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RITUAL MAGIC

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There are few subjects so complicated or misunderstood as ritual magic. 4000 years ago magic was part of established religion and the repository of such scientific knowledge as was then known. In Assyria for instance the imagined forces of nature were theriomorphised and arranged in a hierarchy under the dominion of seven planetary spirits.

'Seven are they! Seven are they!
'Bred in the depths of the ocean,
'Knowing neither mercy nor pity
'They harken not to prayer and supplication.'

Since nature was not understood her forces were regarded as malignant and controllable only by magician-priests, while only Ea knew that word with which he created the Universe out of himself. Surprisingly, these barbarous words of evocation still survive though corrupted almost beyond recognition. Their meaning had been lost 1700 years ago when Iamblichus studied them in Egypt. Nevertheless they still moan and roar through the conjurations and by their sound help to increase the frenzy of he who uses them. Here is an example taken from a Greek magical papyrus and used in one of the ceremonies of the Golden Dawn, of which the poet Yeats was once a practicing member:

'Thee I invoke, the terrible God who dwellest in the place of the spirit. AR O GO GO RU ABRAO SOTOU MUDORIO PHALAR-THAO O O O AEPĒ.'

Ritual magic is a cumbersome affair little suited to the tempo of modern life. The late Aleister Crowley would not have been so short of money had he followed business rules instead of relying on Segelash, the Abramelin talisman for finding great treasure. Yet within its limits magic still works. If you are born

with the right temperament and have developed the necessary will power and imagination, you can learn by it to control some of the more subtle forces of nature.

Quite soon in your conjurations you will sense the definite presence of a force—sometimes a very powerful one—in your temple. If you are psychic you will see in your mind's eye, first as in a glass darkly then with terrifying clarity, the traditional shape of that which you have evoked. This, if you are meddling with the Goetia, may not be pleasant, Paimon appears in the form of a man on a camel with a crown most glorious on his head, but Diralisen and Nominon are typical of his servitors: the one manifests as a six-footed snake with the head of an enormous ferret, the eye very red, the other as a large spongy jelly fish with one greenish luminous spot. Similar qliphotic nightmares inspired much of Hieronimus Bosch's work and are active in the imagination of Dali, who needs no ritual to summon them.

A magician, unlike a painter, is not content with giving form to his imaginings. He wants to communicate with what he had evoked out of his subconscious, but cannot hear its replies unless he is clair-audient. That is why he often works with a medium in his circle or—if the spirit be friendly—in his triangle. Instances recorded at first hand of that which is conjured appearing to normal sight in the clouds of incense are rare and for the most part suspect. Normally the phenomena are subjective.

Magic has been defined as the art of causing change to occur in accordance with will. When we understand what is happening and why, we no longer call it magic, so that he uses ritual for what can now be obtained by normal means is a fool. Hitler and Goebbels between them perfected a technique for enslaving a nation far more practical and deadly than anything which has yet been obtained by conjuring Lucifer, Leviathan, Satan and Belial with their eight sub-princes and 316 servitors. Nevertheless, magic still works where science fears to tread. Its powers of exciting the subconscious are as valid now as they were in the remote past, though its sphere of usefulness is more restricted. The means used are logical and can be explained.

A man can do nothing of creative importance without the disciplines use of his will and his imagination. These can be stimulated and directed through the senses, since there is a correlation or sympathy between the world of idea and that of form. Pattern, colour, scent and sound are therefore used to

direct and deepen concentration. They vary in each operation in accordance with the nature of what you are seeking, though the basic structure of what you do remains the same.

How to Acquire a Familiar

Suppose you want to question a Mercurial spirit or to acquire a familiar form among the servitors of Samael, the False Accuser, you strike your bell eight times; the colours used in tracing the various circles, triangles, talismans and sigyls are a symphony of violet purple, orange, red russet and yellowish brown flecked with white; your ring—or, if a skryer, your shew stone—is an opal; storax the basis of your incense, fish and white wine of your sacrament; while if you favour the blood sacrifice you kill a white cock, and if you like to heighten your effects with drugs, you take anhalonium. To copy the above when invoking a spirit of Mars or conjuring the Flaming Ones (Golachab) could only lead to confusion and failure. The appropriate correspondences must be used in each case and the time involved in working them out helps to attune the mind to that which is sought.

The paraphernalia required seems at first sight to be both childish and unnecessarily complicated, yet each part serves an indispensable purpose. The circle announces by its symbolism the nature of the Great Work behind your experiments, while the protective god names inscribed round the rim vary with the system you are using as do the figures, a Tau cross, crux ansata or whatever it is with which you decorate it. The altar is the solid basis of your work, your fixed will. The scourge, dagger and chain represent in turn the energy of things (Sulphur, in alchemical parlance) their fluidity (Mercury) and their fixity (Salt). The holy oil used in consecration is your aspiration; the wand your will, wisdom and word; the cup your understanding and so a vehicle of grace; the sword the analytical faculty to be directed against every demon; while the pantacle is the paten of your sacrament. The lamp represents the divine light, the crown your attainment and the robe the silence and secrecy in which you work. Finally, the lamen worn over your heart should harmonise with its symbolism all the above. No fixed pattern is laid down, as each magician must design his own according to his knowledge and understanding.

Texts of the Magical System

The weapons and instruments of the Art may not be bought, but should be fashioned from virgin and consecrated materials by the magician himself. Each must then be consecrated in a

separate ceremony and as knowledge and power develop these consecrations should be repeated. Before each ceremony you should fast, pray and meditate in accordance with whatever system you believe. This basic technique is the same whether the magician is a Christian, Hindu, Jew, Mahommedan, Buddhist or one of those few and for the most part misguided persons who have evolved a religion of their own. As preliminary training it is essential and logical—without it, very few have ever obtained results. The subtle forces of nature whether invoked or conjured are not at the disposal of the normal man. Training in will power and concentration together with faith are as essential in magic as in yoga and religion.

The collated texts of several magical systems are at your disposal in published translation. The one you choose is indicative of your calibre and understanding. *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* is the purest, then *The Key of Solomon the King*, the Lemegeton or Goetia, the Grimoire of Honorius, the Enchiridion of Pope Leo and finally the Faustian school with its pacts which represent the magician as a lost soul haggling for forbidden knowledge and power.

The magic of Abramelin, first written down in 1458, is the only system to pass on the pre-Christian doctrine of the Holy Guardian Angel—the daimon of Socrates. It insists that his knowledge and conversation must be experienced before demons are conjured. This is Egyptian teaching. It was an Egyptian priest who 1700 years ago invoked the daimon of Plotinus to visible appearance in the temple of Isis, apparently the only pure place that he could find in Rome. On this occasion Plotinus failed to hold converse with his 'tutelary spirit,' because at the climax of the ceremony 'the priest's assistant, who had been holding the birds to prevent them flying away, strangled them . . . in terror'—or so Porphyry reported.

Whichever system you choose to work, the result will depend on your aspiration and understanding. If you are a fool, you will waste your time in puerile attempts to get rich quick, you will ruin your digestion with concoctions that put the mediaeval pharmacopoeia to shame and you will bemoan the fact that things like human fat are no longer easy to come by without landing you in jail or on the gallows. You may even be so childish as to write in Hebrew the letters H A O N round an apple to stop a fight. If however you succeed in making sense out of a very ancient tradition and then put that sense into practice, you will learn to appreciate the four powers of the Sphinx—to know, to will, to dare and to keep silent.