to perpendicularity, increases constantly from zero to infinity. But almost the only integral value is found at the angle of 45 degrees where it is unity.

It may be said that there is an infinite number of such series, each possessing the same property of infinite divisibility. The ninety tangents of angles differing by one degree between zero and ninety may be multiplied sixty fold by taking the minute instead of the degree as the co-efficient of the progression, and these again sixty fold by introducing the second to divide the minute. So on ad infinitum.

All these considerations depend upon the assumption that every number is no more than a statement of relation. The new conception, indicated by the Book of the Law, is of course in no way contradictory of the orthodox view; but it adds to it in the most practically important manner. A statistician computing the birth-rate of the eighteenth century makes no special mention of the birth of Napoleon. This does not invalidate his results; but it demonstrates how exceedingly limited is their scope even with regard to their own object, for the birth of Napoleon had more influence on the death-rate than another other phenomenon included in his calculations.

A short digression is necessary. There may be some who are still unaware of the fact, but the mathematical and physical sciences are in no sense concerned with absolute truth, but only with the relations between observed phenomena and the observer. The statement that the acceleration of falling bodies is thirty-two feet per second, is only the roughest of approximation at the best. In the first place, it applies to earth. As most people know, in the Moon the rate is only one-sixth as great. But, even on earth, it differs in a marked manner between the poles and the equator, and not only so, but it is affected by so small a matter as the neighborhood of a mountain.

It is similarly inaccurate to speak of "repeating" an experiment. The exact conditions never recur. One cannot boil water twice over. The water is not the same, and the observer is not the same. When a man says that he is sitting still, he forgets that he is whirling through space with vertiginous rapidity.

It is possibly such considerations that led earlier thinkers to admit that there was no expectation of finding truth in anything but mathematics, and they rashly supposed that the apparent ineluctability of her laws constitutes a guarantee of their coherence with truth. But mathematics is entirely a matter of convention, no less so than the rules of Chess or Baccarat. When we say that "two straight lines cannot enclose a space", we mean no more than we are unable to think of them as doing so. The truth of the statement depends, consequently, on that of the hypothesis that our minds bear witness to truth. Yet the insane man may be unable to think that he is not the victim of mysterious persecution. We find that no reason for believing him. It is useless to reply that mathematical truths receive universal consent, because they do not. It is a matter of elaborate and tedious training to persuade even the few people when we teach of the truth of the simplest theorems in Geometry. There are very few people living who

are convinced – or even aware – of the more recondite results of analysis. It is no reply to this criticism to say that all men can be convinced if they are sufficiently trained, for who is to guarantee that such training does not warp the mind?

But when we have brushed away these preliminary objections, we find that the nature of the statement itself is not, and cannot be, more than a statement of correspondences between our ideas. In the example chosen, we have five ideas; those of duality, of straightness, of a line, of enclosing, and of space. None of these are more than ideas.

Each one is meaningless until it is defined as corresponding in a certain manner to certain other ideas. We cannot define any word soever, except by identifying it with two or more equally undefined words. To define it by a single word would evidently constitute a tautology.

We are thus forced to the conclusion that all investigation may be stigmatized as *obscurum per obscurum*. Logically, our position is even worse. We define A as BC, where B is DE, and C is FG. Not only does the process increase the number of our unknown quantities in Geometrical progression at every step, but we must ultimately arrive at a point where the definition of Z involves the term A. Not only is all argument confined within a vicious circle, but so is the definition of the terms on which any argument must be based.

It might be supposed that the above chain of reasoning made all conclusions impossible. But this is only true when we investigate the ultimate validity of our propositions. We can rely on water boiling at 100 degrees Centigrade, «In revising this comment, I note with amusement that it had escaped me that 100 degrees C. is by definition the temperature at which water boils! I have seen it boil at about 84 degrees C. on the Baltoro Glacier, and determined my height above sea-level by observing the boiling point so often that I had quite forgotten the original conditions of Celsius.» although, for mathematical accuracy, water never boils twice running at precisely the same temperature, and although, logically, the term water is an incomprehensible mystery.

To return to our so-called axiom; Two straight lines cannot enclose a space. It has been one of the most important discoveries of modern mathematics, that this statement, even if we assume the definition of the various terms employed, is strictly relative, not absolute; and that common sense is impotent to confirm it as in the case of the boiling water. For Bolyai, Lobatschewsky, and Riemann have shown conclusively that a consistent system of geometry can be erected on any arbitrary axiom soever. If one chooses to assume that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is either greater than or less than two right angles, instead of equal to them, we can construct two new systems of

Geometry, each perfectly consistent with itself, and we possess no means soever of deciding which of the three represents truth.

I may illustrate this point by a simple analogy. We are accustomed to assert that we go from France to China, a form of expression which assumes that those countries are stationary, while we are mobile. But the fact might be equally well expressed by saying that France left us and China came to us. In either case there is no implication of absolute motion, for the course of the earth through space is not taken into account. We implicitly refer to a standard of repose which, in point of fact, we know not to exist. When I say that the chair in which I am sitting has remained stationary for the last hour, I mean only “stationary in respect to myself and my house”. In reality, the earth's rotation has carried it over one thousand miles, and the earth's course some seventy thousand miles, from its previous position. All that we can expect of any statement is that it should be coherent with regard to a series of assumption which we know perfectly well to be false and arbitrary.

It is commonly imagined, by those who have not examined the nature of the evidence, that our experience furnishes a criterion by which we may determine which of the possible symbolic representations of Nature is the true one. They suppose that Euclidian Geometry is in conformity with Nature because the actual measurements of the interior angles of a triangle tell us that their sum is in fact equal to two right angles, just as Euclid tells us that theoretical considerations declare to be the case. They forget that the instruments which we use for our measurements are themselves conceived of as in conformity with the principles of Euclidian Geometry. In other words, they measure ten yards with a piece of wood about which they really know nothing but that its length is one-tenth of the ten yards in question.

The fallacy should be obvious. The most ordinary reflection should make it clear that our results depend upon all sorts of condition. If we inquire, "What is the length of the thread of quicksilver in a thermometer?", we can only reply that it depends on the temperature of the instrument. In fact, we judge temperature by the difference of the coefficients of expansion due to heat of the two substances, glass and mercury.

Again, the divisions of the scale of the thermometer depend upon the temperature of boiling water, which is not a fixed thing. It depends on the pressure of the earth's atmosphere, which varies (according to time and place) to the extent of over twenty per cent. Most people who talk of "scientific accuracy" are quite ignorant of elementary facts of this kind.

It will be said, however, that having defined a yard as the length of a certain bar deposited in the Mint in London, under given conditions of temperature and pressure, we are at least in a position to measure the length of other objects by comparison, directly or indirectly, with that standard. In a rough and ready way, that is more or less the case. But if it should occur that the length of things in general were halved or doubled, we could not possibly be aware of the other so-called laws of Nature. We have no means so-ever of determining even so simple a matter as to whether one of two events happens before or after the other.

Let us take an instance. It is well known that the light of the sun requires some eight minutes to reach the earth. Simultaneous «Simultaneity, closely considered, possesses no meaning soever. See A.A. Eddington, "Space, Time and Gravitation", 61.» {WEH NOTE: SIC. This is page 51 in Eddington, op. cit. 1920 edition, 1959 reprint: "The denial of absolute simultaneity is a natural complement to the denial of absolute motion ..."} phenomena in the two bodies would therefore appear to be separated in time to that extent; and, from a mathematical standpoint, the same discrepancy theoretically exists, even if we suppose the two bodies in question to be only a few yards one more remote than the other. Recent consideration of these facts has shown the impossibility of determining the fact of priority, so that it may be just as reasonable to assert that a dagger-thrust is caused by a wound as vice versa. Lewis Carroll has an amusing parable to this effect in "Through the Looking-Glass", which work, by the way, with its predecessor, is packed with examples of philosophical paradox. «If I strike a billiard ball, and it moves, both my will and its motion have causes long antecedent to the act. I may consider both my work and its reaction as twin effects of the eternal Universe. The moved arm and ball are part of a state of the Cosmos which resulted necessarily from its momentarily previous state, and so, back for ever. Thus, my magical work is only one of the cause-effects necessarily concomitant with the cause-effects which set the ball in motion. I may therefore regard the act of striking as a cause-effect of my original will to move the ball, though necessarily previous to its motion. But the case of magical work is not quite analogous. For I am such that I am compelled to perform magick in order to make my will to prevail; so that the cause of my doing the work is also the cause of the ball's motion, and there is no reason why one should precede the other, See Book 4, Part III, for a full discussion. (Since writing the above, I have been introduced to "Space, Time and Gravitation", where similar arguments are adduced.)»

We may now return to our text "Every number is infinite". The fact that every number is a term in a mathematical continuum is no more an adequate definition than if we were to describe a picture as Number So-and-So in the catalogue. Every number is a thing in itself, «I regret to find myself in disagreement with the Hon. Bertrand Russell with regard to the conception of the nature of Number.» possessing an infinite number of properties peculiar to itself.

Let us consider, for a moment, the numbers 8 and 9. 8 is the number of cubes measuring one inch each way in a cube which measures two inches each way; while 9 is the number of squares measuring one inch each way in a square measuring three inches each way. There is a sort of reciprocal correspondence between them in this respect.

By adding one to eight, we obtain nine, so that we might define unity as that which has the property of transforming a three-dimensional expansion of two into a two-dimensional expansion of three. But if we add unity to nine, unity appears as that which has the power of transforming the two-dimensional expansion of three aforesaid into a mere oblong measuring 5 by 2. Unity thus appears as in possession of two totally different properties. Are we then to conclude that it is not the same unity? How are we to describe unity, how know it? Only by experiment can we discover the nature of its action on any given number. In certain minor respects, this action exhibits regularity. We know, for example, that it uniformly transforms an odd number into an even one, and vice

versa, but that is practically the limit of what we can predict as to its action.

We can go further, and state that any number soever possesses this infinite variety of powers to transform any other number, even by the primitive process of addition. We observe also how the manipulation of any two numbers can be arranged so that the result is incommensurable with either, or even so that ideas are created of a character totally incompatible with our original conception of numbers as a series of positive integers. We obtain unreal and irrational expressions, ideas of a wholly different order, by a very simple juxtaposition of such apparently comprehensible and commonplace entities as integers.

There is only one conclusion to be drawn from these various considerations. It is that the nature of every number is a thing peculiar to itself, a thing inscrutable and infinite, a thing inexpressible, even if we could understand it. In other words, a number is a soul, in the proper sense of the term, an unique and necessary element in the totality of existence.

We may not turn to the second phrase of the text: "there is no difference". It must strike the student immediately that this is, on the face of it, a point blank contradiction of all that has been said above. What have we done but insist upon the essential difference between any two numbers, and show that even their sequential relation is little more than arbitrary, being indeed rather a convenient way of regarding them for the purpose of coordinating them without understanding than anything else? On a similar principle, we number public vehicles or telephones without implication even of necessary sequence. The appellation denotes nothing beyond membership of a certain class of objects, and is indeed expressly chosen to avoid being entangled in considerations of any characteristics of the individual so designated except that cursory designation.

when it is said that there is no difference between numbers (for in this sense I think we must understand the phrase), we must examine the meaning of the word 'difference'. Difference is the denial of identity in the first place, but the word is not properly applied to discriminate between objects which have no similarity. One does not ask, "What is the difference between a yard and a minute?" in practical life. We do ask the difference between two things of the same kind. The Book of the Law is trying to emphasize the doctrine that each number is unique and absolute. Its relations with other numbers are therefore in the nature of illusion. They are the forms of presentation under which we perceive their semblances; and it is to the last degree important to realize that these semblances only indicate the nature of the realities behind them in the same way in which the degrees on a thermoetric scale indicate heat. It is quite unphilosophical to say that 50° Centigrade is hotter than 40°. Degrees of temperature are simply conventions invented by ourselves to describe physical states of a totally different order; and, while the heat of a body may be regarded as an inherent property of its own, our measure of that heat in no way concerns it.

We use instruments of science to inform us of the nature of the various objects which we wish to study; but our observations never reveal the thing as it is in itself. They only enable us to compare unfamiliar with familiar experiences. The use of an instrument necessarily implies the imposition of alien conventions. To take the simplest example: when we say that we see a thing, we only mean that our consciousness is modified by its existence according to a particular arrangement of lenses and other optical instruments, which exist in our eyes and not in the object perceived. So also, the fact that the sum of 2 and 1 is three, affords us but a single statement of relations symptomatic of the presentation to us of those numbers.

We have, therefore, no means soever of determining the difference between any two numbers, except in respect of a particular and very limited relation. Furthermore, in view of the infinity of every number, it seems not unlikely that the apparent differences observed by us would tend to disappear with the disappearance of the arbitrary conditions which we attach to them to facilitate, as we think, our examination. We may also observe that each number, being absolute, is the centre of its universe, so that all other numbers, so far as they are related to it, are its appanages. Each number is, therefore, the totality of the universe, and there cannot be any difference between one infinite universe and another. The triangle ABC may look very different from the standpoints of A, B, and C respectively; each view is true, absolutely; yet it is the same triangle.

The above interpretation of the text is of a revolutionary character, from the point of view of science and mathematics. Investigation of the lines here laid down will lead to the solution of these grave problems which have

so long baffled the greatest minds of the world, on account of the initial error of attaching them on lines which involve self-contradiction. The attempt to discover the nature of things by a study of the relations between them is precisely parallel with the ambition to obtain a finite value of Pi. Nobody wishes to deny the practical value of the limited investigations which have so long preoccupied the human mind. But it is only quite recently that even the best thinkers have begun to recognize that their work was only significant within a certain order. It will soon be admitted on all hands that the study of the nature of things in themselves is a work for which the human reason is incompetent; for the nature of reason is such that it must always formulate itself in proportions which merely assert a positive or negative relation between a subject and a predicate. Men will thus be led to the development of a faculty, superior to reason, whose apprehension is independent of the hieroglyphic representations of which reason so vainly makes use. «See "Eleusis", A. Crowley Collected Works, Vol. III, Epilogue.» {This then will} be the foundation of the true spiritual science which is the proper tendency of the evolution of man. This Science will clarify, without superseding, the old; but it will free men from the bondage of mind, little by little, just as the old science has freed them from the bondage of matter.

This science is the proper and particular study of initiates, and its principia are formulated in the Book of the Law. This Book may therefore be regarded as indicating a complete revolution in human affairs, for it advances mankind in the most radical manner. The road of attainment to self-realisation is made open as never before has been done in the history of the planet.

AL I,5: "Help me, o warrior lord of Thebes, in my unveiling before the Children of men!"

THE OLD COMMENT.

5. Nu, to unveil herself, needs a mortal intermediary, in the first instance.

It is to be supposed that ankh-f-n-khonsu, the warrior lord of Thebes, priest of Men Tu, is in some subtle manner identical with either Aiwass or the Beast.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Here Nuit appeals, simply and directly, recognizing the separate function of each Star of her Body. Though all is One, each part of that One has its own special work, each Star its particular Orbit.

In addressing me as warrior lord of Thebes, it appears as if She perceived a certain continuity or identity of myself with Ankh-f-n-khonsu, whose Stele is the Link with Antiquity of this Revelation. See Equinox I, VII, pp. 363-400a, for the account of this event.

The unveiling is the Proclamation of the Truth previously explained, that the Body of Nuith occupies Infinite Space, so that every Star thereof is Whole in itself, an independent and absolute Unit. They differ as Carbon and Calcium differ, but each is a simple "immortal" Substance, or at least a form of some simpler Substance. Each soul is thus absolute, and 'good' or 'evil' are merely terms descriptive of relations between destructible combinations. Thus Quinine is 'good' for a malarial patient, but 'evil' for the germ of the disease. Heat is 'bad' for ice-cream and 'good' for coffee. The indivisible essence of things, their 'souls', are indifferent to all conditions soever, for none can in any way affect them.

AL I,6: "Be thou Hadit, my secret centre, my heart & my tongue!"

THE OLD COMMENT.

6. The recipient of this knowledge is to identify himself with Hadit, and thus fully express the thoughts of her heart in her very language.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Nuit formulates me as Hadit, especially in the three centres of consciousness of her Being. IN this way, for this purpose, I became the complement of Her.

These centres are those of Love, Life and language. Duality is the condition of all three. It will appear later how it is

that None and Two are identical; they are distinct in our minds only because those minds are conscious, and therefore think of “two” as their own state. But the unconscious mind thinks Nothing, and is Nothing. Yet it is the same mind.

Nuith selects three centres of Her Body to become “Two” with Hadit; for she asks me to declare Her in these three. Infinite freedom, all-embracing, for physical Love; boundless continuity for Life; and the silent rhythm of the Stars for Language. These three conceptions are Her gift to us.

AL I,7: “Behold! it is revealed by Aiwass the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

7. Aiwass – see Introduction. He is 78, Mezla, the “influence” from the Highest Crown, and the number of cards in the Tarot, Rota, the all-embracing Wheel.

Hoor-paar-Kraat – see II, 8.

Aiwass is called the minister of Hoor-paar-Kraat, the God of Silence; for his word is the Speech of the Silence.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Aiwass is the name given by Ouarda the Seer as that of the Intelligence Communicating. See note to Title.

Hoor-paar-Kraat or Harpocrates, the “Babe in the Egg of Blue”, is not merely the God of Silence in a conventional sense. He represents the Higher Self, the Holy Guardian Angel. The connexion is with the symbolism of the Dwarf in Mythology. He contains everything in Himself, but is unmanifested. See II:8.

He is the First Letter of the Alphabet, Aleph, whose number is One, and his card in the Tarot is The Fool, numbered Zero. Aleph is attributed to the “Element” (in the old classification of things) of Air. Now as “One” or Aleph he represents the Male Principle, the First Cause, and the free breath of Life, the sound of the vowel A being made with the open throat and mouth.

As Zero he represents the female Principle, the fertile Mother. (An old name for the card is Mat, from the Italian 'Matto', fool, but earlier also from Maut, the Egyptian Vulture-Mother-Goddess). Fertile, for the 'Egg of Blue' is the Uterus, and in the Macrocosm the Body of Nuith, and it contains the Unborn Babe, helpless yet protected and nourished against the crocodiles and tigers shown on the card, just as the womb is sealed during gestation. He sits on a lotus, the yoni, which floats on the 'Nile', the amniotic fluid.

In his absolute innocence and ignorance he is “The Fool”; he is the 'Saviour', being the Son who shall trample on the crocodiles and tigers, and avenge his father Osiris. Thus we see him as the “Great Fool” of Celtic legend, the “Pure Fool” of Act I of “Parsifal”, and, generally speaking, the insane person whose words have always been taken for oracles.

But to be 'Saviour' he must be born and grow to manhood; thus Parsifal acquires the Sacred Lance, emblem of virility. He usually wears the 'Coat of many colours' like Joseph the 'dreamer'; so he is also now the Green Man of spring festivals. But his 'folly' is now not innocence but inspiration of wine; he drinks from the Graal, offered to him by the Priestess.

So we see him fully armed as Bacchus Diphues, male and female in one, bearing the Thyrsus-rod, and a cluster of grapes or a wineskin, while a tiger leaps up by his side. This form is suggested in the Taro card, where 'The fool' is shown with a long wand and carrying a sack; his coat is motley. Tigers and Crocodiles follow him, thus linking this image with that of Harpocrates.

Almost identical symbols are those of the secret God of the Templars, the bi-sexual Baphomet, and of Zeus Arrhenothelus, equally bi-sexual, the Father-Mother of All in One Person. (He is shown in this full form in the Tarot Trump XV, “the Devil”.) Now Zeus being lord of Air, we are reminded that Aleph is the letter of Air.

As Air we find the “Wandering Fool” pure wanton Breath, yet creative. Wind was supposed of old to impregnate the Vulture, which therefore was chosen to symbolize the Mother-Goddess.

He is the Wandering Knight or Prince of Fairy Tales who marries the King's Daughter. This legend is derived from certain customs among exogamic tribes, for which see "The Golden Bough".

Thus one Europa, Semele and others claimed that Zeus – Air«Zeus obtained Air for his kingdom in the partition with Hades, who took Fire, and Poseidon, who took Water. Shu is the Egyptian God of the Firmament. There is a great difficulty here, etymologically. Zeus is connected with IAO, Abrasax, and the Dental Sibilant Gods of the Great Mysteries, with the South and Hadit, Ada, Set, Saturn, Adonai, Attis, Adonis; he is even the "Jesus", slain with the Lance, whose blood is collected in a Cup. Yet he is also to be identified with the opposite party of the North and Nuit, with the "John" slain with the Sword, whose flesh is placed upon a Disk, in the Lesser Mysteries, baptizing with Water as "Jesus" with Fire, with On, Oannes, Noah, and the like.

It seems as if this great division, which has wrought such appalling havoc upon the Earth, were originally no more than a distinction adopted for convenience. It is indeed the task of this Book to reduce Theology to the interplay of the Dyad Nuith and Hadith, these being themselves conceived as complementary, as Two equivalent to Naught, "divided for love's sake, for the chance of union."» – had enjoyed them in the form of a beast, bird, or what not; while later Mary attributed her condition to the agency of a Spirit – Spiritus, breath, or air – in the shape of a dove. But the "Small Person" of Hindu mysticism, the Dwarf insane yet crafty of many legends in many lands, is also this same "Holy Ghost", or Silent Self of a man, or his Holy Guardian Angel.

He is almost the "Unconscious" of Freud, unknown, unaccountable, the silent Spirit, blowing "whither it listeth, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth". It commands with absolute authority when it appears at all, despite conscious reason and judgment.

Aiwass is then, as this verse 7 states, the "minister" of this Hoor-paar-Kraat, that is of the Saviour of the World in the larger sense, and of mine own "Silent Self" in the lesser. A "minister" is one who performs a service, in this case evidently that of revealing; He was the intelligible medium between the Babe God – the New Aeon about to be born – and myself. This Book of the Law is the Voice of his Mother, His Father, and Himself. But on His appearing, He assumes the active form twin to Harpocrates, that of Ra-Hoor-Khuit. The Concealed Child becomes the Conquering Child, the armed Horus avenging his father Osiris. So also our own Silent Self, helpless and witless, hidden within us, will spring forth, if we have craft to loose him to the Light, spring lustily forward with his cry of Battle, the Word of our True Wills.

This is the Task of the Adept, to have the Knowledge and Conversation of His Holy Guardian Angel, to become aware of his nature and his purpose, fulfilling them.

Why is Aiwass thus spelt, when Aiwas is the natural transliteration of OIVZ{WEH NOTE: This word is not certain.}? Perhaps because he was not content with identifying Himself with Thelema, Agape, etc. by the number 93, but wished to express his nature by six letters (Six being the number of the Sun, the God-Man, etc.) whose value in Greek should be A=1, I=10, F=6, A=1, S=200, S=200: total 418, the number of Abrahadabra, the Magical Formula of the new Aeon! Note that I and V are the letters of the Father and the Son, also of the Virgin and the Bull, (See "Liber 418") protected on either side by the letter of AIR, and followed by the letter of Fire twice over.

AL I,8: "The Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs."

THE OLD COMMENT.

8. Here beings the text.

Khabs is the secret Light or L.V.X.; the Khu is the magical entity of a man.

I find later (Sun in Virgo, An VII) that Khabs means star. In which chase cf. v.5.

The doctrine here taught is that that Light is innermost, essential man. Intra (not Extra) Nobis Regnum Dei.

THE NEW COMMENT.

We are not to regard ourselves as base beings, without whose sphere is Light or "God". Our minds and bodies are veils of the Light within. The uninitiate is a "Dark Star", and the Great Work for him is to make his veils transparent

by 'purifying' them. This 'purification' is really 'simplification'; it is not that the veil is dirty, but that the complexity of its folds makes it opaque. The Great Work therefore consists principally in the solution of complexes. Everything in itself is perfect, but when things are muddled, they become 'evil'. (This will be understood better in the Light of "The Hermit of Esopus Island", q.v.) The Doctrine is evidently of supreme importance, from its position as the first 'revelation' of Aiwass.

This 'star' or 'Inmost Light' is the original, individual, eternal essence. The Khu is the magical garment which it weaves for itself, a 'form' for its Being Beyond Form, by use of which it can gain experience through self-consciousness, as explained in the note to verses 2 and 3. This Khu is the first veil, far subtler than mind or body, and truer; for its symbolic shape depends on the nature of its Star.

Why are we told that the Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs? Did we then suppose the converse? I think that we are warned against the idea of a Pleroma, a flame of which we are Sparks, and to which we return when we 'attain'. That would indeed be to make the whole curse of separate existence ridiculous, a senseless and inexcusable folly. It would throw us back on the dilemma of Manichaeism. The idea of incarnations "perfecting" a thing originally perfect by definition is imbecile. The only sane solution is as given previously, to suppose that the Perfect enjoys experience of (apparent) Imperfection. (There are deeper resolutions of this problem appropriate to the highest grades of initiation; but the above should suffice the average intelligence.)

AL I,9: "Worship then the Khabs, and behold my light shed over you!"

THE OLD COMMENT.

9. That Khabs is declared to be the light of Nu. It being worshipped in the centre, the light also fills the circumference, so that all is light.

THE NEW COMMENT.

We are to pay attention to this Inmost Light; then comes the answering Light of Infinite Space. Note that the Light of Space is what men call Darkness; its nature is utterly incomprehensible to our uninitiated minds. It is the 'veils' mentioned previously in this comment that obstruct the relation between Nuit and Hadit.

We are not to worship the Khu, to fall in love with our Magical Image. To do this – we have all done it – is to forget our Truth. If we adore Form, it becomes opaque to Being, and may soon prove false to itself. The Khu in each of us includes the Cosmos as he knows it. To me, even another Khabs is only part of my Khu. Our own Khabs is our one sole Truth.

AL I,10: "Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known."

THE OLD COMMENT.

10. This is the rule of Thelema, that its adepts shall be invisible rulers. This, it may be remarked, has always been the case.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The nature of magical power is quite incomprehensible to the vulgar. The prophet Ezekiel besieging a tile in order to destroy Jerusalem, and the adventure of Hosea with Gomer, seem as absurd to the 'practical' man as do the researches of any other scientific man until the Sunday Newspapers have furnished him with a plausible explanation which explains nothing. ("Book 4", Part III, must be read in this connexion.)

"My servants"; not those of the Lord of the Aeon. "The Law is for all"; there can be no secrecy about that. The verse refers to specially chosen 'servants'; perhaps those who, worshipping the Khabs, have beheld Her light shed over them. Such persons indeed consummate the marriage of Nuit and Hadit in themselves; in that case they are aware of certain Ways to Power.

There is also a mystical sense in this verse. We are to organize our minds thoroughly, appointing few and secret chiefs, serving Nuit, to discipline the varied departments of the conscious thought.

AL I,11: “These are fools that men adore; both their Gods & their men are fools.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

11. “The many and the known” both among Gods and men, are revered; this is folly.

THE NEW COMMENT.

It is a fact of meditation that everything which becomes manifest is instantly recognized as unreal. All perfect unveiling solves, wholly or in part, the equation “Something equals 0/0.” (See comment on verse 28.) Adeptship is little more than ability to perceive this 0/0 phase of “Something” in respect of larger and larger “Somethings”.

A verse with so sacred a number as 11 is likely to mean very deep things. Probably much concerning the function of The Fool is concealed in it.

It has been shewn in a previous note that the principal Gods, and men, that men have adored, are in one way or another represented in the Tarot card “The Fool”. The statement in the text is, superficially, either a platitude or a petulance; neither sounds like the tone of Nuit. A third alternative? Can we have “phrased” it carelessly, or punctuated it incorrectly? Or is there a Qabalistic puzzle or a mystic submeaning concealed? The subject changes instantly, as it seems. I prefer to suggest that these “fools” are “Silent selves”, impotent babes unborn; then verse 12 continues “Come forth!”, that is, bring your Holy Guardian Angel from the womb of your subconsciousness. Then, “take your fill of love”; that is, do your True Will, whose mode of fulfilment is love, as explained later in this chapter.

AL I,12: “Come forth, o children, under the stars, & take your fill of love!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

12. The Key of the worship of Nu. The uniting of consciousness with infinite space by the exercise of love, pastoral or pagan love. But vide infra.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The whole doctrine of 'love' is discussed in the Book “Aleph (Wisdom or Folly)” and should be studied therein. But note further how this Verse agrees with the comment above, how every Star is to come forth from its veils, that it may revel with the whole World of Stars. This is again also a call to unite or 'love', thus formulating the Equation $1(-1) = 0$ «The Hon. Bertrand Russell might prefer to write this: $1(-1) = 0$. For Initiates of the IXth degree of O.T.O. it could be expressed: $\Phi K - T = 0$, where $\Phi - K = 0$, and Φ and K are both positive integers.», which is the general magical formula in our Cosmos.

“Come forth” – from what are you hiding? “under the stars”, that is, openly. Also, let love be 'under' or 'unto' the Body of Nuith. But above all, be open! What is this shame? Is Love hideous, that men should cover him with lies? Is Love so sacred that others must not intrude? Nay, 'under the stars', at night, what eye but theirs may see?

Or, if one see, should not your worship wake the cloisters of his soul to echo sanctity for that so lovely a deed and gracious you have done?

AL I,13: “I am above you and in you. My ecstasy is in yours. My joy is to see your joy.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

13. This doctrine implies some mystic bond which I imagine is only to be understood by experience; this human ecstasy and that divine ecstasy interact. A similar doctrine is found in the Bhagavad Gita. THE NEW COMMENT.

Note that Space is omnipresent. «Perhaps I should have defined the word “Space”. The task is far from easy. Space (including Time) is one of the conditions necessary to the illusion of duality. But when Nuith says “I am Infinite Space and the Infinite Stars thereof” (verse 22) there must be some other meaning. May I define it as “totality of the possibilities of giving Form to Being”, and thus equivalent to “Matter”, which manifests “Motion”? This at least suits the verse under present discussion; for the Feminine Idea is to take delight in enabling the Masculine Idea to express itself by its means. There should be no difficulty for the student of modern mathematical philosophy in

conceiving Matter and Space as identical. He may find it less easy to assent to a personification capable of speech. But I shall not resent the interpretation of Her speech as being the rhetorical device of AIWAZ. Devotion to Her, Knowledge of Her, may perfectly well be understood as the process of extending the human consciousness to apprehend the supra-rational idea thus presented. It was obviously necessary, from a practical point of view, to phrase this Book in terms of common parlance, concealing the more recondite Arcana in the numerical and literal cipher. When, then, I say "Space is omnipresent", it is almost the equivalent of "Anything is always liable to happen." » The cause of 'sorrow' is the 'imaginary' solutions of continuity in this substance. Ecstasy is produced by the resolution of these illusions. Observe well that to beings in a state of strain or sorrow the "Great Work" is bound to appear in the guise of a relief or joy. But this is not to assert Samadhi, that unity with the universe which brings relief and joy by "love", as an "absolute good". It is only good relatively to our present condition as beings divided by Illusion from Nuit. When one returns to the 'simple' state, one soon begins to think out a new route through the Universe, and devise new combinations in the Great Game called Seeing Life.

In Nature few elements are lone wolves. Most of them are being thrown in and out of combination constantly; on suns this occurs with lordly vehemence.

Note that Nuith, although She is Infinite Space, speaks as an individual might do, often enough. This is not that She is 'talking down to our level'; it is a fact. In the Cosmos almost any aggregation can think and act as an Ego. For instance, the cells of our bodies are each units, diverse in composition and character, living each a life of its own. Yet we think and act for them, and say "I". The stars are the cells of Her Body. Each one of us is such a cell; not less itself but more because of its secret function in Her.

It should be evident that Nuith obtains the satisfaction of Her Nature when the parts of Her Body fulfil their own Nature. The sacrament of life is not only so from the point of view of the celebrants, but from that of the divinity invoked.

It is said that for every step one takes towards one's Holy Guardian Angel, He takes two towards his client.

What do I mean by "beings divided by Illusion from Nuith", in the first paragraph? This, that we are limited mentally, that we realize only an infinitesimal fraction of the possible forms of expression. We can hardly even imagine ourselves as living on another planet, or in the Sun; much less as apprehending the Universe by means of a totally different set of senses. Yet most of us who are not mere placental amnoites possess an instinct which persistently regrets our incapacities. It is bad enough to be dependent on scientific instruments for our knowledge of all but the grossest of the wonders and splendours of the Universe; but worse that we are aware of an infinite variety of order of phenomena, such as electricity, magnetism, chemical action, and a host of others, which we can explore only by indirect means, interpret only by obviously inadequate symbols, and understand only in terms of arbitrary relations with our animal-sense-perceptions. We know theoretically that every object must react to every other object; and it is evident that each type of reaction may be as overwhelmingly interesting as those which happen to affect us. What unimaginable rapture to be able to observe magnetic fields or molecular movements as directly as we do the Ocean and the Ant-heap! It is the task of the Initiate to adapt himself to the Totality of Existence, and to develop in him self the means of apprehending it wholly and fully.

AL I,14: "Above, the gemmed azure is

The naked splendour of Nuit;

She bends in ecstasy to kiss

The secret ardours of Hadit.

The winged globe, the starry blue,

Are mine, O Ankh-af-na-khonsu!"

THE OLD COMMENT.

14. This verse is a direct translation of the first section of the stele. It conceals a certain secret ritual of the highest

rank, connected with the two previous verses.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This is a poetic description of the symbolism of the Stele. It is suitable for such minds as approach Truth in this manner rather than by way of Science or Philosophy.

It contains a Formula of Magick Art, connected with the Stele. Also, less ineffably, it boasts the consummation of the marriage of Hadit and Nuit in the priest. That is, he has freed Hadit, in the core of his Star, from the illusion-veils of the Khu, so that the two Infinities become one, and none; and create, in the manner shortly to be described, a new Finite.

This Finite will evidently be an expression of the particular mood of its Father and Mother at the moment of its conception. Obviously, this "Child" cannot add to the Universe; it is therefore inevitably twin (Horus and Harpocrates, Osiris and Typhon, Jesus and Barabbas) in Nature, formed of equal and opposite elements. When the Operation is mystical in character, the "Child" does not appear at all in this manifested form as Two, but as Naught. In the consciousness of the Adept, this is called Samadhi. He has united himself with, and lost himself in, Nuit. When the "Child" appears as Two, it is Magick, as the other is Mysticism. This is the essential difference between these Arts.

AL I, 15: "Now ye shall know that the chosen priest & apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest the Beast; and in his woman called the Scarlet Woman is all power given. They shall gather my children into their fold: they shall bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men."

THE OLD COMMENT.

15. The authority of the Beast rests upon this verse; but it is to be taken in conjunction with certain later verses which I shall leave to the research of students to interpret. I am inclined, however, to believe that "the Beast" and "the Scarlet Woman" do not denote persons, but are titles of office, that of Hierophant and High Priestess (Vau and Gimel), else it would be difficult to understand the next verse.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The definition of "infinite space" offered in the Comment on verse 13 is useful here. My Work is in great part to insist upon the infinite possibilities of human development. Man has too slavishly acquiesced in his limitations. Science itself has shewn itself almost as intolerant as Religion toward certain lines of research. Indeed, every element of society has added its energy to the opposition which bars each pioneer with indiscriminating stupidity. Darwin, Pasteur, Lister, and Jenner met with the same ferocious cowardice as Shelly and Luther; they were assailed on every ground from Religion and Morality upwards; every falsehood that malice could invent was circulated about them.

In short, they were treated then as I am being treated now; and I am resolute to prosecute my Work now as they were resolute then.

That which is beneath is like that which is above. The Beast and the Scarlet Woman are avatars of Tao and Teh, Shiva and Sakti. This Law is then an exact image of the Great Law of the Cosmos; this is an assurance of its Perfection.

It is necessary to say here that The ` Beast appears to be a definite individual; to wit, the man Aleister Crowley. But the Scarlet Woman is an officer replaceable as need arises. Thus to this present date of writing, Anno XVI, Sun in Sagittarius, there have been several holders of the title.

1. Rose Edith Crowley nee Kelly, my wife. Put me in touch with Aiwaz; see Equinox 1, 7, "The Temple of Solomon the King." Failed as elsewhere is on record.

2. A doubtful case. Mary d'Este Sturges nee Dempsey. Put me in touch with Abuldiz; hence helped with Book

4. Failed from personal jealousies.

3. Jeanne Robert Foster nee Oliver. Bore the “child” to whom this Book refers later. Failed from respectability.

4. Roddie Minor. Brought me in touch with Amalantrah. Failed from indifference to the Work.

5. A doubtful case, Marie Rohling nee Lavroff. Helped to inspire Liber CXI. Failed from indecision.

6. A doubtful case, Bertha Almira Prykryl nee Bruce. Delayed assumption of duties, hence made way for No. 7.

7. Lea Hersig. Assisted me in actual initiation; still at my side, An XVII, Sol in Sagittarius. (P.S. & An XIX, Sol in Aries).

“Prince-priest” is an unusual word, and not in tone with other references to me. I suspect therefore a secret cipher of some sort. For one thing, it is an anagram of PRINCEPS ITER, not bad for Alastor the Wanderer, or PRINCIPS ERIT, he shall be the chief (see verse 23). But such Qabalah is hardly to be considered serious. The recurrence of the letters PRI is however curious and may be significant. The combination PR in most Aryan Languages gives the idea of “Before.” P and R are the letters of Mars and Sol respectively. Now Mars is referred to the number 5, and Sol to the number 6; both to the idea “Force and Fire”, though in different ways. Now “Force and Fire” is the attribute of Ra-Hoor-Khuit, Lord of the Aeon; and 5 and 6 are mystically mated to represent the Accomplishment of the Great Work in Abrahadabra, the Word of the Aeon. (See, for this Word, infra Qabalistic Appendix). The termination ST is the coronal combination XXXI which we shall notice often enough later on.

The Beast, besides 666 correspondences, is by English sound, the Magus (Beth, Mercury, etc.) of this ST. S has in the Tarot the card numbered XX, which represents the Stele of Revealing, and is called the Judgment; i.e., the ending of an Aeon. T has the card numbered XI and is called Strength. It is the card of Leo and represents Babalon and the Beast conjoined.

“Their fold”; not only a sheepfold, but as if it were written “their embrace”.

AL I,16: “For he is ever a sun, and she a moon. But to him is the winged secret flame, and to her the stooping starlight.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

15. In II, 16, we find that HAD is to be taken as 11 (see II, 16, comment). Then Hadit = 421, Nuit = 466.

$421 - 3$ (the moon) = 418

$466 + 200$ (sun) = 666

These are the two great numbers of the Qabalistic system that enabled me to interpret the signs leading to this revelation.

The winged secret flame is Hadit; the stooping starlight is Nuit; these are their true natures, and their functions in the supreme ritual referred to above.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The sun and moon, in their occult sense, are secondary representatives of this original duality which is a phase of the Qabalistic Zero. Other correspondences are Yun {SIC, s.b. “Yang” ?WEH} and Yin, Yod and He, etc. But most such dualities have been conceived in very gross and unphilosophical forms. Of course, it is impossible to grasp this subject properly by reason; only the understanding developed by meditation and spiritual experience avails. Initiation is pantomorphously progressive.

Note that the Secret Divine Letter ShT which is the key of this book is by shape the Sun united with the Moon C = Sh, O = t CO = Sht. {WEH NOTE: Elsewhere Crowley calls this sign “the secret sigil of the Beast” and it is depicted by a crescent attached to the left side of a circle. Sometimes the circle is dotted. Sometimes the Greek lower case letters $\sigma\theta$ are written connectively for this (vide. Liber MCCLXIV, value 209, first edition, OTONL-6 and note 28).}

AL I,17: “But ye are not so chosen.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

17. “Ye” refers to the other worshippers of Nuit, who must seek out their own election.

THE NEW COMMENT.

That is, there is a special incarnation of Nuit and Hadit for the Beast and the Scarlet Woman, as opposed to the general truth that every man and woman are images of these ineffable Beings.

Note that a woman, having no soul of her own, can be used always as a 'Form' for any Being. This explains why Nuit can incarnate at will in successive women, careless of the physical limits of life. {WEH NOTE: Crowley's opinion regarding the soul-less state of women refers to a matter of expression. He believed it more generally, but probably based it on Victorian male conceptions of “unliberated women”. The Comment to this and the previous verse may say more about the defensive insecurity of Crowley the man than the verses of Liber AL. In Chapter I Comment, remember that all this is a male mind trying to contemplate the revelations of a goddess. Square peg and round hole problems may arise.}

I feel a certain necessity to explain that an 'avatar' implies rather a release from the limits of personality than anything else. The Scarlet Woman and I are peculiarly representative of Nuit and Hadit by virtue of our attainments in making our consciousness omniform as They re. It must not be supposed that our original individualities can claim any special prerogatives as such.

AL I,18: “Burn upon their brows, o splendid serpent!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

18. The serpent is the symbol of divinity and royalty. It is also a symbol of Hadit, invoked upon them.

THE NEW COMMENT.

For the images in this and the next verse see the Stele of Revealing, to which they allude.

The Serpent is the Uraeus, with the powers of Life and Death, wise, ecstatic, immortal; winged and hooded, that he may go as a god swiftly and silently. It refers in this place especially to Hadit.

AL I,19: “O azure-lidded woman, bend upon them!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

19. Nuit herself will overshadow them.

THE NEW COMMENT.

These two verses 18, 19, seem to be interpolated by Aiwaz, invoking the Gods to The Beast and The Scarlet Woman, perhaps as a formal Consecration.

AL I,20: The key of the rituals is in the secret word which I have given unto him.

THE OLD COMMENT.

20. This word is perhaps ABRAHADABRA, the sacred word of 11 letters.

THE NEW COMMENT.

For this word see Appendix {WEH NOTE: The Appendix has not yet been recovered. Kenneth Grant, in his “Magical and Philosophical Commentaries ...” pp. 105-108 has a lengthy extension here. The providence of the extension is not definitely known to be Crowley at this writing, hence cannot be included here.}. ABRAHADABRA is “The key of the rituals” because it expresses the Magical Formulae of uniting various complementary ideas; especially the Five of the Microcosm with the Six of the Macrocosm.

AL I,21: “With the God & the Adorer I am nothing: they do not see me. They are as upon the earth; I am Heaven, and there is no other God than me, and my lord Hadit.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

21. Refers to the actual picture on the stele. Nuit is a conception immeasurably beyond all men have even thought of the Divine. thus she is not the mere star-goddess, but a far higher thing, dimly veiled by that unutterable glory. This knowledge is also to be attained by adepts; the outer cannot reach to it.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The importance of this verse lies in the assertion of the metaphysical entity of Our Lady, Her incomprehensibility to normal sense.

The Method of invoking Nuit is given in Liber XI (see Equinox I, VII). Note the initials of God and Adorer GA, the Earth.

Note that Heaven is not a place where Gods Live; Nuit is Heaven, itself. And "Heaven" is of course "a place wherein one may fulfil oneself", conformably to the definition of Nuit as Space previously offered.

AL I,22: "Now, therefore, I am known to ye by my name Nuit, and to him by a secret name which I will give him when at last he knoweth me. Since I am Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof, do ye also thus. Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt."

THE OLD COMMENT.

22. A promise – not yet fulfilled. P.S. since (An V) fulfilled) A charge to destroy the faculty of discriminating between illusions.

THE NEW COMMENT.

We have here a further conception of the cosmographical scheme. Nuit is All that which exists, and the condition of that existence. Hadit is the Principle which causes modifications in this Being. This explains how one may call Nuit Matter, and Hadit Motion, in the highest physico-philosophical sense of those terms.

We are asked to acquiesce in this Law of Nature. That is, we are not to oppose resistance to the perfect fluidity of the "Becoming" of Nature. Similarly, we are not to attach more importance to any one momentary appearance than to any other.

For, the moment we do so, we confirm illusion of Duality. We assert Imperfection as absolute instead of as a device of Perfection for self-appreciation.

The Secret name was revealed in the Sahara desert – see Liber 418, 12 Aethyr, Equinox I, V, Suppl. pp. 82-87.

This question of making "no difference" as ordained is to regard the whole of the non-Ego or universe apparently external to the Self as a single phenomenon; Samadhi on any one thing becomes therefore Samadhi on The Whole. The mystic who "availeth in this" can then perform his Great Work of "love under will" in a single operation instead of being obliged to unite himself with the non-Ego piecemeal. But see also the Comment on verse 4, above.

Notice the word "hurt", from the French "heurter", meaning to knock against an obstacle. There is thus a strictly technical accuracy in the choice of the term.

(Insert quotations from Essay of AN XIX March 31 - April 11 showing how all is the same to Nuit, though not to partial views.)

AL I,23: "But whoso availeth in this, let him be the chief of all!"

THE OLD COMMENT.

23. The chief, then, is he who has destroyed this sense of duality.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This chief is of course no more or less than others. The limitations of our dualistic language obscure the meaning of these loftier Words. Chieftainship is to be understood as one of the illusions; but, in respect of that plane, a fact. The facts of Nature are perfectly true in so far as their mutual relation is concerned; their invalidity refers only to their

total relation with the philosophical canon of Truth.

The word “all” is not to be taken as elliptical for “all men”; it means that such an one is completely master of his universe. For when one has become indifferent to phenomena, and accepts any one of them as necessary, indeed as an essential part of the whole, he has made himself Lord of the Whole as such. In fact, it is obvious on quite rational grounds that this must be the case. My discrimination between artichokes and arsenic puts me at the mercy of a million circumstances, from my cook to my wife.

AL I,24: “I am Nuit, and my word is six and fifty.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

24. $Nu = 6 + 50 = 56$.

THE NEW COMMENT.

One must observe the special significance of these numbers, not only conjoined, but separate. For 6, Vau, is the Bull; and 50, Nun, the Scorpion. But 6 is also the number of the Sun, our Star. The N of Nu is therefore the Dragon – “Infinite Space” – and V is “the Infinite Stars” thereof. The ITH is the honorific termination representing Her fulfilment of Creative Force. “I” being the Inmost Force, and “Th” its Extension.

The Dragon in current symbolism refers to the North or Hollow of Heaven; thus to the Womb of Space, which is the container and breeder of all that exists.

Liber Aleph should be consulted for further information as to the magical import of Scorpio and Taurus.

AL I,25: “Divide, add, multiply, and understand.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

25. Dividing $6/50 = 0.12$.

0, the circumference, Nuit.

., the centre, Hadit.

1, the Unity proceeding, Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

2, the Coptic H, whose shape closely resembles the Arabic figure 2, the breath of Life, inspired and expired. Human consciousness, Thoth. Adding $50 + 6 = 56$, Nu, and Concentrating $5 + 6 = 11$, Abrahadabra, etc.

Multiplying $50 \times 6 = Shin$, and Ruach Elohim, the Holy Spirit.

I am inclined to believe that there is a further mystery concealed in this verse, possibly those of 418 and 666 again.

THE NEW COMMENT.

See Qabalistic Appendix. {WEH NOTE: Appendix not yet recovered. K. Grant, op. cit., adds several paragraphs here which appear to come from Crowley. This is not provided in this text for lack of certainty of the providence.}

AL I,26: “Then saith the prophet and slave of the beauteous one: Who am I, and what shall be the sign? So she answered him, bending down, a lambent flame of blue, all-touching, all penetrant, her lovely hands upon the black earth, & her lithe body arched for love, and her soft feet not hurting the little flowers: Thou knowest! And the sign shall be my ecstasy, the consciousness of the continuity of existence, the omnipresence of my body.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

26. The prophet demanding a sign of his mission, it is promised; a Samadhi upon the Infinite.

This promise was later fulfilled – see “The Temple of Solomon the King”, which proposes to deal with the matter in its due season. (P.S. It did so, vide Equinox I.)

THE NEW COMMENT.

In the MSS., the last 5 words of this verse do not occur. The original reading is 'the unfragmentary non-atomic fact of my universality'.

This phrase was totally beyond the comprehension of the scribe, and he said mentally – with characteristic self-conceit – “People will never be able to understand this.” Aiwass then replied,

“Write this in whiter words. But go forth on.”

He was willing that the phrase should be replaced by an equivalent, but did not wish the dictation to be interrupted by a discussion at the moment. It was therefore altered (a little later) to “the omnipresence of my body.

It is extremely interesting to note that in the light of the cosmic theory explained in the notes to verse 3 and 4, the original phrase of Aiwass was exquisitely and exactly appropriate to his meaning.

It takes this opportunity of quoting from Professor Eddington, *Op. Cit.*, a passage which should make it perfectly clear that the “mystical”, “irrational”, “paradoxical” conception of Nuit expressed in this chapter has a parallel in the sober calculations of a perfectly orthodox astronomer in the undeniably practical University – a poor thing, but mine own – of Cambridge:

“Whenever there is matter there is action and therefore curvature; and it is interesting to notice that in ordinary matter the curvature of the space-time world is by no means insignificant. For example, in water of ordinary density the curvature is the same as that of space in the form of a sphere of radius 570,000,000 kilometers. The result is even more surprising if expressed in time-units; the radius is about half-an-hour.

“It is difficult to picture quite what this means; but at least we can predict that a globe of water 570,000,000 km. radius would have extraordinary properties. Presumably there must be an upper limit to the possible size of a globe of water. So far as I can make out a homogeneous mass of water of about this size (and no larger) could exist. It would have no centre, and no boundary, every point of it being in the same position with respect to the whole mass as every other point of it – like points on the surface of a sphere with respect to the surface. Any ray of light after travelling for an hour or two would come back to the starting point. Nothing could enter or leave the mass, because there is no boundary to enter or leave by; in fact, it is coextensive with space. There could not be any other world anywhere else because there isn't an 'anywhere else'.

“The mass of this volume of water is not so great as the most moderate estimates of the mass of the stellar system”.

AL I,27: “Then the priest answered & said unto the Queen of Space, kissing her lovely brows, and the dew of her light bathing his whole body in a sweet-smelling perfume of sweat: O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

27 - 31. Here is a profound philosophical dogma, in a sense possibly an explanation and illumination of the propositions in “Berashith”.

The dyad (or universe) is created with little pain in order to make the bliss of dissolution possible. Thus the pain of life may be atoned for by the bliss of death.

This delight is, however, only for the chosen servants of Nu. Outsiders may be looked on much as the Cartesians looked on animals. Yet, of course, this is only on the plane of Illusion. One must not discriminate between the space marks. (P.S. The Christian is one who has acquiesced in his own dishonour; a renegade from manhood).

THE NEW COMMENT.

The physical description of the onset of this ecstasy refers to the actual facts at the period of receiving this knowledge.

The attempt to resolve All into One is a philosophical blunder. It explains nothing; neither how One came to be, nor how Two came to be. The only sound conception is that of “Zero not extended” with a phase of “Something” (“0 degree = X”) which makes the answer to both questions self-evident.

The idea “One” is intelligible enough as the result of the resolutions of Two. But in itself it is meaningless because of the absence of any co-ordinates. A point can have no qualities except as it is related to a second point. It is only 'high' if there be another which is 'low'. It cannot even be said to exist unless there be something which does not exist.

Note the word 'continuous' repeated. It suggests the “continuum” of modern mathematical philosophy.

On the other hand, the constitution of Nuit is 'atomic' (verse 26) or discontinuous. She is in fact the reconciliation of these contradictory ideas. It is important for us to grasp the philosophical situation formally; and this demands a somewhat close analysis. The definitions of Cantorian and Dedekindian continuity should be sought in Bertrand Russell, *Op. Cit.*; it is sufficient here to explain that by the continuity of Nuit I conceive conditions similar to those of the sphere of water described in the quotation in the note to verse 25. Any point in this sphere would be indistinguishable from any other point in a certain sense; or at least the distinction might be considered as arbitrary and illusory. Yet there is no reason why we should not choose to fix our attention on any particular point or system of points for the purpose of amusing ourselves – analogously to the explanation above put forward (notes on vv. 3 & 4) of incarnation. The constitution of our illusion will evidently be atomic. The facts that {...}, and that the subtraction of (a) the inductive numbers, (b) the inductive numbers greater than n , © the odd numbers, from {...} give respectively zero, n and {...} as the result, do not interfere with the finite character of the relation between n and $n + 1$. The transfinite properties of {...} do not destroy the atomic character of the series of which it is the sum.

Let us investigate the nature of existing ideas a little more closely. First of all, Nuit, being the totality of possibilities of Form, is not only one series, but the sum of all series. We are justified in conceiving any collection of ideas soever as a homologous series, for we have the right to choose the function which will serve to arrange them as our design requires. To protest that such a choice is arbitrary, fantastic or irrational is to assert the authority of some self-appointed “normal mind” as absolute in Nature. The failure of philosophers to transcend their own mental limitations has reduced all their systems to circular arguments, and all their ontologies to Solipsism, however elaborately they have endeavoured to cloak the fact with sophistries. You cannot tie a true knot in a cord with a closed circuit. All knowledge is relative to the mind which contains it.

Consider “incommensurable” numbers, such as 1 and 2. This coy surd is insensible to the fascinations of the deftest Dedekindian Cult. It may be approached within limits as narrow as we choose to appoint; yet there remains a “great gulf fixed” which is utterly impassable. The surd is simply not in the series; you might as well try to find Consciousness by making microtome sections of the brain. Yet the relation between 1 and 2 is perfectly clear and simple; there is no incommensurability about it at all. It is (for one thing) the ratio of the hypotenuse of a right-angled isosceles triangle to one of the other sides, in Euclidian geometry. The difficulty of commensuration can exist only in minds obsessed by the atavistic necessity of counting cowries or wives on the fingers.

Let me then maintain that such collections as “The thoughts of a man's lifetime” constitute a series in the same sense as the inductive numbers. This collection conforms perfectly with Peano's 'ideas' and 'proposition'. Every thought is a thing in itself; it is determined by its predecessors and determines its successors; it is concatenated with them by 'psychological time'. Briefly, it fulfils every condition required by the definition. (The 'recurrence' of a thought is no objection, for the identity is superficial, like that of a digit in a long decimal. “My aunt”, whom I now think of, is not the aunt I thought of last year, any more than the 4 in the second place of .0494 is the same as that in the fourth place.)

Any thought in this series possesses a chain of sub-thoughts which connect it with its neighbours; these may be discovered by the proper psychological methods.”The Words of the insane are mountain-tops”; two successive thoughts may be compared to two snow summits rising above cloud-banks; they are not isolated, but joined by certain geologically necessary formations. But each pair of such sub-thoughts may be similarly investigated, and

so on ad infinitum. Each thought is inevitably itself, although it is related to all other possible thoughts. There are not two thoughts of which we can say that one either merges into, or necessarily begets, the other. Any series of thoughts is therefore a true inductive series, exactly as the “natural numbers” are, with the added properties that it is real and omniform. It is atomic, its elements being intrinsically individual; and yet a continuum, since its intervals are susceptible of subdivision indefinitely prolonged without producing any diminution of these properties of the original series. The difference between successive thoughts and successive numbers is that by inserting r terms between p and $q - p$: $p : p^2 : \dots : p^{(2-1)} : q - p$ we apparently approximate the members, so that $p - q$ ($p^2 - (p)$); while the sub-thoughts which intervene between my impression on waking “A fine frosty morning” and my reaction “I’ll go skating” come to me from very various departments of my mind, and no two of them are in any way more closely connected than their culmination in consciousness is to its forerunner. But this difference is in reality an illusion born of the obsession already diagnosed; 2 is nearer to 1 and to 3 than 3 is to 1 only in respect of one particular function. Full comprehension of the true nature of number, as conceived by this Book, should enable the mind to transcend its “normal” trammels.

It will no doubt be objected that these speculations, even if correct, are sterile; or, even worse, discouraging to that study of the relations between phenomena which has been the basis of all advance in knowledge.

I might deny the reality of the progress, since it has only exposed the self-contradictions, and emphasized the mysteries, which beset us. But I prefer to take my stand on the ground that we have been totally wrong, hitherto, in our fundamental attitude to the Universe. The only possible issue from the vicious circle wherein we are penned is to refuse resolutely to allow ourselves to accept (1) the evidence of our senses, (2) the pleadings of our minds, (3) the reactions between phenomena as tokens of Truth. All objects are equally capable of conveying any given impression to us; it is merely a question of arranging the conditions of the experiments. We can add or subtract any conceivable quality at will. Thus, “there is no difference”; and each existence is inscrutably itself. We are only the more deceived as it multiplies its Protean projections.

Our proper course is to destroy the instruments of perception which we at present possess, recognizing that they are no more than personal prejudices which limit and delude us in every way. Our senses assure us that the earth is flat, and that the Sun moves across it, until we amend their assertions by the aid of instruments, and of reason. Yet the astronomer with his telescope is no less arbitrary than the cave-man with his eye. We are like the Snark in the Barrister’s dream, witnesses, lawyers, and judge in one. We have no standard independent of ourselves; and we know only too well that our witnesses, the senses, are neither competent, clear, trustworthy, intelligent, or even capable of giving evidence on the actual issues.

The mind is in even worse plight. Obviously, its judgments must be based on its own laws, and we have no shadow of reason for supposing that these possess any authority beyond their own jurisdiction. We know that the Structure of the brain has been determined by the animal struggle to survive: it is adapted to the conditions of environment. It is the serf of brute passions, the ape of atavism, the dupe of sense, and the automaton of accident. We have no right to assert that its internal reactions correspond to the external world in any way whatever. Officially recognized thinkers are only just beginning to realize what mystics have known since the Morning Star glimmered through the haze on the horizon of History, that the Laws of Thought are only expressions of the bondage of the thinker. Apart from the dependence of mind upon the unreliable, symbolically communicated, and fragmentary affidavits of sense, apart from the imperfections inseparable from its origin, our judgments are necessarily no more than representations of the consistency of one part of our internal structure with another. We cannot lift ourselves by pulling at our toes. We now know that our most fixed axioms are as arbitrary as a madman’s delusions. There is nothing to prevent a man from asserting that “Things which are both equal to the same thing are both greater than each other” and constructing a geometry conformable thereto: neither by reasoning nor by experience could it be proved that his system was not the “truth” of Nature. More, the word “truth” itself has proved on analysis to contain no intelligible significance, but to be an empirical symbol of what can only be described as symptoms of cerebral inadequacy.

Still worse, even so far as the conclusions of reason express the relations of an animal with itself, they disclose not the consistency which is the test of the fulfilment of this limited function, but an inherent self-contradiction which

shatters the validity of the entire process. For the “Law of Contradiction” is the Court of final Appeal which has been the authority for every step. I quote once more from the Hon. Bertrand Russell, Op. Cit.:

“The comprehensive class we are considering, which is to embrace everything, must embrace itself as one of its members. In other words, if there is such a thing as “everything”, then “everything” is something, and is a member of the class “everything”. But normally a class is not a member of itself. Mankind, for example, is not a man. Form now the assemblage of all classes which are not members of themselves. This is a class: is it a member of itself or not? If it is, it is one of those classes that are not members of themselves, i.e. it is a member of itself. Thus of the two hypotheses – that it is, and that it is not, a member of itself – each implies its contradictory. This is a contradiction, similar contradictions ad lib.” {WEH NOTE: I'm sorry. I just can't keep shut. This is just the bloody fallacy of FOUR TERMS!}

This author, perhaps the mightiest mind of its type now living, proceeds gallantly to go “over the top”. But he is always, sooner or later, drowned in the “blood” of a new contradiction, or the “mud” of mystery. He finds himself constantly compelled to assume some axiom which has been proved to be incapable of being proved, or crushed by the certainty that even in the event of his proving all his propositions, the sum of their statement amounts to this, that, so far as he is anybody or anything, he is himself.

Professor Eddington, in the masterly exposition of modern thought already quoted, presents, clearly enough, the case against supposing that any phenomenon soever is a “fact” in any absolute sense.

Each account of it must be incomplete, symbolic, and variable with the position and faculties of the observer.

“By his theory of relativity, Albert Einstein has provoked a revolution of thought in physical science.”

“The achievement consists essentially in this: – Einstein has succeeded in separating far more completely than hitherto the share of the observer and the share of external nature in the things we see happen. The perception of an object by an observer depends on his own situation and circumstances; for example, distance will make it appear smaller and dimmer. We make allowance for this almost unconsciously in interpreting what we see. But it now appears that the allowance made for the motion of the observer has hitherto been too crude, – a fact overlooked because in practice all observers share nearly the same motion, that of the earth. Physical space and time are found to be closely bound up with this motion of the observer; and only an amorphous combination of the two is left inherent in the external world. When space and time are relegated to their proper source – the observer – the world of nature which remains appears strangely unfamiliar; but it is in reality simplified, and the underlying unity of the principal phenomena from this new outlook have, with one doubtful exception, been confirmed when tested by experiment.”

I must confess that I was amazed with every amazement when so the the eminent astronomer failed to follow up this brilliant outburst by turning the devastation of his artillery upon the ramparts of the citadel whose outlying defenses he had shattered with such stupendous thunderbolts. Now came it that the very act of detecting so subtly, and removing so skillfully, the mote in his neighbour's eye, did not suggest to him that he might be incommoded by the beam of his own? Aware of the errors introduced into his calculations by the comparatively steady, regular, and imperceptible motion of his earth-borne body, how not to be stricken aghast to contemplate the possible consequences of taking, as a fixed and absolute point for the base of his triangulations, and unknown and uncontrollable engine in violent, erratic and incalculable action, neither to be mastered nor measured, his mind? Who dare presume to set limits to the eccentricities of a brain which is the logical conclusion for a love-harried, witch-burning, god-fearing, fox-hunting, cannibal ape, spice with tubercle, syphilis, insanity and the rest of the poisons for one premise and an unintelligible and accidental environment for the other? Is not every thought determined, and its validity indeterminable, especially by its owner? Who then shall decide what “trustworthy reasoning” may mean?

At the very least, we must eliminate as far as possible very obvious source of error, such as personality (in particular) involves. But further, we must regulate the motion of the mind, control it, bring it to a standstill. It may be – I know that it is – that as soon as thought is prevented from bewildering us with its torrential turmoil, we may become aware that we possess a subtler and steadier organ of apprehension. This is in fact one of the principal

points of initiation.

AL I,28: “None, breathed the light, faint & faery, of the stars, and two.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

Now appears the plain statement of the Perfect Metaphysick. It may be as well to quote the essential passages from 'Bereshith' in connexion with this matter.

“I ASSERT THE ABSOLUTENESS OF THE QABALISTIC ZERO.”

When we say that the Cosmos sprang from 0, what kind of 0 do we mean? By 0 in the ordinary sense of the term we mean “absence of extension in any of the categories”.

When I say “No cat has two tails” I do not mean, as the old fallacy runs, that “Absence-of-cat possesses two tails”; but that “In the category of two-tailed things, there is no extension of cat”.

Nothingness is that about which no positive proposition is valid. We cannot truly affirm: “Nothingness is green, or heavy, or sweet”.

Let us call time, space, being, heaviness, hunger, the categories. If a man be heavy and hungry, he is extended in all these, besides, of course, many more. But let us suppose these five are all. Call the man X; his formula is then

$ts b h h$

X. If he now eat he will cease to be extended in hunger; if he be cut off from time and gravitation as well, he will now be represented by the formula

sb

X. Should he cease to occupy space and to exist, his formula would then be

0

X. This expansion is equal to 1; whatever X may represent, if it be raised to the power of 0 (this meaning mathematically “If it be extended in no dimension or category”), the result is Unity, and the unknown factor X is eliminated.

Now if there was in truth 0, “before the beginning of years”, THAT 0 WAS EXTENDED IN NONE OF THE CATEGORIES, FOR THERE COULD HAVE BEEN NO CATEGORIES IN WHICH IT COULD EXTEND! If our 0 was the ordinary 0 of mathematics, there was not truly absolute 0, for 0 is, as I have shown, dependent on the idea of categories. If these existed, then the whole question is merely thrown back; we must reach a state in which 0 is absolute. Not only must we get rid of all subjects, but of all predicates. By 0 (in mathematics) we really mean 0 to the n, where n is the final term of a natural scale of dimensions, categories, or predicates. Our Cosmic Gee, then, from which the present universe arose, was Nothingness, extended in no categories, or, graphically, 0 to the 0. This expression is in its present form meaningless. Let us discover its value by a simple mathematical process.

$0 \ 1-1$

$0 = 0 = 01/01$ (Multiply by $1 = n/n$) Then $01/n \times n/01 = 0 \times \text{infinity}$

Now the multiplying of the infinitely great by the infinitely small results in SOME UNKNOWN FINITE NUMBER EXTENDED IN AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF CATEGORIES. It happened, when this our Great Inversion took place, from the essence of all nothingness to finity extended in innumerable categories, that an incalculably vast system was produced. Merely by chance, chance in the truest sense of the term, we are found with gods, men, stars, planets, devils, colours, forces, and all the materials of the cosmos; and with time, space, and causality, the conditions limiting and involving them all.

Remember that it is not true to say that our 0 to the 0 existed; nor that it did not exist. The idea of existence was just as much unformulated as that of toasted cheese.

But 0 to the 0 is a finite expression, or has a finite phase, and our universe is a finite universe; its categories are themselves finite, and the expression “infinite space” is a contradiction in terms. The idea of an absolute and of an infinite God is relegated to the limbo of all similar idle and pernicious perversions of truth. Infinity remains; but only as a mathematical conception as impossible in nature as the square root of -1.”

This passage was written in 1902, E.V., before the revelation of the Law. It remains true that 'infinite space is a contradiction in terms', and so on; but this is no argument against the Cosmogony of this Book. For above the Abyss every idea soever is necessarily a contradiction in terms; see Liber 418 for the demonstration of this.

There is much more on these points in Liber Aleph, and in “The Urn”.

“Breathed” and “light” are highly significant words, implying the duality of creation in breath – inspiration and expiration – and that of vibratory light; while breath is also Aleph, whose card is numbered Zero; and Light is L.V.X. 120, the Rosy Cross, wherein the Positive is dissolved in the Negative.

AL I,29: “For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

I quote from “The Book of Lies (falsely so-called)”.

THE OYSTER

The Brothers of A.:A.: are one with the Mother of the child.

The Many is as adorable to the One as the One is to the Many. This is the Love of These: creation-parturition is the Bliss of the One; coition-dissolution is the Bliss of the Many.

The All, thus interwoven of These, is Bliss.

Naught is beyond Bliss.

The Man delights in uniting with the Woman;

the Woman in parting from the child

The Brothers of A.:A.: are Women; the Aspirants to A.:A.: are Men.“

In order to have Motion one must have Change. In fact, one must have this in order to have anything at all. Now this Change is what we call Love. thus “love under will” is the Law of Motion. The re-entrant character of this Motion is difficult to conceive; but the Aspirant is urged to try to assimilate the idea. A Hindu might compare the Cosmic process to a churn which out of milk made butter to feed a milk-producing woman, every step in the cycle being a Progress of Joy.

Time is necessarily created by us in order to make room for the apparent existence of the duality which we devise for the presentation of unity, or nihility.

“Two things” must evidently exist either in two places, or at two times, or both; else they would be indistinguishable.

Two phenomena which differ in time would be considered simultaneous if separated in space so that our observation of the former were delayed, for several reasons; and it is fairly easy to realize the possibility. But it seems as if separation in space were somehow more intractable. I can see no priori reason for this distinction; I think it arises from the fact that space is directly presented to our senses, while time is proper to the mental apprehension of impressions.

Our universe is (after all) in one place, so far as we are concerned, i.e., in our sensoria, so that any two impressions can only be registered by us as consecutive. Even when we are aware of their simultaneity, we are compelled to place them in sequence. Our sensorium makes no distinction between concrete and abstract ideas in this respect. Sensory impressions and general ideas are equally grist for the mill. But we make a distinction between our record

of events whose sequence is a necessary part of our comprehension of them, and those which are independent of our history. We insist on the sequence of school and college, but our general judgments are recognized as independent of time. This is peculiarly the case with our idea of the Ego, which we instinctively regard as if it were eternal and unchanging, though in fact it grows and decays continually. Yet we think of the incidents of boyhood as having occurred to the Ego, forming part of its character.

Now since this Ego is only conscious by virtue of having formulated itself, or the Universe (as it happens to view the case), in the form of Duality, and since all the experiences of the Ego are necessary to it, as all phenomena soever are necessary, it is permissible to regard the totality of the experience of the Ego as the presentation in duality of a single simultaneous fact.

In other words, life is an attempt to realize one's own nature in one's own soul.

The man who fails to recognize it as such is hopelessly bewildered by the irrational character of the universe, which he takes to be real; and he cannot but regard it as aimless and absurd. The adventures of his body and mind, with their desires for material and moral well-being, are obviously as foredoomed to disaster as Don Quixote's. He must be a fool if he struggles on (against inexorable fate) to obtain results which he knows can only end in catastrophe, a climax the more bitter as he clings the more closely to his impossible ideals.

But once he acquiesces in the necessity of the course of events, and considers his body and mind as no more than the instruments which interpret himself to himself by means of dualistic presentation, he should soon acquire a complete indifference to the nature of the incidents which occur to him.

It is not surprising that these incidents should occur in an apparent disorderly sequence any more than that the colours of a picture, or the words of a story, should not be disturbed according to an a priori classification, as in a Lexicon or a colourman's catalogue. His task as a connoisseur is to recognize the idea of the artist, and this he can only do by appreciation of the complete work. He must analyze the assemblage of elements, and assign the correct value to each, comprehending the intention of each relative to the finished design.

It will be said that nobody can realize himself so long as the presentation is imperfect, that is, so long as he is incarnated. This is no doubt true in all rigour; but one can obtain an approximation to the intended self-knowledge by withdrawing for a time to the monistic form of self-consciousness, which does not distinguish between the Ego and the Non-Ego; in other words, by attaining Samadhi. But the first experience of Samadhi will then naturally be an ecstasy devoid of name or form, and containing no elements distinguishable as such; and we know this to be the case. One has simply deprived oneself of the means of expression, and all dual consciousness disappears, together with its forms, time and space. One concludes from this that the Universe is identical with the Ego, and all things dissolve into a formless essence characterized by knowledge and bliss. But this early stage of Samadhi is an illusion, a sort of drunken dizziness. (So in sexual love, the ecstasy abolishes the Ego, apparently; it forgets that duality was its cause, and must be equally real with itself, in one sense or another). But subsequent Samadhi teaches the adept that his universal instantaneous Unity exists as "None and Two"; and he learns that his Samadhi is peculiar to himself as well as common to all.

He becomes able to experience the truth of the statements in the Book of the Law, the nature of Nuith and Hadith, and of himself as a Star, unique, individual, and eternal, but yet a part of the Body of Nuith, and therefore identical with all other stars in that respect.

He realizes himself as the "bed in working" of Nuith and Hadith, as a particular form assumed by the latter for the sake of Variety in his "play" with the former; and he partakes in this play by his self-realization, which he synthesizes from the "events of his life".

He understands that these events are the resultant of the Universe as applied to him, so that his experience is equally unique and universal, each star being the centre of the cosmos, and the Cosmos applicable as a whole to each star.

The experiences of each angle of a triangle are common to all, for one can express any relation as a function of any angle, at will. Each may be taken as the starting-point of the study of the properties to the triangle. But each angle is

necessary to the triangle, and each is equally important to its existence. Each is bound to the others, and moreover each is in a sense illusory in respect of the triangle, which is an idea, simple and ideal, whose unity is compelled to express itself and manifest its properties by extension as a plane figure. For no triangle can express the idea of a triangle. Any triangle must be either equilateral, isosceles or scalene, either acute, right-angled, or obtuse; and no one triangle can be all these at once; while the idea of a triangle includes all these, and infinite other, possibilities.

In a similar way, Nuith and Hadith include all possible forms of existence; they can only realize Themselves by creating an infinite variety of forms of Themselves, each one real as it is Their image, illusory as it is a partial and divided aspect of Them.

Each such Star is intelligible to Them, as a poem is to its author as a part of this soul mirrored by his mind. But it is not intelligible to itself, because it has no relation with any other ideas; it only knows itself as the babe of its mother Nuith, to whom it yearns, being stirred by its father Hadith to express that instinctive attachment by inarticulate cries.

To know itself, each such Star, or Soul, must eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, by accepting labour and pain as its portion, and death as its doom. That is, it must reveal its nature to itself by formulating that nature as duality. It must express itself by a series of symbolic gestures ostensibly external to it, just as a painter reveals one facet of his Delight-Diamond by covering a canvas with colours in such a way that the picture seems at first sight to represent something outside himself. It must, in fact, repeat for itself the original Magick of Nuith and Hadith which created it.

As They made Themselves visible piecemeal by fashioning particular Souls, expressing the Impersonal and Absolute Homogeneity by means of Personal Relative Heterogeneity, so, not forgetting their true nature as forms of the Infinite, whereby they are one with all, must the stars devise methods of studying themselves.

They must make images of themselves, apparently external, and they must represent their highly complex qualities in a duality involving space and time. For each Star is of necessity related to every other star, so that no influence is alien to its individuality; it must therefore observe its reaction to every other star.

Just so are most chemical elements possessed of but few qualities directly appreciable by our senses; we must learn their natures by putting them into relation with the other Elements in turn. (Note well that this knowledge were impossible unless there were a variety of elements; so also the fact of our self-consciousness proves the existence of individual souls; all related, all parts of the One Soul, in one sense, but none the less independent in themselves, eternal entities expressing particular elements of existence).

Each star is in itself immune and innocent; its proper consciousness is monistic; it must therefore employ a body and mind as the instruments for interpreting its relations with other souls, and comparing its nature with theirs. For the mind perceives the contrast of the Self and the not-Self, and presents its experiences, classified and judged, to the soul as documents for the dossier; and the body reports to the mind the impressions received from its contact with alien forms as the senses receive them.

It must naturally require many incarnations for the soul to begin to know itself with any degree of perfection; and one may recognize advanced souls by their minds, which understand the nature of their work, are indifferent to the body's preference for any special forms of experience, and seek eagerly after novel adventures (like a philatelist after rare stamps) to complete the collection. They are also as a rule both very careful and very careless about their bodily welfare, taking pains to preserve their powers for the purpose of gaining new experiences, but utterly indifferent to them as valuable in themselves. They rule them with a rod of iron, and train them like pugilists; but they risk them recklessly whenever the Work demands it.

It is important to understand the necessity of our present Universe. Perfection could do not otherwise than create Imperfection. But was there not original Imperfection? No; for Perfection is hardly more than that original state, since we cannot conceive the total as susceptible of addition. «Note that {infinity?}, the sum of the series of natural numbers, is not increased in value by the addition, or diminished by the subtraction of any finite number. Yet 2 is greater than ... ! The fact illustrates our "Naught and Two" theory in a most instructive manner.» This is another

view of the God going through the combinations, on a larger scale, and shows not only why He does it, but why He must do it. But is not all this based on the accident that I personally am bored by omniscience on any given matter? Yes, but Imperfection is a fact, and a God whom Perfection did not bore would not have created Imperfection. But why not suppose a wicked God, or a foolish God? Things which seem to me wrong, or stupid, are so because I am the sole judge. But these things are not my creations, but those of other Gods. True, but those Gods are all part of me, so far as I know them. So then, in my own nature are these contrary Gods, which (as above said) I have created in myself to give variety. You see that you cannot conceive these divers 'Gods without conceiving also a Whole, in which the entire equation cancels out to Naught. One cannot conceive it as a Unity, because 1 to the 0 power like 1 to the first power, 1 to the 2nd power, etc., is only one, 1, and cannot become 2 by reflection, as I thought 75 {WEH NOTE: Sic. This is not possible and must be a typo in the TS. Grant Op. Cit. gives "18".} years ago, because there is nothing else to reflect it, or it could not be both All and One. (A heterogeneous One, with a mirror in its All, would be two). Now Evil is only minus to anyone's Plus; you cannot have an Evil to destroy the Whole (or we have Two again.) Therefore no Evil can possibly do any harm; it can only be part of the Play. The Whole is destroyed as soon as understood; that is, it is conceived as zero to the zero power again; this then bursts forth in some new combination, with no gain or loss except (perhaps ? ?) the gain due to Time, as explained elsewhere. But in this case what is Time? It is a fundamental condition of experience, to say nothing of memory, so is necessary to the Finitude Phase of zero to the zero power, that is, to any Universe where change occurs. Is there any possible connexion between two successive such Phases? No; they must be alike in one respect that they each cancel out, so Balance is a necessary principle. More so than time; for one could have a Samadhis Phase which developed Nirvi-Kalpa instantly.

But if no Time, then a Unity, which could never become Naught; no such Phase is possible. Duality is therefore the nature of any manifested Universe.

1 exists, true; but only by a fiction; for there is always a -1 to cancel it. But we get the illusion of 1 when we add 1/2 to 1/2 or 1/3 to 2/3, etc., things – each conscious of its fractional character – seeking to be whole. Now the bigger any 'One' gets, the more conscious it is of its "Minus One" wife, the more clearly it sees that 'One' is illusion, and had better cancel out. The general process of Initiation is therefore the same for all possible universes.

From the standpoint of Physics, the original Inertia expresses itself as two complementary forms of Energy – the small active Negative Electron (Hadit) and the large passive Positive Electron (Nuit). (It has recently been shown that the mass of Matter is zero). When these satisfy each other, two phenomena occur: (1) their opposed equalities cancel out to Zero. (Perhaps even to 0 to the 0 power, thus restoring the original Indeterminate Nothing). (2) a "child" is born of the union; i.e., a positive phenomenon is produced, whose nature is entirely different from that of either of its 'parents'; for it is finite, and possesses limitations and qualities of its own. Groups of such primaeval units form the various kinds of 'atom', according to the number and geometric disposition thereof. (This involves projection in space and time, ideas which are not necessary to the Electrons, they being simply ideas posited to serve as a basis for any dualistic expression to which Zero may be equated, such as Being and Form, Matter and Motion. We invent Space, Time, Sense-Impression, etc. to enable us to distinguish between "experiences" to express our conception of the multiplicity of the possibilities contained in the Idea of Zero. Each human consciousness being a case of one particular way of grouping elements, its conception of the Cosmos is limited by the necessary relations of that group to other groups. It grows by "union" with such groups, and is glad, partly because it satisfied its Oedipus-complex by thus approaching Nuit, partly because it fulfils its natural function of Creation.

AL I,30: "This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all."

THE NEW COMMENT.

This verse is written for men who are still in division, and sore about it; the pain is only in their idea of it. One should compare this thought with the Freudian psychology, which regards all separation from the 'Mother' as heroic but painful. But has a hero really no compensations? Besides, separation is itself a relief, just so soon as the strain becomes irksome, as in parturition.

As to “the joy of dissolution” the reference is to Samadhi, the trance in which Subject and Object become one. In this orgiastic ecstasy is experienced at first; later, the character of the consciousness changes to continuously calm delight, and later still, the delight deepens in a manner wholly indescribable. The technical terms used by Oriental Initiates to denote these conditions are untranslatable; in any case, they serve rather to darken counsel.

There is a Qabalistic aphorism concerning the words 'nothing' and 'all'; for this and similar matters see the Appendix. {WEH NOTE: The Appendix has not yet been recovered}.

AL I,31: “For these fools of men and their woes care not thou at all! They feel little; what is, is balanced by weak joys; but ye are my chosen ones.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

All this talk about 'suffering humanity' is principally driven based on the error of transferring one's own psychology to one's neighbour. The Golden Rule is silly. If Lord Alfred Douglas (for example) did to others what he would like them to do to him, many would resent his action.

The development of the Adept is by Expansion – out to Nuit – in all directions equally. The small man has little experience, little capacity for either pain or pleasure. The bourgeois is a clod. I know better (at least) than to suppose that to torture him is either beneficial or amusing to myself.

This thesis concerning compassion is of the most palmary importance in the ethics of Thelema. It is necessary that we stop, once for all, this ignorant meddling with other people's business. Each individual must be left free to follow his own path. America is peculiarly insane on these points. Her people are desperately anxious to make the Cingalese wear furs, and the Tibetans vote, and the whole world chew gum, utterly dense to the fact that most other nations, especially the French and British, regard 'American institutions' as the lowest savagery, and forgetful or ignorant of the circumstance that the original brand of American freedom – which really was Freedom – contained the precept to leave other people severely alone, and thus assured the possibility of expansion on his own lines to every man.

AL I,32: “Obey my prophet! follow out the ordeals of my knowledge! seek me only! Then the joys of my love will redeem ye from all pain. This is so: I swear it by the vault of my body; by my sacred heart and tongue; by all I can give, by all I desire of ye all.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

32. The rule and purpose of the Order; the promise of Nuit to her chosen.

THE NEW COMMENT.

It is proper to obey The Beast, because His Law is pure Freedom, and He will give no command which is other than a Right Interpretation of this Freedom. But it is necessary for the development of Freedom itself to have an organization; and every organization must have a highly-centralized control. This is especially necessary in time of war, as even the so-called 'democratic' nations have been taught by Experience, since they would not learn from Germany. Now this age is pre-eminently a 'time of war', most of all now, when it is our Work to overthrow the slave-gods.

The injunction “seek me only” is emphasized with an oath, and a special promise is made in connection with it. By seeking lesser ideals one makes distinctions, thereby affirming implicitly the very duality from which one is seeking to escape. Note also that “me” may imply the Greek MH, “not”. The word 'only' might be taken as '{?Ayin-Lamed-Nun-Vau?}' with the number of 156, that of the Secret Name BABALON of Nuith. There are presumably further hidden meanings in the key-word 'all'.

AL I,33: “Then the priest fell into a deep trance or swoon, & said unto the Queen of Heaven; Write unto us the ordeals; write unto us the rituals; write unto us the law!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

33.The prophet then demanded instruction; ordeals, rituals, law.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Law, in the common sense of the word, should be a formulation of the customs of a people, as Euclid's propositions are the formulation of geometrical facts. But modern knavery conceived the idea of artificial law, as if one should try to square the circle by tyranny. Legislators try to force the people to change their customs, so that the “business men” whose greed they are bribed to serve may increase their profits.

'Law' in Greek, is NOMOC, from NEM, and means strictly “anything assigned, that which one has in use or possession”; hence “custom, usage”, and also “a musical strain”. The literal equivalence of NEM and the Latin NEMO is suggestive. In Hebrew, 'Law' is ThORA and equivalent to words meaning “The Gate of the Kingdom” and “The Book of Wisdom”.

AL I,34: “But she said: the ordeals I write not: the rituals shall be half known and half concealed: the Law is for all.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

The first demand is refused, or, it may be, is to be communicated by another means than writing.

(It has since been communicated)



The second is partially granted; or, if fully granted, is not to be made wholly public.

The third is granted unconditionally.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The Ordeals are at present carried out unknown to the Candidate by the secret Magick Power of The Beast. Those who are accepted by Him for initiation testify that these Ordeals are frequently independent of His conscious care. They are not, like the traditi

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