



Mjölnir



The Thelemic Journal of Yggdrasil Camp, Ordo Templi Orientis

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VOL. I, No. 4

Transcendentalism: A Thelemic Perspective

*Frater Achad:
Freedom*

*Sabazius X°:
On Slander &
On Sponsorship*



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From the Editor:

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The fourth issue of Mjöltnir marks Yggdrasil Camp's one year anniversary. Much has happened since the beginning, and it is due to the wonderful efforts of the camp members. I want to thank each camp member for his or her assistance and dedication. We have been fortunate to be able to have such a diverse group of individuals come together and work for the betterment of the Order, Thelema, and each other. Thank you all very much! I would especially like to thank Soror Lacy for the wonderful computer generated image that is on the cover of this issue of Mjöltnir.

This issue of Mjöltnir continues our series of Achad essays, this time exploring Freedom. We also have essays on Slander and Sponsorship from the Grand Master Sabazius, an essay comparing Transcendentalism and Thelema, and other announcements and resource lists.

I would also like to thank both Solve-Coagula and Equilibrium Camps for their continued assistance over the last few months. The body masters and camp members from both camps have assisted Yggdrasil in so many ways. I am very grateful for the help.

A wonderful trend has been shaping up in the Atlanta region and across the country recently. Many O.T.O. bodies are working very closely together, sharing resources and events. This is a wonderful trend. When a person takes initiation, they join the O.T.O., not any particular camp. Each member should explore other bodies and see other Thelemites. Through this exchange they can grow by observing other customs and ideas. But I would like to caution our brothers and sisters not to think harshly about other bodies that do not participate. As each of us are stars, so are individual bodies. Each shines bright by its true will. If the body wishes to work with others and share orbit, so be it, but no ill will should be thought of bodies that wish to work with by themselves and shine as bright as their energies allow. Each body must manifest in its own way. To do anything else is restriction, sin.

We always welcome comments and submissions. Correspondence, comments, or submissions should be sent via email to mjolnir@thelema.nu. If email is not available, correspondence should be sent via the body address above.

Love is the law, love under will.

Frater 117, Editor

FREEDOM

AN ESSAY BY FRATER ACHAD

INTRODUCTION

How remarkable that this work comes from the pen of Frater Achad; it sounds almost like the words of that other off-beat first-generation Thelemic rebel, Jack Parsons. While the piece suffers a bit from changing times and attitudes (the use of the word “Capitalist” here to mean the “big bosses” image was once common, but is now confined largely to the Monopoly Game in this age of decentralized opportunity), the subject of freedom is always timely, and Achad’s linking the slave-mentality to a sense of “sin” that equates with pleasure and delight still seems right on target today.

“Freedom” for Achad is, ipso facto, the ideal of Thelema realized in Thelemic living. While it is my impression that, for the most part, most of the time, Achad lived an external life of a rather conventional nature, his ideals and interior myth-vision of existence was bound up in the spiritual libertarianism he saw in *Liber Al vel Legis* and the core Thelemic teachings.

Thus, this brief essay on freedom remains timely for us all. Achad is telling us we will not be truly free by mere reform or revision, but by shifting to the paradigm of a New Aeon.

– T Allen Greenfield



Listen Brother! Are you FREE? Are you enjoying the full, free life of the true master-class, or are you groveling in slavery, in sin?

“Sir,” you reply, “What is sin to me? I have outgrown such ideas as Sin, and Hell and the Devil. Nowadays, no educated person believes in the existence of these things. But, as to Freedom? How can I be free when I am working 10 hours a day, so that the Capitalist who is pocketing 3/4 of the results of my labour, may live in luxury and idleness on the money I earn for him. How can I be free under such a system?”

Listen Brother! You may be free NOW, if you WILL. Work does not bind you. Work is no sin, but RESTRICTION is. “The word of Sin is Restriction.” You are sinning as long as you feel restricted, for “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law!” The Master has told us so. The Book of the Law tells us so, for the New Law is a Law of Liberty and Freedom for all.

It is not the Capitalist who is preventing you from enjoying to the full your leisure hours. It is not your daily

work which prevents you from taking advantage to the full the pleasures of your spare time. It is yourself, because you have either forgotten how to enjoy yourself or you have never learned, or been taught, or tried to teach yourself.

It is this lack of true enjoyment that fills your life with misery and despair. It is this lack of true pleasure that makes your work (which is healthy and manly and good) seem dull and monotonous and uninteresting. It is this lack of the realization of the joy of life that makes you envy the Capitalist (of whose troubles and worries you know nothing) who is in reality as much a slave as you are. It is this, I say, that makes you think the whole System is wrong. And so it is, but not in the way you think and suppose.

Have you not been taught from childhood that every true and manly enjoyment is a Sin and a disgrace that should not be indulged in? Have you not been taught that if you do enjoy yourself, and anybody finds out, you will be shunned as a sinner and a bad man! Have you not found that either you must go against the true promptings of your nature in almost every conceivable way, or perform your true desires in a secret and disgraceful way, for fear of being found out and losing your so-called ‘reputation?’

Do you realize that this terrible state of affairs has become a part of your very consciousness, is a limitation and check on your every action?

Even supposing you to be one who has tried to find enjoyment, in spite of wrong impressions and under existing conditions; did you not find that at first the Feeling of Freedom, even in doing what you thought to be wrong, was a great part of the enjoyment itself? But once that stage is past, once let that idea go and get to feeling, “Oh well, I’ve done it before and now I can’t help it” and you gradually get more and more dulled and the pleasure grows less and less, until what was once true enjoyment and real freedom at the start, loses “even the pleasant consciousness of sin” and becomes another form of slavery. You have lost the very sense of Freedom. You are a slave.

But the worst slave of all is the prig who indulges (openly) in no pleasures at all, in order that he may be considered ‘virtuous’ or ‘respectable’ or a ‘Christian’ who has ‘got religion’ and wants to see every one else in the same deplorable state of senile decay, so that he may not feel quite so much out of place in the world. Such is not Freedom, my Brother.

Freedom is Fullness of Life, Manliness of Action, Virility in Love, Fearlessness of Conduct combined with the

utmost toleration of the rights of others, and a true recognition of their liberty to do their Will.

What, think you, is the reason why the Latin and the Chinese and the Hindu (of whom many of you are jealous because you think they have no right here and would take away work that you should have) are willing to work for a mere pittance? It may well be that you have good cause to envy them, if you did but know it, for they are Contented and Happy because their SPARE TIME, their LEISURE (however short) is FULL OF DELIGHT.

They are wont to indulge their true feelings in every way, including the proper way, for it must be admitted that many of the Oriental Races are masters in the art of producing pleasure WITHOUT EXPENSE. They know, from experience, as you have never known, as yet, that an Hour of Rapture is recompense for a Day of hard work.

I do not say that "A moment of Rapture is compensation for a lifetime of misery." That is absurd, the idle talk of the poet. But AN HOUR OF RAPTURE and a DAY OF TOIL, is practical and possible and WORTH WHILE.

And you don't get it under existing circumstances. How much time are you really devoting to any true enjoyment, say for instance Love? Most of you know nothing of Love after the first year of married life. Even then the total rapture is probably but a few seconds per week, and then it is not True Rapture. Love, like every other true enjoyment is a Science, an Art. How much of your time do you spend in its study?

Don't you see, brother, how you are being fooled with regard to these things, all the time. How those who want to keep you in slavery are cunningly (or ignorantly, it matters little) working in every possible way to take from you one true pleasure after another, to prohibit you from all those things Nature has provided for your enjoyment and highest good? Don't you see how the more their grasp on you slackens, the more they will try and take, so that they may better retain their hold, while you are less and less in a position to Free yourself, and more and more stupefied into submission because there is so little of the true man left in you to fight? Their very system is based on slavery (your slavery) as representing the highest perfection, though the Truth they once held- but never declared and therefore lost- was intended to lead you to Perfect Freedom.

But Truth, my brother, must once again be given to the world, though in a different language from of yore, because the very System that has held you in bondage so long, has used the Symbolism which in the days of The Christ radiated Truth and it has become so befouled with external and useless meanings that there is hardly a sentence of what once was Living Truth, that can now be used by any True Man, without a feeling of shame,

because the words have become so distorted and their meaning falsified for other and less worthy ends.

Therefore, brother, we use a new language, a new Symbolism for the veil of Truth as you will find if you study our Books and Writings, just as in years to come, if its purity again be lost, another and another System will arise, for the Truth is ever one, in whatever language its outer form may be clothed.

But in this tract I will not deal with the higher problems, I want to talk to you quite simply, as men and women, in your own language, so that you may understand and Rejoice. "There is no law beyond DO WHAT THOU WILT."

All that you have learned to look upon as 'good' which binds you and prevents you from doing your true Will and from enjoying the true Manhood and Womanhood that is yours by right -is SIN. There is no other sin. "The word of sin is restriction."

But when you enjoy yourselves and take delight in those pleasures of which the Life of man is made up, you must remember that every act of Pleasure and of Love is a Sacrament and as such is holy. That is just where you have been making the mistake in the past. You have looked upon these things as wrong, and therefore restricted yourselves and your actions making them sins instead of realizing their true value and perfect holiness. Again, if you drink wine, and so long as you enjoy it - and you will enjoy it when you understand how to use it- it is not wrong, but you should drink unto the honour and glory of Our Lady of the Starry Heavens, Nuit, Who has Herself given us these teachings, and who tells us in our Holy Book, the Book of the Law, Liber Legis: "Be goodly therefore: dress ye all in fine apparel; eat rich foods and drink sweet wines and wines that foam! Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me." If you ever bear this one point in mind, and remember that these acts are holy and sacred, not sins, but true virtues, life will at once wear a different aspect. You will no longer feel sorrowful or sad, and while you look upon the wine you drink as a Sacrament, you will never debase yourself by getting 'drunk' in the old sense of the word, but you will ENJOY your drink as never before. Thus with Love, and all else in which you indulge and take delight. For "It is a lie, this folly against self - Be strong man! Lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this."

Be strong then, Brother, and be not afraid. Work, work hard and well, since your living depends on this, but after your toil is over, in your leisure hours, remember what we have told you, Seek Rapture, if only for an hour, and learn that Love is the law, love under will.

TRANSCENDENTALISM: A THELEMIC PERSPECTIVE

AN ESSAY BY SOROR ANAÏS

There are parallels between Thelema and almost every other religion/philosophy. In attempting to show the parallels between Transcendentalism and Thelema, I have taken liberties to impose my own interpretations of *The Book of the Law*. However, the interpretations set forth below are of my own device and are not intended to be all-inclusive. - Soror Anaïs

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

In the 1800's a movement known as Transcendentalism was "founded" by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Along with Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and others, Emerson proclaimed a new law for humanity, one of following one's true self in every circumstance. In 1842, Emerson read an essay entitled "The Transcendentalist" at a Masonic Temple in Boston. In this lecture he compared Transcendentalism to Idealism. "The idealist," he said, "[insists] on the power of Thought and of Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture." He stated that Idealism and Materialism are both natural modes of thinking, but that "the idealist contends that his way of thinking is in higher nature" (Trans. 1). He spoke of Transcendentalism as a "faith proper to man in his integrity" (4), in dramatic contrast to most religions and philosophies which would have men and women be slaves to conformity, the wills of others, and various gods. Speaking for all of the Transcendentalists, he remarked that, in their experience, "man is cheap," and that with their "passion for what is great and extraordinary, it cannot be wondered at, that they are repelled by vulgarity and frivolity in people" (6). The Transcendentalists assert that the majority of humanity does not realize the divinity within them, but choose to live as swine disguised as men and women. From this perspective there developed within them a love and need for solitude, for the Transcendentalists "are lovers and worshippers of Beauty...and in the eternal trinity of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty" (9).

Due to the sugar-coating and misreading of some of their writings, there has been much misunderstanding of the philosophy of the Transcendentalists. One usually imagines them as living in shacks on the edges of ponds, spending their days fishing and mindlessly extolling the virtues of poverty and friendship. Although there are some aspects of the above in their writings, most of their philosophy speaks of being true to oneself, avoiding the influence of the herd mentality,

and having true spiritual experiences. Traditionally, the philosophy of the Transcendentalists can be summarized in four basic premises:

1. The individual is the spiritual center of the universe.
2. The structure of the universe literally duplicates the structure of the individual self; all knowledge, therefore, depends upon self-knowledge.
3. Nature is a living mystery, and contains signs and symbols which can be used to gain insight and knowledge.
4. Individual happiness depends upon self-realization. (Reuben 2)

The Transcendentalists' efforts to establish a new morality based on the true self of each individual can be seen as a predecessor to the law of Thelema. As stated in *The Book of the Law*, "thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect" (I:42-44).

The phrase "do what thou wilt" is often misunderstood. In explaining "pure will," Crowley wrote that it is best defined as "the true expression of the Nature, the proper or inherent motion of the matter, concerned" (LA 46). It is primarily in Emerson's writings that we see variations of "do what thou wilt." His essay entitled "Self-Reliance" is a perfect example of his advocacy for men and women to live for themselves, and to eliminate every aspect of themselves that is not their true nature. He promulgates a stripping away of the ego to arrive at one's soul. In the first paragraph of "Self-Reliance," Emerson states, "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, -that is genius" (SR 19). Emerson felt, as we may assume did Crowley, that the majority of humanity allows the wills of others to interfere with their own true wills. He also felt that too often men and women restricted their true natures, thus destroying the genius and beauty that is present within everyone. The foundation of Transcendentalism revolves around this one idea. Thoreau exhorts this law as well. In commenting on a young man who expressed the desire to live as he did while on the shores of Walden Pond, Thoreau wrote, "I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue his own way, and not his father's or mother's or neighbor's instead" (63). In further clarifying the Transcendentalists' definition

of will, we can again refer to Emerson. He speaks of the Over-soul as that “within which every man’s particular being is constituted and made one with all other; that common heart...that overpowering reality which... constrains every one to pass for what he is, and to speak from his own character, and not from his tongue, and which evermore tends to pass into our thought and hand, and become wisdom, and virtue, and power, and beauty” (SR 52). There is a part of every man and every woman, and every creature, that is connected to this divine source. Whitman wrote in *Leaves of Grass*, “I swear I see now that every thing has an eternal soul” (104). The philosophies of both Thelema and Transcendentalism agree that only by following this divine emanation will true happiness be achieved.

There are harsh words found in the writings of the Transcendentalists as well as in Crowley’s writings. An excerpt from *Liber AL* says, “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 and the joy of the world” (II:21). Verse III:57 states, “Despise also all cowards; professional soldiers who dare not fight, but play; all fools despise.” In his commentary to this verse, Crowley states, “We have here a picture of the average man, of a fool. He has no will of his own, is all things to all men, is void, a repeater of words of whose sense he knows not,..., but mostly of inert and characterless nonentity” (LA 183). These fools are the cowards who will not stand up and accept the divinity within them. The coward is the typical man or woman, embodying the herd mentality. Whitman speaks of his disgust for the common man in *Leaves of Grass*:

I think I could turn and live awhile with the animals... they are so placid and self-contained,
 I stand and look at them sometimes half the day long.
 They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
 They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
 They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
 Not one is dissatisfied... not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
 Not one kneels to another nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,
 Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole earth. (55-56)

Thoreau speaks harshly of this common man: “Talk of a divinity in man! Look at the teamster of the highway, wending to market by day or night; does any divinity stir within him? His highest duty to fodder and water his horses! What is his destiny to him compared with the shipping interests?... How godlike, how immortal, is he? See how he cowers and sneaks, how vaguely all the day he fears, not being immortal nor divine, but the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself” (11). Thoreau was of the opinion that, “Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men” (80). Earlier in *Walden* he stated that, “while civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them” (33). As with Emerson: “We but half express ourselves, and our ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents.” He continues, “but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards” (SR 20). As to these divine ideas being considered “evil” by some, Emerson writes of when a man asked him about living wholly from within. The man asked, “But these impulses may be from below, not from above.” Emerson replied, “They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil’s child, I will live then from the Devil” (21). In the next paragraph Emerson continues that, “The doctrine of hatred must be preached as the counteraction to the doctrine of love when that pules and whines” (22). Thoreau continues this theme in *Walden* saying, “The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of any thing, it is very likely to be my good behavior” (13). Here we see a reversal of the traditional definitions of good and evil. The Transcendentalists hold that if a man believes in his heart that something is true, then it is, at least for him. Their philosophy agrees with *Liber AL*, that “the word of Sin is Restriction” (I:41). In Thelema, the definitions of good and evil are practically the same. Any action or thought in keeping with one’s True Will is good, regardless of what another may say. A sin is any action or thought that is not part of one’s True Will, or does not arise from one’s True Self. *The Book of the Law* states, “Pity not the fallen! I never knew them. I am not for them. I console not: I hate the consoled & the consoler” (II:48). In accordance with Thelemic ideals, when asked about his obligation “to put all poor men in good situations,” Emerson responded, “Are they my poor?” He continues to speak of his disgust for the dollar and its use for popular charities, “the education at college of fools,” and the building of meeting-houses to a vain end (SR 22). He writes that there are few men with whom he shares a spiritual affinity, and whom he would do anything for, but will not let the opinion of others that his life is “mean” tempt him to contradict himself. Both

philosophies agree that it is every persons job to care for him or herself alone. No one is obliged to help the weak.

Every man and woman has within them a divine radiance. It is accessible to everyone, however most do not truly realize its existence. Every person has a place; all are equal in their potential contribution to the brilliance of the night sky. The stars in the sky do not collide; they each fulfill their own purpose and shine with the glory of their joyful existence. They are representative of the full potential of humanity. When *Liber AL* speaks of the slaves, the weak, the cowards, it is intended to be understood that those who fulfill these descriptions are choosing to do so. At any time, one has the power to rise up and accept that he or she is a god or goddess. Therefore, why be sorry for those who do not yet dare to accept this responsibility, freedom, and joy? *Liber AL* states that, "the Law is for all" (I:34). It makes no guarantees that the masses will want the freedom it offers. Thus is the master/slave race created: not by force, but by the choice of each individual to choose his or her destiny in life.

The Book of the Law clearly expresses the idea that god is within man with, "I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star" (II:6). There are numerous references to humanity's connection with the Divine in the writings of the Transcendentalists. In *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman writes, "Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touched from" (49). Thoreau recounts a story from a Hindu book that describes a king's son who was raised by a forester. One day it was revealed that he was a prince. The writer stated, "so soul, from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be Brahme" (84). Emerson speaks of man being part of the eternal ONE (SR 52).

Although there are striking differences between Transcendentalism and Thelema, it is apparent that there are also many shared beliefs. The Transcendentalists set the stage for the law of the New Aeon to be more accepted. Without their efforts to overcome the limiting rules of societal thought, Thelema would perhaps not have been able to achieve the impact it has made thus far. Also, interpreting the writings of "the Beast 666" in light of Transcendentalism will create a more accepting audience to which to proclaim the Law of Thelema.

Love is the law, love under will.

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THE ROSE AND THE CROSS BY A. CROWLEY

*Out of the seething cauldron of my woes,
Where sweets and salt and bitterness I flung;
Where charméd music gathered from my tongue,
And where I chained strange archipelagoes
Of fallen stars; where fiery passion flows
A curious bitumen; where among
The glowing medley moved the tune unsung
Of perfect love: thence grew the Mystic Rose.*

*Its myriad petals of divided light;
Its leaves of the most radiant emerald;
Its heart of fire like rubies. At the sight
I lifted up my heart to God and called:
How shall I pluck this dream of my desire?
And lo! There shaped itself the Cross of Fire!*

ON-LINE RESOURCES FOR YGGDRASIL CAMP

In this day of dot-com this and web site that, it should come as no surprise that there are a number of resources available to the on-line occultist, in particular to those involved with Yggdrasil Camp. The body has three online resources that each person in the camp with internet access should be aware of.

The Yggdrasil Camp Web Site -

<http://www.thelema.nu/yggdrasil/>

This is the main internet presence for Yggdrasil camp. It has the camp address, email, and phone number. It gives a brief description of the camp, a quick outline of the month's schedule, and online versions of Mjöltnir in PDF format. Any person interested in the camp should be directed to this site for an initial contact point.

The Yggdrasil Camp Mailing List -

<http://www.egroups.com/group/Yggdrasil-OTO/>

This is a broadcast email service where the Yggdrasil schedule and other announcements are posted. This service requires a valid email address. If you are not subscribed, follow the link above to subscribe to the mailing list. This list does not allow public posting; it is only for broadcast messages from the camp officers.

The Yggdrasil Camp Intranets Site -

<http://yggdrasil.intranets.com/>

This is the main Yggdrasil on-line community site. This site has the current schedule in detail, announcements, and discussions about various magical and camp topics. This site is not public because of the nature of the information in it. All camp members with internet access are encouraged to take advantage of this on-line community. This is the best place to throw out ideas, get the most up-to-date schedule, and find out the next time initiations will take place. Also, if you are a member you will receive email reminders of upcoming events. If you wish to join the intranets site, please email yggdrasil@thelema.nu for registration information.

The internet allows timely access to a wealth of information. This includes instant access to your fellow brothers and sisters and their ideas. If you have access you can get much more out of the net and help build the Thelemic Community we all look for. Any questions should be emailed to yggdrasil@thelema.nu or via phone at (770) 618-8755.

- Frater 117

Ordo Templi Orientis Conferences & Events

Waratah Blossoms - October 5-9, 2000

Oceania Lodge of the Ordo Templi Orientis invites you to Australia to be part of Waratah Blossom. Feast for five fabulous days and experience unimaginable joys as you revel with brothers and sisters from around the world in lush Australian sub-tropical rainforest. Initiations, Gnostic Masses, Rituals, Lectures, Workshops, International Guest Lecturers, Australian Thelemic Culture, Qi Gong, Yoga, Bush Walking, Swimming, Beer Tent, Stalls, Limited Edition Festival T-shirt, and much more! For more information, contact Oceania Lodge, PO Box 269, Enmore NSW 2042, Australia or email waratah_blossoms@hotmail.com.

Ecclesiæ Gnosticæ Catholicæ Conference with Bishops Lon Milo and Constance DuQuette - June 30 - July 2, 2000

The DuQuettes present a comprehensive and intensive examination of Aleister Crowley's Liber XV, the Mass of the Gnostic Catholic Church (Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica of Ordo Temple Orientis.)

Liber XV, the Mass of the Gnostic Catholic Church, is the central ritual of the O.T.O. (both public and private). It is the ritualized enactment of the Order's central secret which emanates from the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Gnosis -- the Ninth Degree.

For twenty years Lon and Constance DuQuette have served the Order as Priest and Priestess and as Bishops. They are profoundly qualified to teach on the subject of the Gnostic Mass and have now resolved to share their knowledge and insights on every aspect of the Mass.

You may be surprised by what they have to say, but rest assured, their opinions spring not from idle speculation or pop psychology, but from an initiated understanding of the O.T.O.'s most precious magical treasure.

Registration:

To Register please send a Check or Money Order: \$30.00 before May 15, \$40.00 after May 15. Include your name and local body affiliation. Send to:

Onnorphris Encampment
Post Office Box 31076
Indianapolis, IN 46231

Sponsored by Onnorphris Encampment, Indianapolis, Indiana For questions please call Phil (317) 781-0790 or Anita (317) 253-0439 or e-mail indyoto@angelfire.com

ON SLANDER

Sabazius X°

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Our particular conception of fraternity includes the principle that brothers and sisters of our Order should protect each other from slander. Under this principle, we are expected to refrain from slandering the good names of our brothers and sisters, and also to inform them when they have been slandered by another. This principle is intended to help safeguard our Order against one of the more insidious obstacles that has faced, and paralyzed, a variety of esoteric societies in the past. Unfortunately, it appears that some have misunderstood the nature and scope of what we mean by the word “slander,” and such misunderstanding has resulted in both an occasional failure to report legitimate grievances, and in our officers being burdened with a considerable quantity of unnecessary labor and anxiety.

Our fraternal principle regarding slander has not always been properly observed -- there have been individuals who have waged campaigns of outright slander against their enemies within our Order. Such cases have usually been fairly straightforward and simple to deal with. However, this same fraternal principle has also been abused -- there have been individuals as well who have (whether willfully or ignorantly) abused the fraternal good will of their brothers and sisters by labeling any sort of disadvantageous talk about them as “slandrous.” Thus, by utilizing a vague, overly-broad definition of the word slander, these individuals have wielded this fraternal principle as a weapon of petty politics, to silence their critics, to gain sympathy, to foster polarization within the community, to cover up their improper activities, and to hinder the ability of our governing bodies to function properly.

Therefore, it has become necessary to dispel such distorted conceptions by setting forth a clear definition of slander as it is used within our Grand Lodge.

For a statement to be slander, it must be:

- (a) false,
- (b) malicious, and
- (c) damaging.

Whether a statement is absolutely true or false may never be determined, so truth and falsehood of potentially slanderous statements are usually assessed on the preponderance of evidence, taking the severity of the statement into account. The burden of proof is generally placed on the person making the statement, but restatements of “common knowledge” or widely-held beliefs cannot usually be considered slanderous. It is impossible to determine the truth or falsehood of opinions, so statements of opinion cannot be considered slanderous.

The term “malicious” means that the statement is made with spiteful intent to cause actual harm. Anger does not equate to malice. A statement cannot be considered malicious if it is a factual report to an officer or governing body of a statement made by someone else. A statement cannot be considered malicious if it is merely a hyperbolic, ironic, or facetious insult, epithet, or gibe.

The term “damaging” refers to real damage, such as loss of income, disruption of family life, or genuine damage to the target's reputation and standing within the community. Hurt feelings do not count as real damage. A statement cannot be considered damaging if it is not plausible.

A brother or sister would not be expected to report a statement as slander to the target brother or sister (or to Grand Lodge) if it did not potentially satisfy all the above criteria.

On the other hand, even if a statement does not satisfy all the above criteria for slander, it may still fall far short of furthering our goals of achieving fraternal harmony and good will. Personal insults, malicious insinuations, exposing personal information given in confidence, and spreading embarrassing gossip rarely serve the Order's best interest, and can sometimes even warrant formal disciplinary action as being contrary to the Order's fraternal aims and principles. Typically, such statements would deserve an appropriate, immediate response in accordance with general principles of fraternity, fairness, and common sense. Erroneous statements should be promptly corrected; and unproven, damaging assertions should be challenged, and reported to their target if necessary. If third-party mediation is required, a local body master or other Grand Lodge officer (one who is not a party to the argument) should be consulted.

Fear of being charged with slander, however, should never be a cause to refrain from reporting a first-hand account of egregious behavior on the part of a fellow initiate. Members of our Order should expect to be treated fairly and courteously by their fellow initiates, with due respect given to their individual wills pertaining to their personal affairs. Further, it is the responsibility of all members to help guard against behavior that would jeopardize the safety or liberty of our members, or the legal standing or reputation of our Order in the community.

Love is the law, love under will.

Sabazius X°

U.S. National Grand Master General

ON SPONSORSHIP

Sabazius X°

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

“Every man and woman that is of full age, free, and of good report, has an indefeasible right to the III°” - Liber LII.

The above quote appears to ensure universal access to the Man of Earth degrees of our Order, but on closer examination, it includes a number of conditions. Men and women are not “free” if they are incapable of travelling to one of our Lodges to be initiated, or if they are incapable of taking and keeping a binding oath to the Order. Men and women are not “of full age” if they are too young to fully participate as citizens of their country. Men and woman are not “of good report” if the Order has determined that they are of “bad report,” or if they cannot find two members in good standing willing to vouch for them.

Your sponsorship is your solemn attestation of an individual's good report. Therefore, before you sign your name in sponsorship of a candidate, it is your duty and responsibility to verify with the Master of your Oasis that Grand Lodge has not recorded the candidate as being of bad report. But further, as you may have read in Liber CI (Twelfth House), “it is incumbent upon the honour of every Brother not to abuse [the privileges of membership], and the sponsors of any Brother who does so, as well as he himself, will be held strictly to account by the Grand Tribunal.” Members who sponsor a candidate who then abuses the privileges of membership are partly answerable for his transgressions, and they partake of his dishonor. Therefore, it is your additional responsibility as sponsor to familiarize yourself with the background, character, sense of honor, and mental and emotional stability of the candidates you sponsor. Consider whether they are truly worthy of your fraternal trust, and the fraternal trust of all your sworn brothers and sisters in the Order; consider whether they are worthy to be admitted into our homes, our temples, and our lives; for once they are sworn to us, we are all sworn to them.

These considerations all apply when sponsoring a candidate for full membership in our Order, who is to become a Man and Brother, or a Woman and Sister, and when sponsoring candidates to higher degrees as well. The candidate for Minerval, on the other hand, is a stranger, who is to become our welcome guest. It would be dereliction of our First Duty to admit a known thief or murderer or psychopath unquestioned and unguarded into our Camp; but it would be contrary to

the law of hospitality to refuse a guest because we do not know him well enough to determine whether he would be a worthy Brother. The Grand Tribunal will be more lenient with the sponsors of a Minerval who violates the privileges of Minerval membership, because the privileges of Minerval membership are not as extensive as those of full membership. Therefore, prospective sponsors should verify with the Master of their Oasis that their Minerval candidates have never been expelled from the Order or placed on bad report, they should carefully review their completed application forms, and they should communicate with them and do their best to assess their general character and mental stability; but the standards applied need not be so strict as those applicable to candidates for the First Degree.

Love is the law, love under will.

Sabazius X°

U.S. National Grand Master General

The Thelemic Parenting Group

The Thelemic Parenting Group currently consists of an elist of order members who are interested in issues related to raising children within the Thelemic tradition. They are discussing a variety of topics pertaining to the different aspects Thelema and children. Since issues relating to children can be delicate, this eGroup is only open to initiates and non-initiates with local body master sponsorship.

The Thelemic Parenting Group is in the process of organizing two major events, a National Thelemic Parenting Conference which will take place in Las Vegas, Nevada the weekend of October 19-21, and an annual summer camp scheduled for the summer of 2001 ev. Both events will be open to order members and their children.

The Thelemic Parenting Group currently has some very talented individuals putting together a publication that will include articles, essays, rituals, and other related pieces. Some members are also pursuing the creation of Thelemic materials for children.

Members who are interested in participating in the Thelemic Parenting eGroup, Summer Camp, or Parenting Conference can contact Sister Heather at (916) 451-0706 or at anaitis156@aol.com.