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Chapter I

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Chapter II

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 vel L E G I S

sub figura CCXX

as delivered by (LXXVIII) XCIII unto DCLXVI

with a commentary by

T H E B E A S T

TO MEGA THERION 666

(Part II, comment to Chapter II)

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AL II,1: “Nu! the hiding of Hadit.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

1. As Had, the root of Hadit, is the manifestation of Nuit, so Nu, the root of Nuit, is the hiding of Hadit.

THE NEW COMMENT.

We see again set forth the complementary character of Nuith and Hadith. Nu conceals Had because He is

Everywhere in the Infinite, and She manifests Him for the same reason. See verse 3. Every Individual manifests the Whole; and the Whole conceals every Individual. The Soul interprets the Universe; and the Universe veils the Soul. Nature understands Herself by becoming self-conscious in Her units; and the Consciousness loses its sense of separateness by dissolution in Her.

There has been much difficulty in the orthography (in sacred languages) of these names. Nu is clearly stated to be 56, {NV}; but Had is only hinted obscurely. This matter is discussed later more fully; verses 15 and 16.

{WEH NOTE: “Hadit” is the spelling of “Bahadit” found on the Stele. This is unusual in that most Egyptian spelling of the period maintained the “Ba” prefix. Crowley adopted the spelling from the Stele, and it is common as well in Liber AL. This “Hadit” or “Bahadit” is the winged sun disk, used over the entrances of temple doorways, at the tops of stel and elsewhere in Egyptian art and architecture. Interestingly, the full name of Ra-Hoor-Khuit is Ra-Heru-Khuti-Ba-Hadi, Ra-Horus who flies into the disk of the sun. — information researched by Fr. Ebony. Liber AL was received during that part of the year in which Ra-Heru-Khuti-Ba-Hadi was said by the ancient Egyptians to rule the decan occupied by the Sun. It is not known if Crowley was aware of this particular deity being astrologically “on official watch” at the time.}

AL II,2: “Come! all ye, and learn the secret that hath not yet been revealed. I, Hadit, am the complement of Nu, my bride. I am not extended, and Khabs is the name of my House.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

2. Nuit is Infinite Extension; Hadit Infinite Contraction. Khabs is the House of Hadit, even as Nuit is the house of Khu, and the Khabs is in the Khu (I,8). These theologies reflect mystic experiences of Infinite Contraction and Expansion, while philosophically they are the two opposing Infinities whose interplay gives Finity.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Khabs – 'a star' – is an unit of Nuit, and therefore Nuit Herself. This doctrine is enormously difficult of apprehension, even after these many years of study.

Hadit is the 'core of every star,' verse 6. He is thus the Impersonal Identity within the Individuality of 'every man and every woman.'

He is 'not extended;' that is, without condition of any sort in the metaphysical sense. Only in the highest trances can the nature of these truths be realized. It is indeed a suprarational experience not dissimilar to those characteristic of the “Star-Sponge” Vision previously described that can help us here. The trouble is that the truth itself is unfitted to the dualistic reason of “normal” mankind. Hadit seems to be the principle of Motion which is everywhere, yet is not extended in any dimension except as it chances to combine with the “Matter” which is Nuit. There can evidently be no manifestation apart from this conjunction. A “Khabs” or Star is apparently any nucleus where this conjunction has taken place. The real philosophical difficulty about this cosmogony is not concerned with any particular equation, or even with the Original Equation. We can understand $x = ab$, $x = a, b, \& c$; and also $0\text{degrees} = pa + qb$, whether $pa - qb = 0$ or not. But we ask how the homogeneity of both Nuit and Hadit can ever lead to even the illusion of “difference.” The answer appears to be that this difference appears naturally with the self-realization of Nuit as the totality of possibilities; each of these, singly and in combination, is satisfied or set in motion by Hadit, to compose a particular manifestation. 0degrees could possess no signification at all, unless there were diverse dimensions wherein it had no extension. “Nothing” means nothing save from the point of view of “Two,” just as “Two” is monstrous unless it is seen as a mode of “Nothing.”

The above explanation appears somewhat disingenuous, since there is no means whatever of distinguishing any Union $H + N = R$ from another. We must postulate a further stage. R (Ra-Hoor-Khuit) Kether, Unity, is always itself; but we may suppose that a number of such homogeneous positive manifestations may form groups differing from each other as to size and structure so as to create the illusion of diversity.

AL II,3: “In the sphere I am everywhere the centre, as she, the circumference, is nowhere found.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

3. A further development of higher meaning. This verse suggests an old mystical definition of God: “He whose centre is everywhere and Whose circumference nowhere”.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This is again interesting as throwing light on the thesis; Every man and every woman is a star. There is no place soever that is not a Centre of Light.

This Truth is to be realised by direct perception, not merely by intellection. It is axiomatic; it cannot be demonstrated. It is to be assimilated by experience of the Vision of the “Star-Sponge.”

AL II,4: “Yet she shall be known & I never.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

4. The circumference of Nuit touches Ra-Hoor-Khuit, Kether; but her centre Hadit is forever concealed above Kether. Is not Nu the Hiding of Hadit, and Had the Manifestation of Nuit? (I later, Sun in Libra, An. VII, dislike this note; and refer the student to Liber XI and Liber DLV.

THE NEW COMMENT.

See later, verse 13, “Thou (i.e. the Beast, who is here the Mask, or “per-sona,” of Hadit) wast the knower.” Hadit possesses the power to know, Nuit that of being known. Nuit is not unconnected with the idea of Nibbana, the “Shoreless Sea,” in which Knowledge is Not.

Hadit is hidden in Nuit, and knows Her, She being an object of knowledge; but He is not knowable, for He is merely that part of Her which She formulates in order that She may be known.

AL II,5: “Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet! Then shall this Knowledge go aright.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

5. A reference to certain magical formulae known to the scribe of this book.

The purification of said rituals is in progress at this time, An.V.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The 'old time' is the Aeon of the Dying God. Some of his rituals are founded on an utterly false metaphysic and cosmogony; but others are based on Truth. We mend these, and end those.

This “Knowledge” is the initiated Wisdom of this Aeon of Horus.

See Book 4, Part III, for an account of the new principles of magick.

Note that Knowledge is Daath, Child of Chokmah by Binah, and crown of Microprosopus; yet he is not one of the Sephiroth, and his place is in the Abyss. By this symbolism we draw attention to the fact that Knowledge is by nature impossible; for it implies Duality and is therefore relative. Any proposition of Knowledge may be written “ARB:” “A has the relation R to B.” Now if A and B are identical, the proposition conveys no knowledge at all. If A is not identical with B, ARB implies “A is identical with B;” this assumes that not less than three distinct ideas exist. In every case, we must proceed either to the identity which means ultimately “Nothing,” or to divergent diversities which only seem to mean something so long as we refrain from pushing the analysis of any term to its logical elements. For example, “Sugar is sugar” is obviously not knowledge. But no more is this: “Sugar is a sweet white crystalline carbo-hydrate.” For each of these four terms describes a sensory impression on ourselves; and we define our impressions only in terms of such things as sugar. Thus “sweet” means “the quality ascribed by our taste to honey, sugar, etc.”; “white” is “what champaks, zinc oxide, sugar, etc. report to our eyesight;” and so on. The proposition is ultimately an identity, for all our attempts to evade the issue by creating complications. “Knowledge” is therefore not a “thing-in-itself;” it is rightly denied a place upon the Tree of Life; it pertains to the Abyss.

Besides the above considerations, it may be observed that Knowledge, so far as it exists at all, even as a statement of relation, is no more than a momentary phenomenon of consciousness. It is annihilated in the instant of its creation. For no sooner do we assent to ARB than ARB is absorbed in our conception of A. After the nine-days' wonder of "The earth revolves round the sun," we modify our former idea of Earth. "Earth" is intuitively classed with other solar satellites. The proposition vanishes automatically as it is assimilated. Knowledge, while it exists as such is consequently "sub judice", at the best.

What then may we understand by this verse, with its capital K for "Knowledge?" What is it, and how shall it "go aright?" The key is in the word "go." It cannot "be," as we have seen above; it is the fundamental error of the "Black Brothers" in their policy of resisting all Change, to try to maintain it as fixed and absolute. But (as the Tree of Life indicates) Knowledge is the means by which the conscious mind, Microprosopus, reaches to Understanding and to Wisdom, its mother and father, which reflect respectively Nuith and Hadit from the Ain and Kether. The process is to use each new item of knowledge to correct and increase one's comprehension of the Subject of the Proposition.

Thus ARB should tell us: A is (not A, as we supposed) but A. This facilitates the discovery A,R,C leading to A, is A(index2); and so on. In practice, every thing that we learn about (e.g.) "horse" helps us to understand – to enjoy – the idea. The difference between the scholar and the schoolboy is that the former glows and exults when he is reminded of some word like "Thalassa." Ourselves:- What a pageant of passion empurples our minds whenever we think of the number 93! Most of all, each new thing that we know about ourselves helps us to realize what we mean by our "Star."

Now, "the rituals of the old time," are no longer valid vehicles; Knowledge cannot 'go aright' until they are adapted to the Formula of the New Aeon. Their defects are due principally to two radical errors. (1.) The Universe was conceived as possessing a fixed centre, or summit; an absolute standard to which all things might be referred; an Unity, or God. (Mystics were angry and bewildered, often enough, when attaining to "union with God" they found him equally in all). This led to making a difference between one thing and another, and so to the ideas of superiority, of sin, etc., ending by absurdities of all kinds, alike in theology, ethics, and science. (2) The absolute antithesis between the pairs of opposites. This is really a corollary of (1). There was an imaginary "absolute evil" which made Manichaeism necessary – despite the cloaks of the Causists – and meant "That which leads one away from God." But each man, while postulating an absolute "God" defined Him unconsciously in terms of a Freudian Phantasm created by his own wish-fulfilment machinery. Thus "God" and "Evil" were really expressions of personal prejudice. A man who "bowed humbly to the Authority of" the Pope, or the Bible, or the Sanhedrim, or the Oracle of Apollo, or the tribal Medicine-Man, none the less expressed truly his own Wish to abdicate responsibility. In the light of this Book, we know that the centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere; that "Every man and every woman is a star," a "Khabs," the name of the house of Hadit; that "The word of Sin is Restriction." To us, then, "evil" is a relative term; it is "that which hinders one from fulfilling his true Will." (E.g., rain is "good" or "bad" for the farmer according to the requirements of his crops).

The Osirian Rituals inculcating self-sacrifice to an abstract ideal, mutilation to appease an "ex cathedra" morality, fidelity to a priori formulae, etc. teach false and futile methods of acquiring false Knowledge; they must be 'cast away' or 'purged'. The Schools of Initiation must be reformed.

AL II,6: "I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life, yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death."

THE OLD COMMENT.

6. Hadit is the Ego or Atman in everything, but of course a loftier and more secret thing than anything understood by the Hindus. And of course the distinction between Ego and Ego is illusion. Hence Hadit, who is the life of all that is, if known, becomes the death of that individuality.

THE NEW COMMENT.

It follows that, as Hadit can never be known, there is no death. The death of the individual is his awakening to the impersonal immortality of Hadit. This applies less to physical death than to the Crossing of the Abyss; for which see

Liber 418, Fourteenth Aethyr. One may attain to be aware that one is but a particular 'child' of the Play of Hadit and Nuit; one's personality is then perceived as being a disguise. It is not only not a living thing, as one had thought; but a mere symbol without substance, incapable of life. It is the conventional form of a certain cluster of thoughts, themselves the partial and hieroglyphic symbols of an 'ego.' The conscious and sensible 'man' is to his Self just what the printed letters on this page are to me who have caused them to manifest in colour and form. They are arbitrary devices for conveying my thought; I could use French or Greek just as well. Nor is this thought, here conveyed, more than one ray of my Orb; and even that whole Orb is but the garment of Me. The analogy is precise; therefore when one becomes "the knower," it involves the 'death' of all sense of the Ego. One perceives one's personality precisely as I now do these printed letters; and they are forgotten, just as, absorbed in my thought, the trained automatism of my mind and body expresses that thought in writing, without attention on my part, still less with identification of the extremes involved in the process.

AL II,7: "I am the Magician and the Exorcist. I am the axle of the wheel, and the cube in the circle. "Come unto me" is a foolish word: for it is I that go."

THE OLD COMMENT.

7. Hadit is both the Maker of Illusion and its destroyer. For though His interplay with Nuit results in the production of the Finite, yet His withdrawing into Himself is the destruction thereof.

"...the axle of the wheel", another way of saying that He is the Core of Things.

"... the cube in the circle." Cf. Liber 418, The Vision and the Voice, 30th Aethyr.

"'Come unto me' is a foolish word: for it is I that go." That is, Hadit is everywhere; yet, being sought, he flies. The Ego cannot be found, as meditation will show.

THE NEW COMMENT.

"It is I that go." The Book Aleph must be consulted for a full demonstration of this truth. We may say briefly that Hadit is Motion, that is, Change or 'Love.' The symbol of Godhead in Egypt was the Ankh, which is a sandal-strap, implying the Power to Go; and it suggests the Rosy Cross, the Fulfilment of Love, by its shape.

The Wheel and the Circle are evidently symbols of Nuith; this sentence insists upon the conception of Lingam-Yoni. But beyond the obvious relation, we observe two geometrical definitions. The axle is a cylinder set perpendicularly to the plane of the wheel; thus Hadit supplies the third dimension to Nuith. It suggests that Matter is to be conceived as Two-dimensional; that is, perhaps, as possessed of two qualities, extension and potentiality. To these Hadit brings motion and position. The wheel moves; manifestation now is possible. Its perception implies three-dimensional space, and time. But note that the Mover is himself not moved. The "cube in the circle" emphasizes this question of dimensions. The cube is rectilinear (therefore phallic no less than the axle); its unity suggests perfection projected as a "solid" for human perception; its square faces affirm balance, equity, and limitation; its six-sidedness sets it among the solar symbols. It is thus like the Sun in the Zodiac, which is no more than the field for His fulfilment in His going. He, by virtue of his successive relations with each degree of the circle, clothes Himself with an appearance of "Matter in Motion," although absolute motion through space is a meaningless expression (Eddington, Op, cit.). None the less, every point in the cube – there are 2 of them – has a unique relation with every point in the circle exactly balanced against an equal and opposite relation. We have thus Matter that both is and is not, Motion that both moves and moves not, interacting in a variety of ways which is infinite to manifest individuals, each of which is unlike any other, yet is symmetrically supported by its counterpart. Note that even at the centre of gravity of the cube no two rays are identical except in mere length. They differ as to their point of contact with the circle, their right ascension, and their relation with the other points of the cube.

Why is Nuith restricted to two dimensions? We usually think of space as a sphere. "None — and two:" extension and potentiality are Her only projections of Naught. It is strange, by the way to find that modern mathematics says "Spherical space is not very easy to imagine" (Eddington, Op.cit.p.158) and prefers to attribute a geometrical form whose resemblance to the Kteis is most striking. For Nuit is, philosophically speaking, the archetype of the Kteis,

giving appropriate Form to all Being, and offering every possibility of fulfilment of every several point that it envelops. But Nuit cannot be symbolized as three-dimensional, in our system; each unit has position by three spatial, and one temporal, coordinates. It cannot exist, in our consciousness, with less, as a reality. Each 'individual' must be a 'point-interval;' he must be the product of some part of the Matter of Nuit (with special energies) determined in space by his relations with his neighbours, and in time by his relations with himself.

It is evidently “a foolish word” for Hadit to say “Come unto me,” as did Nuit naturally enough, meaning “Fulfil thy possibilities;” for who can “come unto” Motion itself, who draw near unto that which is in very truth his innermost identity?

AL II,8: “Who worshipped Heru-pa-kraath have worshipped me; ill, for I am the worshipper.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

8. He is symbolized by Harpocrates, crowned child upon the lotus whose shadow is called Silence.

Yet His Silence is the Act of Adoration; not the dumb callousness of heaven toward man, but the supreme ritual, the Silence of supreme Orgasm, the stilling of all Voices in the perfect rapture.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Harpocrates is also the Dwarf-Soul, the Secret Self of every man, the Serpent with the Lion's Head. Now Hadit knows Nuit by virtue of his 'Going' or 'Love.' It is therefore wrong to worship Hadit; one is to be Hadit, and worship Her. This is clear even from His instruction “To worship me” in verse 22 of this chapter. Confer, Cap.I, v.9. We are exhorted to offer ourselves unto Nuit, pilgrims to all her temples. It is bad Magick to admit that one is other than One's inmost self. One should plunge passionately into every possible experience; by doing so one is purged of those personal prejudices which we took so stupidly for ourselves, though they prevented us from realizing our true

Wills and from knowing our Names and Natures. The Aspirant must well understand that it is no paradox to say that the Annihilation of the Ego in the Abyss is the condition of emancipating the true Self, and exalting it to unimaginable heights. So long as one remains “one's self,” one is overwhelmed by the Universe; destroy the sense of self, and every event is equally an expression of one's Will, since its occurrence is the resultant of the concourse of the forces which one recognizes as one's own.

AL II,9: “Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

9. Hence we pass naturally and easily to the sublime optimism of verse 9. The lie is given to the pessimism, not by sophistry, but by a direct knowledge.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This verse is very thoroughly explained in Liber Aleph. “All in this kind are but shadows” says Shakespeare, referring to actors. The Universe is a Puppet-Play for the amusement of Nuit and Hadit in their Nuptials; a very Midsummer Night's Dream. So then we laugh at the mock woes of Pyramus and Thisbe, the clumsy gambols of Bottom; for we understand the Truth of Things, how all is a Dance of Ecstasy. “Were the world understood, Ye would know it was good, a Dance to a lyrical measure!” The nature of events must be “pure joy;” for obviously, whatever occurs is the fulfilment of the Will of its master. Sorrow thus appears as the result of any unsuccessful – therefore, ill-judged – struggle. Acquiescence in the order of Nature is the ultimate Wisdom.

One must understand the Universe perfectly, and be utterly indifferent to its pressure. These are the virtues which constitute a Master of the Temple. Yet each man must act What he will; for he is energized by his own nature. So long as he works “without lust of result” and does his duty for its own sake, he will know that “the sorrows are but shadows.” And he himself is “that which remains;” for he can no more be destroyed, or his true Will be thwarted, than Matter diminish or Energy disappear. He is a necessary Unit of the Universe, equal and opposite to the sum

total of all the others; and his Will is similarly the final factor which completes the equilibrium of the dynamical equation. He cannot fail if he would; thus, his sorrows are but shadows - he could not see them if he kept his gaze fixed on his goal, the Sun.

AL II,10: "O prophet! thou hast ill will to learn this writing."

THE OLD COMMENT.

10.The prophet who wrote this was at this point angrily unwilling to proceed.

THE NEW COMMENT.

As related in Equinox I, VII, I was at the time of this revelation, a rationalistic Buddhist, very convinced of the First Noble Truth: "Everything is Sorrow." I supposed this point of view to be an absolute and final truth - as if Apemantus were the only character in Shakespeare!

It is also explained in that place how I was prepared for this Work by that period of Dryness. If I had been in sympathy with it, my personality would have interfered. I should have tried to better my instructions.

See, in Liber 418, the series of visions by which I actually transcended Sorrow. But the considerations set forth in the comment on verse 9 lead to a simpler, purer, and more perfect attainment for those who can assimilate them in the subconscious mind by the process described in the comment on verse 6.

It may encourage certain types of aspirant if I emphasize my personal position. AIWAZ made no mistake when he spoke this verse - and the triumphant contempt of his tone still rings in my ear! After seventeen years of unparalleled spiritual progress, of unimaginably intense ecstasies, of beatitudes prolonged for whole months, of initiations indescribably exalted, of proof piled on proof of His power, His vigilance, His love, after being protected and energized with incredible aptness, I find myself still only too ready to grumble, nay even to doubt. It seems as if I resented the whole business. There are times when I feel that the amoeba, the bourgeois, and the cow represent the ABC of enviable creatures. There may be a melancholic strain in me, as one might expect in a case of renal weakness such as mine. In any event, it is surely a most overwhelming proof that AIWAZ is not myself, but my master, that He could force me to write verse 9, at a time when I was both intellectually and spiritually disgusted with, and despairing of, the Universe, as well as physically alarmed about my health.

AL II,11: "I see thee hate the hand & the pen; but I am stronger."

THE OLD COMMENT. 11. He was compelled to do so.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This compulsion was that of true inspiration. It was the Karma of countless incarnations of struggle towards the light. There is a sharp repulsion, physical and mental, toward any initiation, like that towards death.

The above paragraph states only a part of the truth. I am not sure that it is not an attempt to explain away the verse, which humiliates me. I remember clearly enough the impulse to refuse to go on, and the fierce resentment at the refusal of my muscles to obey me. Reflect that I was being compelled to make an abject recantation of practically every article of my creed, and I had not even Cranmer's excuse. I was proud of my personal prowess as a poet, hunter, and mountaineer of admittedly dauntless virility; yet I was being treated like a hypnotized imbecile, only worse, for I was perfectly aware of what I was doing.

AL II,12: "Because of me in Thee which thou knewest not."

THE OLD COMMENT.

12.For the God was in him, albeit he knew it not.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The use of capitals "Me" and "Thee" emphasizes that Hadit was wholly manifested in The Beast. It is to be remembered that The Beast has agreed to follow the instructions communicated to Him only in order to show that

'nothing would happen if you broke all the rules.' Poor fool! The Way of Mastery is to break all the rules – but you have to know them perfectly before you can do this; otherwise you are not in a position to transcend them.

Aiwaz here explains that his power over me depended upon the fact that Hadit is verily “the core of every star.” As is well known, there is a limit to the power of the hypnotist; he cannot overcome the resistance of the Unconscious of his patient. My own Unconscious was thus in alliance with Aiwaaz; taken between two fires, my conscious self was paralyzed so long as the pressure lasted. It will be seen later – verses 61 to 69 – that my consciousness was ultimately invaded by the Secret Self, and surrendered unconditionally, so that, it proclaimed, loudly and gladly, from its citadel, the victory of its rightful Lord. The mystery is indeed this, that in so prosperous and joyous a city, there should still be groups of malcontents whose grumblings are occasionally audible.

AL II,13: “for why? Because thou wast the knower, and me.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

13. For so long as any answer remains, there is no thing known. Knowledge is the loss of the Knower in the Known.

“And me” (not “and I”), Hadit was the passive, which could not arise because of the existence of the Knower; “and” implying further duality – which is Ignorance.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Hadit had to overcome the silly 'knower,' who thought everything was Sorrow. Cf. “Who am I?” – “Thou knowest” in Chapter I.

I am far from satisfied with either of the above interpretations of this verse. We shall see a little later, verses 27 ~sq, a general objection to “Because” and “why.” Then how is it that Hadit does not disdain to use those terms? It must be for the sake of my mind. Then, “for why” is detestably vulgar; and no straining of grammar excuses or explains the “me.”

We have two alternatives. The verse may be an insult to me. My memory tells me, however, that the tone of the voice of Aiwaaz was at this point low, even, and musical. It sounded like a confidential, almost deferential, clarification of the previous verse, which had rung out with joyful crescendo.

The alternative is that the verse contains some Qabalistic proof of the authority of Aiwaaz to lay down the law in so autocratic a manner. Just so, one might add weight to one's quotation from Sappho, in the English, by following it up with the original Greek.

The absence of all capital letters favours this theory. Such explanation, if discovered, will be given in the Appendix. {WEH NOTE: Appendix not extant} However, simply enough, the solution begins with the idea that the small initial of 'because' would be explained by a colon preceding it instead of a note of interrogation, which may have been due to my haste, ignorance, and carelessness. Then 'for why' may be understood: “for the benefit of this Mr. Why – to satisfy your childish clamour for a reason – I will now repeat my remarks in an alternative form such that even your stupidity can scarcely fail to observe that I have sealed my psychological explanation in cipher.” We find accordingly that the arising “of Me in Thee” constitutes a state wherein “thou knewest not.” By “knewest” we may understand the function of Hadit, intellectually and conjugally united with Nuit. (See Book 4, Part III, for GN, the root meaning both 'to know' and 'to beget'). And 'not' is Nuit, as in Cap. I. Now this idea explains that the arising 'of Me (Hadit) in Thee (The Beast)' is the fulfilment of the Magical Formula of Hadit and Nuit. And to know Nuit is the very definition of 'joy.' The next verse confirms this: “thou (the Beast) wast the knower (Hadit) and (united with) me (Nuit, as in Cap. I., verse 51 & others).” Finally, Nuit is indicated by two different symbols 'not' (Gk OU) and 'me' (Gk MH). Now OU MH was my Motto in the Grade of Adeptus Exemptus; Aiwaaz thus subtly reminds me that I was pledged to deny the assertions of my intellectual and moral consciousness.

He combines in these few words (a) a correct psychological explanation of the situation, (b) a correct magical explanation of that explanation, © a personal rebuke to which I had no possible reply, involving a knowledge of my own mental state which was superior to my own.

These two verses are sufficient in themselves to demonstrate the praeter-human qualities of the Author of this Book.

AL II,14: “Now let there be a veiling of this shrine: now let the light devour men and eat them up with blindness!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

14. Enough has been said of the nature of Hadit; now let a riddle of L.V.X. be propounded.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The subject changes. Hadit will give an Exordium upon Himself in the next two verses. Then He will propound an ethical doctrine so terrible and strange that men will be “devoured and eaten up with blindness” because of it.

AL II,15: “For I am perfect, being Not; and my number is nine by the fools; but with the just I am eight, and one in eight: Which is vital, for I am none indeed. The Empress and the King are not of me; for there is a further secret.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

15. I am perfect, being Not (31 LA or 61 AIN). My number is Nine, by the fools (IX, the Hermit, Virgo: Yod and Mercury). With the just I am Eight, VIII, Justice-Libra-Maat, Lamed and, One in Eight, Aleph. Which is vital, for I am None indeed. LA.

The Empress, Daleth III, the King, He, IV, are not of me, III plus IV = VII.

THE NEW COMMENT.

See Appendix. {WEH NOTE: not available.}

AL II,16: “I am the Empress & the Hierophant. Thus eleven, as my bride is eleven.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

16. I am the Empress and the Hierophant (Vau) III + V = VIII, and VIII is XI, both because of the 11 letters in Abrahadabra (= 418 = ChITH = Cheth = 8), the Key Word of all this ritual and because VIII is not Leo, Strength, but Libra, Justice, in the Tarot. (see 777)

THE NEW COMMENT.

See Appendix. {WEH NOTE: not available.}

AL II,17: Hear me, ye people of sighing!

The sorrows of pain and regret

Are left to the dead and the dying,

The folk that not know me as yet.

THE OLD COMMENT.

17. This passage was again very painful to the prophet, who took it in its literal sense.

But 'the poor and the outcast' are the petty thoughts and the Qliphotic thoughts and the sad thoughts. These must be rooted out, or the ecstasy of Hadit is not in us. They are the weeds in the Garden that starve the Flower.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The dead and the dying, who know not Hadit, are in the Illusion of Sorrow. Not being Hadit, they are shadows, puppets, and what happens to them does not matter. If you insist upon identifying yourself with Hecuba, your tears are natural enough.

There is no contradiction here, by the way, with verses 4 and 5. The words 'know me' are used loosely as is natural in a stanza; or, more likely, are used (as in the English Bible) to suggest the root GN, identity in transcendental

ecstasy. Possibly 'not' and 'me' are once more intended to apply to Nuit. With 'know' itself, they may be “Nothing under its three forms” of negativity, action, and individuality.

AL II,18: “These are dead, these fellows; they feel not. We are not for the poor and sad: the lords of the earth are our kinsfolk.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

This idea is confirmed. Those who sorrow are not real people at all, not 'stars' – for the time being. The fact of their being 'poor and sad' proves them to be 'shadows,' who 'pass and are done.' The 'lords of the earth' are those who are doing their Will. It does not necessarily mean people with coronets and automobiles; there are plenty of such people who are the most sorrowful slaves in the world. The sole test of one's lordship is to know what one's true Will is, and to do it.

AL II,19: “Is a God to live in a dog? No! but the highest are of us. They shall rejoice, our chosen: who sorroweth is not of us.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

A god living in a dog would be one who was prevented from fulfilling his function properly. The highest are those who have mastered and transcended accidental environment. They rejoice, because they do their Will; and if any man sorrow, it is clear evidence of something wrong with him. When machinery creaks and growls, the engineer knows that it is not fulfilling its function, doing its Will, with ease and joy.

AL II,20: “Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

As soon as one realizes one's self as Hadit, one obtains all His qualities. It is all a question of doing one's Will. A flaming harlot, with red cap and sparkling eyes, her foot on the neck of a dead king, is just as much a star as her predecessor, simpering in his arms. But one must be a flaming harlot – one must let oneself go, whether one's star be twin with that of Shelly, or of Blake, or of Titian, or of Beethoven. Beauty and strength come from doing one's Will; you have only to look at any one who is doing it to recognize the glory of it.

AL II,21: “We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world. Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

There is a good deal of the Nietzschean standpoint in this verse. It is the evolutionary and natural view. Of what use is it to perpetuate the misery of Tuberculosis, and such diseases, as we now do? Nature's way is to weed out the weak. This is the most merciful way, too. At present all the strong are being damaged, and their progress hindered by the dead weight of the weak limbs and the missing limbs, the diseased limbs and the atrophied limbs. The Christians to the Lions!

Our humanitarianism, which is the syphilis of the mind, acts on the basis of the lie that the King must die. The King is beyond death; it is merely a pool where he dips for refreshment. We must therefore go back to Spartan ideas of education; and the worst enemies of humanity are those who wish, under the pretext of compassion, to continue its ills through the generations. The Christians to the Lions!

Let weak and wry productions go back into the melting-pot, as is done with flawed steel castings. Death will purge, reincarnation make whole, these errors and abortions. Nature herself may be trusted to do this, if only we will leave her alone. But what of those who, physically fitted to live, are tainted with rottenness of soul, cancerous with the sin-complex? For the third time I answer: The Christians to the Lions!

Hadith calls himself the Star, the Star being the Unit of the Macrocosm; and the Snake, the Snake being the symbol of Going or Love, and the Chariot of Life. He is Harpocrates, the Dwarf-Soul, the Spermatozoon of all Life, as one may phrase it. The Sun, etc., are the external manifestations or Vestures of this Soul, as a Man is the Garment of an actual Spermatozoon, the Tree sprung of that Seed, with power to multiply and to perpetuate that particular Nature, though without necessary consciousness of what is happening.

In a deeper sense, the word “Death” is meaningless apart from the presentation of the Universe as conditioned by “Time.” But what is the meaning of Time?

There is great confusion of thought in the use of the word “eternal,” and the phrase “for ever.” People who want “eternal happiness” mean by that a cycle of varying events all effective in stimulating pleasant sensations; i.e., they want time to continue exactly as it does with themselves released from the contingencies of accidents such as poverty, sickness and death. An eternal state is however a possible experience, if one interprets the term sensibly. One can kindle “*flamma aeternae caritatis*,” for instance; one can experience a love which is in truth eternal. Such love must have no relation with phenomena whose condition is time. Similarly, one’s “immortal soul” is a different kind of thing altogether from one’s mortal vesture. This Soul is a particular Star, with its own peculiar qualities, of course; but these qualities are all “eternal,” and part of the nature of the Soul. This Soul being a monistic consciousness, it is unable to appreciate itself and its qualities, as explained in a previous entry; so it realizes itself by the device of duality, with the limitations of time, space and causality. The “Happiness” of Wedded Love or eating Marrons Glaces is a concrete external non-eternal expression of the corresponding abstract internal eternal idea, just as any triangle is one partial and imperfect picture of the idea of a triangle. (It does not matter whether we consider “Triangle” as an unreal thing invented for the convenience of including all actual triangles, or vice versa. Once the idea Triangle has arisen, actual triangles are related to it as above stated).

One does not want even a comparatively brief extension of these “actual” states; Wedded Love though licensed for a lifetime, is usually intolerable after a month; and Marrons Glaces pall after the first five or six kilogrammes have been consumed. But the “Happiness,” eternal and formless, is not less enjoyable because these forms of it cease to give pleasure. What happens is that the Idea ceases to find its image in those particular images; it begins to notice the limitations, which are not itself and indeed deny itself, as soon as its original joy in its success at having become conscious of itself wears off. It becomes aware of the external imperfection of Marrons Glaces; they no longer represent its infinitely varied nature. It therefore rejects them, and creates a new form of itself, such as Nightgowns with pale yellow ribbons or Amber Cigarettes.

In the same way a poet or painter, wishing to express Beauty, is impelled to choose a particular form; with luck, this is at first able to recompense in him what he feels; but sooner or later he finds that he has failed to include certain elements of himself, and he must needs embody these in a new poem or picture. He may know that he can never do more than present a part of the possible perfection, and that in imperfect imagery; but at least he may utter his utmost within the limits of the mental and sensory instruments of his similarly inadequate symbol of the Absolute, his vehicle of human incarnation.

These suffer from the same defects as the other forms; ultimately, “Happiness” wearies itself in the effort to invent fresh images, and becomes disheartened and doubtful of itself. Only a few people have wit enough to proceed to generalization from the failure of a few familiar figures of itself, and recognize that all “actual” forms are imperfect; but such people are apt to turn with disgust from the whole procedure, and to long for the “eternal” state. This state is however incapable of realization, as we know; and the Soul understanding this, can find no good but in “Cessation” of all things, its creations no more than its own tendencies to create. It therefore sighs for Nibbana.

But there is one other solution, as I have endeavoured to shew. We may accept (what after all it is absurd to accuse and oppose) the essential character of existence. We cannot extirpate or even alter in the minutest degree either the matter or manner of any element of the Universe, here each item is equally inherent and important, each a equipollent, independent, and interdependent.

We may thus acquiesce in the fact that it is apodeictically implicit in the Absolute to apprehend itself by self-expression as Positive and Negative in the first place, and to combine these primary opposites in an infinite variety

of finite forms.

We may thus cease either (1) to seek the Absolute in any of its images, knowing that we must abstract every one of their qualities from every one of these equally if we would unveil it; or (2) to reject all images of the Absolute, knowing that attainment thereof would be the signal for the manifestation of that part of its nature which necessarily formulates itself in a new universe of images.

Realizing that these two courses (the materialist's and the mystic's) are equally fatuous, we may engage in either or both of two other plans of action, based on assent to actuality.

We may (1) ascertain our own particular properties as partial projections of the Absolute; we may allow every image presented to us to be of equally intrinsic and essential entity with ourselves, and its presentation to us a phenomenon necessary in Nature; and we may adjust our apprehension to the actuality that every event is an item in the account which we render to ourselves of our own estate. We dare not desire to omit any single entry, lest the balance be upset. We may react with elasticity and indifference to each occurrence, intent only on the idea that the total, intelligently appreciated, constitutes a perfect knowledge not indeed of the Absolute but of that part thereof which is ourselves. We thus adjust one imperfection accurately to another, and remain contented in the appreciation of the righteousness of the relation.

This path, the "Way of the Tao," is perfectly proper to all men. It does not attempt either to transcend or to tamper with Truth; it is loyal to its own laws, and therefore no less perfect than any other Truth. The Equation Five plus Six is Eleven is of the same order of perfection as Ten Million times Ten times Ten Thousand Million is One Billion. In the Universe formulated by the Absolute, every point is equally the Centre; every point is equally the focus of the forces of the whole. (In any system of three points, any two may be considered solely with reference to the third, so that even in a finite universe the sum of the properties of all points is the same, though no two properties may be common to any two points. Thus a circle, BCD, may be described by the revolution of a line AB in a plane about the point A; but also from the point C, or indeed any other point, by the application of the proper analysis and construction. We calculate the motion of the solar system in heliocentric terms for no reason but simplicity and convenience; we could convert our tables to a geocentric basis by mere mechanical manipulation without affecting their truth, which is only the truth of the relations between a number of bodies. All are alike in motion, but we have arbitrarily chosen to consider one of them as stationary, so that we may more easily describe the movements of the others in regard to it, without complicating our calculations by introduction of the movements of the whole system as such. And for this purpose the Sun is a more convenient standard than the Earth). There is another Way that we may take, if we will; I say "another," though it seems perhaps to some no more than development of the other which happens to be proper to some people.

Even in the first Way, it is of all things necessary to begin by exploring one's own Nature, so as to discover what its peculiarities are; this is accomplished partly by introspection, but principally by Right Recollection of the whole phantasmagoria presented to it by experience; for since every event of life is a symbol of part of the structure of the Soul, the totality of experience must by the "Name" of the whole of that part of the Soul which has so far uttered itself. Now then, let us suppose that some Soul, having penetrated thus far, should discover in its "Name" that it is a Son truly begotten by the Spirit of Being upon the Body of Form, and that it has power to understand itself and its Father, with all that such heirship implies. Suppose further that it be come to puberty, will it not be impelled to assert itself as its Father's son? Will it not shake itself free from the Form that bore and nourished and trained it, and turn from its brothers and sisters and playmates? Will it not glow and ache with the impulse to be utterly itself, and find a Form fit to impress with its image, even as did its Father aforesaid?

If such a Soul be indeed its Father's son, he will not fear to show lack of filial reverence, or presumption, if he forget its family in the fervour of founding one of his own, of begetting boys not better or braver indeed than his brothers, girls not softer or sweeter indeed than his sisters, but wholly his own, with his own defects and desires evoked by enchantment of ecstasy when he dies to himself in the womb of the witch who lusts for his life, and buys it with the coin that bears his Image and Superscription.

Such is the secret of the Soul of the Artist. He knows that he is a God, of the Sons of God; he has no fear or shame in

showing himself of the seed of his Father. He is proud of that Father's most precious privilege, and he honours him no less than himself by using it. He accepts his family as of his own royal stock; every one is as princely as he is himself. But he were not his Father's son unless he found for himself a Form fit to express himself by multiplex reproductions of his Image. He must admire himself in many costumes, each emphatic of some elected elegance or excellence in himself which would otherwise elude his homage by being hidden and hushed in the harmony of his heart. This Form which shall serve him must be softness' self to his impress, with exact elasticity adapting itself to the strongest and subtlest salients, yet like steel to resist all other stress than his own, and to retain and reproduce surely and sharply the image that his acid bites into its surface. There must be no flaw, no irregularity, no granulation, no warp in its substance; it must be smooth and shining, pure metal of true temper.

And he must love this chosen Form, love it with fearful fervour; it is the face of his Fate that craves his kiss, and in her eyes Enigma blazes and smoulders; she is his death, her body his coffin where he may rot and stink, or writhe in damned dreams, self-slain, or rise in incorruption self-renewed, immortal and identical, fulfilling himself wholly in and by her, splashing all space with sparkling stars his sons and daughters, each star an image of his own infinity made manifest, mood after mood, by her magick to mould him when his passion makes molten her metal.

Thus then must every Artist work. First, he must find himself. Next, he must find the form that is fitted to express himself. Next, he must love that form, as a form, adoring it, understanding it, and mastering it, with most minute attention, until it (as it seems) adapts itself to him with eager elasticity, and answers accurately and aptly, with the unconscious automatism of an organ perfected by evolution, to his most subtlest suggestion, to his most giant gesture.

Next, he must give himself utterly up to that Form; he must annihilate himself absolutely in every act of love, labouring day and night to lose himself in lust for it, so that he leave no atom unconsumed in the furnace of their frenzy, as did of old his Father that begat him. He must realize himself wholly in the integration of the infinite Pantheon of images; for if he fail to formulate one facet of himself, by lack thereof will he know himself falsely.

There is of course no ultimate difference between the Artist as here delineated and him who follows the "Way of the Tao", though the latter finds perfection in his existing relation with his environment, and the former creates a private perfection of a peculiar and secondary character. We might call one the son, the other the daughter, of the Absolute.

But the Artist, though his Work, the images of himself in the Form that he loves, is less perfect than the Work of his Father, since he can but express one particular point of view and that by means of one type of technique, is not to be thought useless on that account, any more than an Atlas is useless because it presents by means of certain crude conventions a fraction of the facts of geography.

The Artist calls our attention away from Nature, whose immensity bewilders us so that she seems incoherent, and unintelligible, to his own interpretation of himself, and his relations with various phenomena of nature expressed in a language more or less common to us all.

The smaller the Artist, the narrower his view, the more vulgar his vocabulary, the more familiar his figures, the more readily is he recognized as a guide. To be accepted and admired, he must say what we all know, but have not told each other till it is tedious, and say it in simple and clear language, a little more emphatically and eloquently than we have been accustomed to hear; and he must please and flatter us in the telling by soothing our fears and stimulating our hopes and our self-esteem.

When an Artist – whether in Astronomy, like Copernicus, Anthropology, like Ibsen, or Anatomy, like Darwin – selects a set of facts too large, too recondite, or too "regrettable" to receive instant assent from everybody; when he presents conclusions which conflict with popular credence or prejudice; when he employs a language which is not generally intelligible to all; in such cases he must be content to appeal to the few. He must wait for the world to awake to the value of his work.

The greater he is, the more individual and the less intelligible he will appear to be, although in reality he is more universal and more simple than anybody. He must be indifferent to anything but his own integrity in the realization

and imagination of himself.

AL II,22: "I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight and bright glory, and stir the hearts of men with drunkenness. To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all. It is a lie, this folly against self. The exposure of innocence is a lie. Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this."

THE OLD COMMENT.

22.Hadit now identifies himself with the Kundalini, the central magical force in man.

This privilege of using wine and strange drugs has been confirmed; the drugs were indeed revealed. (P.S. And they have not harmed those who have used them in this Law.)

Follows a curse against the cringing altruism of Christianity the yielding of the self to external impressions, the smothering of the Babe of Bliss beneath the flabby old nurse Convention.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Drunkenness is a curse and a hindrance only to slaves. Shelley's couriers were 'drunk on the wind of their own speed.' Any one who is doing his true Will is drunk with the delight of Life.

Wine and strange drugs do not harm people who are doing their will; they only poison people who are cancerous with Original Sin. In Latin countries where Sin is not taken seriously, and sex-expression is simple, wholesome, and free, drunkenness is a rare accident. It is only in Puritan countries, where self-analysis, under the whip of a coarse bully like Billy Sunday, brings the hearer to 'conviction of sin,' that he hits first the 'trail' and then the 'booze.' Can you imagine an evangelist in Taormina? It is to laugh.

This is why missionaries, in all these centuries, have produced no conversions whatever, save among the lowest types of negro, who resemble the Anglo-Saxon in this possession of the 'fear-of-God' and 'Sin' psychopathies.

Truth is so terrible to these detestable mockeries of humanity that the thought of self is a realization of hell. Therefore they fly to drink and drugs as to an anaesthetic in the surgical operation of introspection.

The craving for these things is caused by the internal misery which their use reveals to the slave-souls. If you are really free, you can take cocaine as simply as salt-water taffy. There is no better rough test of a soul than its attitude to drugs. If a man is simple, fearless, eager, he is all right; he will not become a slave. If he is afraid, he is already a slave. Let the whole world take opium, hashish, and the rest; those who are liable to abuse them were better dead.

For it is in the power of all so-called intoxicating drugs to reveal a man to himself. If this revelation declare a Star, then it shines brighter ever after. If it declare a Christian – a thing not man nor beast, but a muddle of mind – he craves the drug, no more for its analytical but for its numbing effect. Lytton has a great story of this in 'Zanoni.' Glyndon, an uninitiate, takes an Elixir, and beholds not Adonai the glorious, but the Dweller on the Threshold; cast out from the Sanctuary, he becomes a vulgar drunkard.

"This folly against self;" altruism is a direct assertion of duality, which is division, restriction, sin, in its vilest form. I love my neighbour because love makes him part of me; not because hate divides him from me. Our law is so simple that it constantly approximates to truism.

"The exposure of innocence." Exposure means "putting out" as in a shop-window. The pretence of altruism and so-called virtue "is a lie;" it is the hypocrisy of the Puritan, which is hideously corrupting both to the hypocrite and to his victim.

To "lust" is to grasp continually at fresh aspects of Nuit. It is the mistake of the vulgar to expect to find satisfaction in the objects of sense. Disillusion is inevitable; when it comes, it leads only too often to an error which is in reality more fatal than the former, the denial of 'materiality' and of 'animalism.' There is a correspondence between these two attitudes and those of the 'once-born' and 'twice-born' of William James (Varieties of Religious Experience). Thelemites are 'thrice-born;' we accept everything for what it is, without 'lust of result,' without insisting upon

things conforming with a priori ideals, or regretting their failure to do so. We can therefore 'enjoy' all things of sense and rapture' according to their true nature. For example, the average man dreads tuberculosis. The "Christian Scientist" flees this fear by pretending that the disease is an illusion in "mortal mind." But the Thelemite accepts it for what it is, and finds interest in it for its own sake. For him it is a necessary part of the Universe; he makes "no difference" between it and any other thing. The artist's position is analogous. Rubens, for instance, takes a gross pleasure in female flesh, rendering it truthfully from lack of imagination and analysis. Idealist painters like Bourgeois awake to the divergence between Nature and their academic standards of Beauty, falsify the facts in order to delude themselves. The greatest, like Rembrandt, paint a gallant, a hag, and a carcass with equal passion and rapture; they love the truth as it is. They do not admit that anything can be ugly or evil; its existence justifies itself. This is because they know themselves to be part of an harmonious unity; to disdain any item of it would be to blaspheme the whole. The Thelemite is able to revel in any experience soever; in each he recognizes the tokens of ultimate Truth. It is surely obvious, even intellectually, that all phenomena are interdependent, and therefore involve each other. Suppose $a + b + c = d$, $a = d - b - c$ just as much as $b = d - c - a$. It is senseless to pick out one equation as 'nice', and another as 'nasty'. Personal predilections are evidence of imperfect vision. But it is even worse to deny reality to such facts as refuse to humour them. In the charter of spiritual sovereignty it is written that the charcoal-burner is no less a subject than the duke. The structure of the state includes all elements; it were stupid and suicidal to aim at homogeneity, or to assert it. Spiritual experience soon enables the aspirant to assimilate these ideas, and he can enjoy life to the full, finding his True Self alike in the contemplation of every element of existence.

AL II,23: "I am alone: there is no God where I am."

THE OLD COMMENT.

23.The Atheism of God. "Allah's the Atheist! He owns no Allah."

To admit God is to look up to God, and so not to be God. The cures of duality.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This refers to the spiritual experience of Identity. When one realizes one's Truth there is no room for any other conception.

It also means that the God-idea must go with other relics of the Fear born of Ignorance into the limbo of savagery. I speak of the Idea of God as generally understood, God being 'something "not ourselves" that makes for righteousness,' as Matthew Arnold victorianatically phrased his definition. The whiskered wowser! Why this ingrained conviction that self is unrighteous? It is the heritage of the whip, the brand of the born slave. Incidentally, we cannot allow people who believe in this 'God;' they are troglodytes, as dangerous to society as any other thieves and murderers. The Christians to the Lions!

Yet, in the reign of Good Queen Victoria, Matthew Arnold was considered rather hot stuff as an infidel! Tempora mutantur, p.d.q. when a Magus gets on the job.

The quintessence of this verse is (however) its revelation of the nature of Hadit as a self-conscious and individual Being, although impersonal. He is an ultimate independent, and unique element in Nature, impenetrably aloof. The negative electron seems to be his physical analogue. Each such electron is indistinguishable from any other; yet each is determined diversely by its relations with various positive complementary electrons. The verse is introduced at this juncture in order to throw light on the passage which follows. It is important to understand Hadit as the 'core of every star' when we come to consider the character of those stars, his 'friends' or sympathetic ideas grouped about him, who are 'hermits,' individualities eternally isolated in reality though they may appear to be lost in their relations with external things.

AL II,24: "Behold! these be grave mysteries; for there are also of my friends who be hermits. Now think not to find them in the forest or on the mountain; but in beds of purple, caressed by magnificent beasts of women with large limbs, and fire and light in their eyes, and masses of flaming hair about them; there shall ye find them. Ye shall see them at rule, at victorious armies, at all the joy; and there shall be in them a joy a million times greater than this.

Beware lest any force another, King against King! Love one another with burning hearts; on the low men trample in the fierce lust of your pride, in the day of your wrath.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

24. Hermits – See verse 15.

Our ascetics enjoy, govern, conquer, love, and are not to quarrel (but see verses 59, 60 – Even their combats are glorious).

THE NEW COMMENT.

The Christians to the Lions!

A hermit is one who dwells isolated in the desert, exactly as a soul, a star, or an electron in the wilderness of space-time. The doctrine here put forth is that the initiate cannot be polluted by any particular environment. He accepts and enjoys everything that is proper to his nature. Thus, a man's sexual character is one form of his self-expression; he unites Hadit with Nuit sacramentally when he satisfied his instinct of physical love. Of course, this is only one partial projection; to govern, to fight, and so on, must fulfil other needs. We must not imagine that any form of activity is ipso facto incapable of supplying the elements of an Eucharist: *suum cuique*. Observe, however, the constant factor in this enumeration of the practices proper to 'hermits:' it is ecstatic delight. Let us borrow an analogy from Chemistry. Oxygen has two hands (so to speak) to offer to other elements. But contrast the cordial clasp of hydrogen or phosphorus with the weak reluctant greeting of chlorine! Yet hydrogen and chlorine rush passionately to embrace each other in monogamic madness! There is no 'good' or 'bad' in the matter; it is the enthusiastic energy of union, as betokened by the disengagement of heat, light, electricity, or music, and the stability of the resulting compound, that sanctifies the act. Note also that the utmost external joy in any phenomenon is surpassed a millionfold by the internal joy of the realization that self-fulfilment in the sensible world is but a symbol of the universal sublimity of the formula “love under will.”

The last two sentences demand careful attention. There is an apparent contradiction with verses 59, 60. We must seek reconciliation in this way: Do not imagine that any King can die (v.21) or be hurt (v.59); strife between two Kings can therefore be nothing more than a friendly trial of strength. We are all inevitably allies, even identical in our variety; to “love one another with burning hearts” is one of our essential qualities. But who then are the “low men,” since “Every man and every woman is a star?” The *casus belli* is this: there are people who are veiled from themselves so deeply that they resent the bared faces of us others. We are fighting to free them, to make them masters like ourselves. Note verse 60, “to hell with them:” that is, let us drive them to the 'hell' or secret sanctuary within their consciousness. There dwells “the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched;” that is, 'the secret serpent coiled about to spring' and 'the flame that burns in every heart of man' – Hadit. In other words, we take up arms against falsehood; we cannot help it if that falsehood forces the King it has imprisoned to assent to its edicts, even to believe that his interests are those of his oppressor, and to fear Truth as once Jehovah did the Serpent.

AL II,25: “Ye are against the people, O my chosen!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

25. The cant of democracy condemned. It is useless to pretend that men are equal; facts are against it. And we are not going to stay, dull and contented as oxen, in the ruck of humanity.

THE NEW COMMENT.

By 'the people' is meant that canting, whining, servile breed of whipped dogs which refuses to admit its deity. The mob is always afraid for its bread and butter – when its tyrants let it have any butter – and now and then the bread has 60% substitutes of cattle-fodder. (Beast-food, even the New York Times of November 13, 1918, E.V. has it.) So, being afraid, it dare not strike. And when the trouble begins, we aristocrats of Freedom, from the castle or the cottage, the tower or the tenement, shall have the slave mob against us. The newspapers will point out to us that “the People” prefer to starve, and thank John D. Rockefeller for the permission to do so.

Still deeper, there is a meaning in this verse applicable to the process of personal initiation. By “the people” we may understand the many-headed and mutable mob which swarms in the slums of our own minds. Most men are almost entirely at the mercy of a mass of loud and violent emotions, without discipline or even organization. They sway with the mood of the moment. They lack purpose, foresight, and intelligence. They are moved by ignorant and irrational instincts, many of which affront the law of self-preservation itself, with suicidal stupidity. The moral Idea which we call “the people” is the natural enemy of good government. He who is 'chosen' by Hadit to Kingship must consequently be 'against the people' if he is to pursue any consistent policy. The massed maggots of 'love' devoured Mark Antony as they did Abelard. For this reason the first task of the Aspirant is to disarm all his thoughts, to make himself impregnable above the influence of any one of them; this he may accomplish by the methods given in Liber Aleph, Liber Jugorum, Thien Tao, and elsewhere. Secondly, he must impose absolute silence upon them, as may be done by the “Yoga” practices taught in Book 4 (Part I) Liber XVI, etc. He is then ready to analyse them, to organize them, to drill them, and so to take advantage of the properties peculiar to each one by employing its energies in the service of his imperial purpose.

AL II,26: “I am the secret Serpent coiled about to spring: in my coiling there is joy. If I lift up my head, I and my Nuit are one. If I droop down mine head, and shoot forth venom, then is rapture of the earth, and I and the earth are one.” THE OLD COMMENT.

26. The Kundalini again. The mystic Union is to be practised both with Spirit and with Matter.

THE NEW COMMENT.

The magical power is universal. The Free Man directs it as He Will. Leave Him alone, or He will make you sorry you tried to interfere!

There is here a reference to the two main types of the Orgia of Magick; I have already dealt with this matter in the Comment. Observe that in the “mystic” work, the union takes place spontaneously; in the other, venom is shot forth. This awakes the earth to rapture; not until then does union occur. For, in working on the planes of manifestation, the elements must be consecrated and made “God” by virtue of a definite rite.

AL II,27: “There is great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss. He shall fall down into the pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of Reason.”

THE OLD COMMENT.

27. The importance of failing to interpret these verses. Unspirituality leads to the bird-lime of Intellect. The Hawk must not perch on any earthly bough, but remain poised on the ether.

THE NEW COMMENT.

Humanity errs terribly when it gets 'education', in the sense of ability to read newspapers. Reason is rubbish; race-instinct is the true guide. Experience is the great Teacher; and each one of us possesses millions of years of experience, the very quintessence of it, stored automatically in our subconscious minds. The Intellectuals are worse than the bourgeoisie themselves; a la lanterne! Give us Men!

Understanding is the attribute of the Master of the Temple, who has crossed the Abyss (or “Pit”) that divides the true Self from its conscious instrument. (See Liber 418, “Aha”! and Book 4, Part III). We must meditate the meaning of this attack upon the idea of “Because.” I quote from my diary the demonstration that Reason is the Absolute, whereof all Truths soever art merely particular cases. The theorem may be stated roughly as follows.

The universe must be expressible either as $\pm n$, or as Zero. That is, it is either unbalanced or balanced. The former theory (Theism) is unthinkable; but Zero, when examined, proves to contain the possibility of being expressed as $n-n$, and this possibility must in its turn be considered as $\pm p$.

This thesis appears to me a reductio ad absurdum of the very basis of our mathematical thinking.

We knew before, of course, that all reasoning is bound to end in some mystery or some absurdity; the above is only one more antimony, a little deeper than Kant's, perhaps, but of the same character. Mathematicians would

doubtless agree that all signs are arbitrary, elaboration of an abacus, and that all 'truth' is merely our name for statements that content our reason; so that it is lower than reason, and within it; not higher and beyond, as transcendentalists argue. I seem never to have seen this point before, though "men of sense" instinctively affirm it, I suppose. The pragmatists are mere tradesmen with their definition of Truth as 'the useful to be thought;' but why not 'the necessary to be thought?' There is a sort of Berkeleyan subjectivity in this view; we might put it: "All that we can know of Truth is 'that which we are bound to think.'" The search for Truth amounts, then, to the result of the analysis of the Mind; and here let us remember my fear of the result of that analysis as I expressed them a month ago.

This analysis is the right method after all.

Now, are we justified in assuming, as we always do, that our reason is either correct or incorrect? That if any proposition can be shown to be congruous with 'A is A' it is 'true,' and so on? Does the 'reason' of the oyster comply with the same canon as man's? We assume it. We make the necessity in our thought the standard of the laws of Nature; and thus implicitly declare Reason to be the Absolute. This has nothing to do with the weakness of error in any one mind, or in all minds; all that we rely on is the existence of some purely mental standard by which we could always correct our thinking, if we knew how. It is then this power which constrains our thought, to which our minds owe fealty, that we call 'Truth;' and this 'Truth' is not a proposition at all, but a 'Law!' We cannot think what it is, obviously, as it is a final condition of philosophical thought in the same way as Space and Time are conditions of phenomenal thought. But, can there be some third type of thought which can escape the bonds of that as that can of this? "Samadhic realization," one is tempted to rush in and answer — while angels hesitate. All my 'philosophic' thought, as above, is direct reflection upon the meaning of Samadhic experience. Is it simply that the reflections are distorted and dim? I have shown the impossibility of any true Zero, and thus destroyed every axiom, blown up the foundations of my mind. In failing to distinguish between None and Two, I cannot even cling to the straw of 'phrases,' since Time and Space are long since perished. None "is" Two, without conditions; and therefore it is a positive idea, and we are just as right to enquire how it came to be as in the case of Haeckel's monad, or one's aunt's umbrella. We are, however, this one small step advanced by our initiations, that we can be quite sure this 'None-Two' is, since all possible theories of Ontology simplify out to it.

Nevertheless, with whatever we try to identify this Absolute, we cannot escape from the fact that it is in reality merely the formula of our own Reason. The idea of Space arises from reflection upon the relations of our bodily gestures with the various objects of our senses. (Poincare - I note after reading him, months later, as I revise this note - explains this fully). So that a 'yard' is not a thing in itself, but a term in the equations which express the Laws according to which we move our muscles. My knowledge consists exclusively of the mechanics of my own mind. All that I know is the nature of its norm. The judgments of the Reason are arbitrary, and can never be verified.

Truth and Reality are simply the Substance of the Reason itself. My demonstration that "None-Two is the formula of the Universe" should then preferably be re-stated thus: "The mind of the Beast 666 is so constituted that it is compelled to conceive of an Universe whose formula is None-Two."

I note that Laotze makes no attempt to announce a Tao which is truly free from Teh. Teh is the necessary quality of Tao, even though Tao, withdrawing Teh into itself, seems to ignore the fact. The only pause I make is this, that mine own Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwaz, whose crown is Thelema, whose robe Agape, whose body the Lost Word that He declared to me, spake in Book Seven and Twenty, saying: "Here is Nothing under its three forms." Can there then be not only Nothing Manifested, Teh or Two, a Nothing Unmanifested, Tao or Naught, but also a Nothing Absolute?

But there is nothing incompatible with the terms of this verse. The idea of "Because" makes everything dependent on everything else, contrary to the conception of the Universe which this Book has formulated. It is true that the concatenation exists; but the chain does not fetter our limbs. The actions and reactions of illusion are only appearances; we are not affected. No series of images matters to the mirror. What then is the danger of making 'a great miss?' We are immune - that is the very essence of the doctrine. But error exists in this sense, that we may imagine it; and when a lunatic believes that Mankind is conspiring to poison him, it is no consolation that others know his delusion for what it is. Thus, we must 'understand these runes;" we must become aware of our True Selves; if we abdicate our authority as absolute individuals, we are liable to submit to Law, to feel ourselves the

puppets of Determinism, and to suffer the agonies of impotence which have afflicted the thinker, from Gautama to James Thomson.

Now then, “there is great danger in me” – we have seen what it is; but why should it lie in Hadit? Because the process of self-analysis involves certain risks. The profane are protected against those subtle spiritual perils which lie in ambush for the priest. A Bushman never has a nervous breakdown. (See Cap.I,v.31). When the Aspirant takes his first Oath, the most trivial things turn into transcendental terrors, tortures, and temptations. (Parts II and III of Book 4 Elaborate this thesis at length.) We are so caked with dirt that the germs of disease cannot reach us. If we decide to wash, we must do it well; or we may have awakened some sleeping dogs, and set them on defenceless areas. Initiation stirs up the mud. It creates unstable equilibrium. It exposes our elements to unfamiliar conditions. The France of Louis XVI had to pass through the Terror before Napoleon could teach it to find itself. Similarly, any error in reaching the realization of Hadit may abandon the Aspirant to the ambitions of every frenzied faction of his character, the masterless dogs of the Augean kennel of his mind.

AL II,28: “Now a curse upon Because and his kin!”

THE OLD COMMENT.

28.The great Curse pronounced by the Supernals against the Inferiors who arise against them.

Our reasoning faculties are the toils of the Labyrinth within which we are all caught. Cf. Liber LXV, v.59.

THE NEW COMMENT.

This is against these Intellectuals aforesaid. There are no “standards of Right.” Ethics is balderdash. Each Star must go on its orbit. To hell with 'moral Principle;' there is no such thing; that is a herd-delusion, and makes men cattle. Do not listen to the rational explanation of How Right It All Is, in the newspapers.

We may moreover consider “Because” as involving the idea of causality, and therefore of duality. If cause and effect are really inseparable, as they must be by definition, it is mere clumsiness to regard them as separate; they are two aspects of one single idea, conceived as consecutive for the sake of (apparent) convenience, or for the general purpose previously indicated of understanding and expressing ourselves in finite terms. Shallow indeed is the obvious objection to this passage that the Book of the Law itself is full of phrases which imply causality. Nobody denies that causality is a category of the mind, a form of condition of thought which, if not quite a theoretical necessity, is yet inevitable in practice. The very idea of any relation between any two things appears as causal. Even should we declare it to be causal, our minds would still insist that causality itself was the effect of some cause. Our daily experience hammers home this conviction; and a man's mental excellence seems to be measurable almost entirely in terms of the strength and depth of his appreciation thereof as the soul of the structure of the Universe. It is the spine of Science which has vertebrated human Knowledge above the slimy mollusc whose principle was Faith.

We must not suppose for an instant that the Book of the Law is opposed to reason. On the contrary, its own claim to authority rests upon reason, and nothing else. It disdains the arts of the orator. It makes reason the autocrat of the mind. But that very fact emphasizes that the mind should attend to its own business. It should not transgress its limits. It should be a perfect machine, an apparatus for representing the universe accurately and impartially to its master. The Self, its Will, and its Apprehension, should be utterly beyond it. Its individual peculiarities are its imperfections. If we identify ourselves with our thoughts or our bodily instincts, we are evidently pledged to partake of their partiality. We make ourselves items of the interaction of our own illusions.

In the following verses we shall find the practical application of this theorem.

AL II,29: “May Because be accursed for ever!”

THE NEW COMMENT.

Distrust any explanation whatever. Disraeli said: Never ask any one to dinner who has to be explained. All explanations are intended to cover up lies, injustices, or shames. The Truth is radiantly simple.

AL II,30: “If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought.”

THE NEW COMMENT.

There is no 'reason' why a Star should continue in its orbit. Let her rip! Every time the conscious acts, it interferes with the Subconscious, which is Hadit. It is the voice of Man, and not of a God. Any man who 'listens to reason' ceases to be a revolutionary. The newspapers are Past Masters in the Lodge of Sophistry Number 333. They can always prove to you that it is necessary, and patriotic, and all the rest of it, that you should suffer intolerable wrongs.

The Qabalists represent the mind as a complex of six elements, whereas the Will is single, the direct expression as “The Word” of the Self. The mind must inform the Understanding, which then presents a simple idea to the Will. This issues its orders accordingly for unquestioning execution. If the Will should appeal to the mind, it must confuse itself with incomplete and uncoordinated ideas. The clamour of these cries crowns Anarchy, and action becomes impossible.

AL II,31: “If Power asks why, then is Power weakness.”



THE NEW COMMENT.

It is ridiculous to ask a dog why it barks. One must fulfil one's true Nature, one must do one's Will. To question this is to destroy confidence, and so to create an inhibition. If a woman asks a man who wishes to kiss her why he wants to do so, and he tries to explain, he becomes impotent. His proper course is to choke her into compliance, which is what she wants, anyhow.

Power acts: the nature of the action depends on the information received by the Will; but once the decision is taken, reflection is out of place. Power should indeed be absolutely unconscious. Every athlete is aware that his skill, strength, and endurance depend on forbidding mind to meddle with muscle. Here is a simple experiment. Hold out a weight at arm's length. If you fix your attention firmly on other matters, you can support the strain many times longer than if you allow yourself to think of what your body is doing.

AL II,32: “Als

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