



HORIZON LODGE  
ORDO TEMPLI ORIENTIS

# THELEMIC MAGICK

Basic Concepts and Practices

**Presented By:**  
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☉ in 25° ♀ : ☽ in 13° ♋

May 16, 2018 e.v.

# Purpose

To help you understand Thelemic magick, its purpose, and its methods.

# WHAT IS THELEMIC MAGICK?

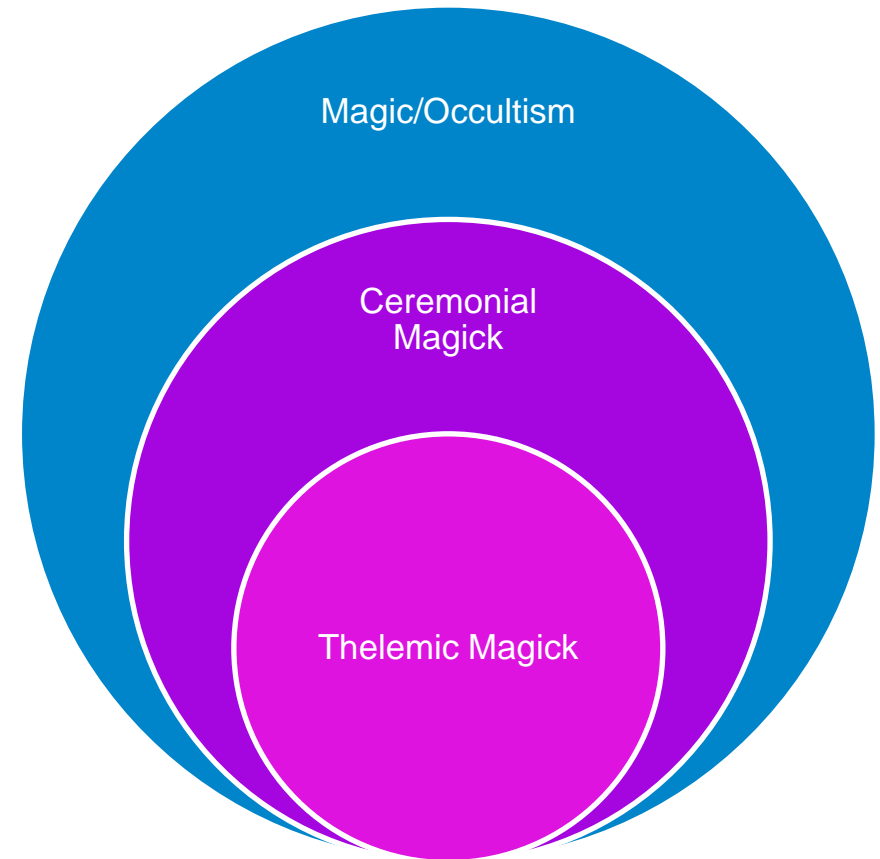
## A form of magic



# A Form of Ceremonial Magick

## Ceremonial Magick

- Divine authority
- Magical circle, pentagrams, symbols, etc.
- Importance of astrology
- Great Magical Retirement
- Trappings (robe, ring, crown, dagger, salt, incense, etc.)

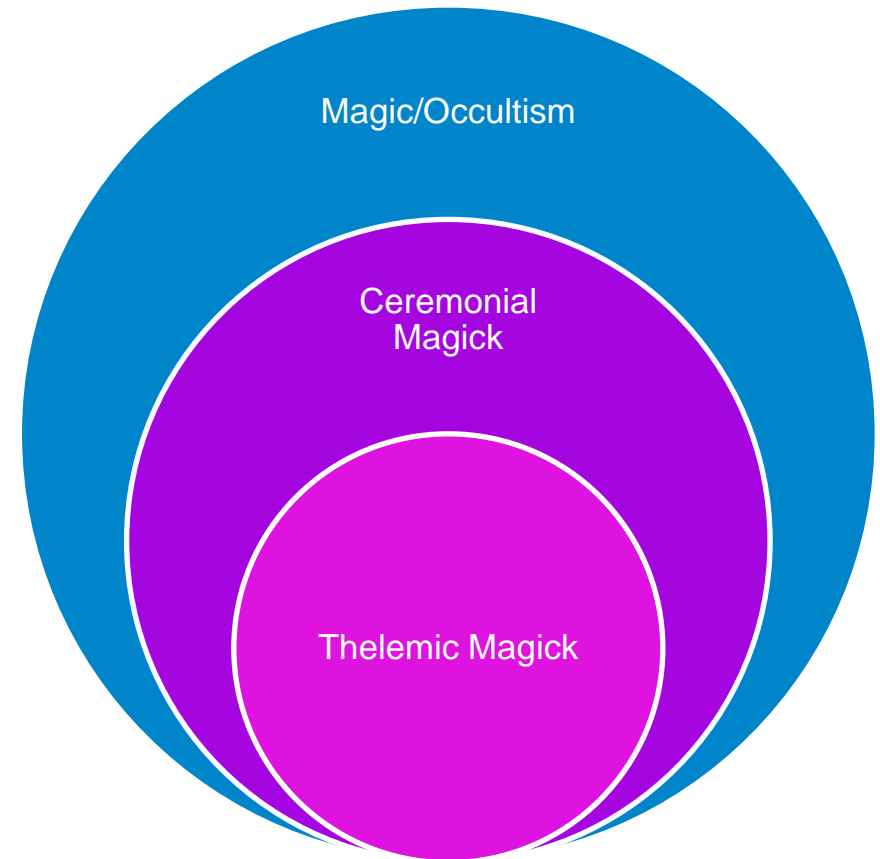


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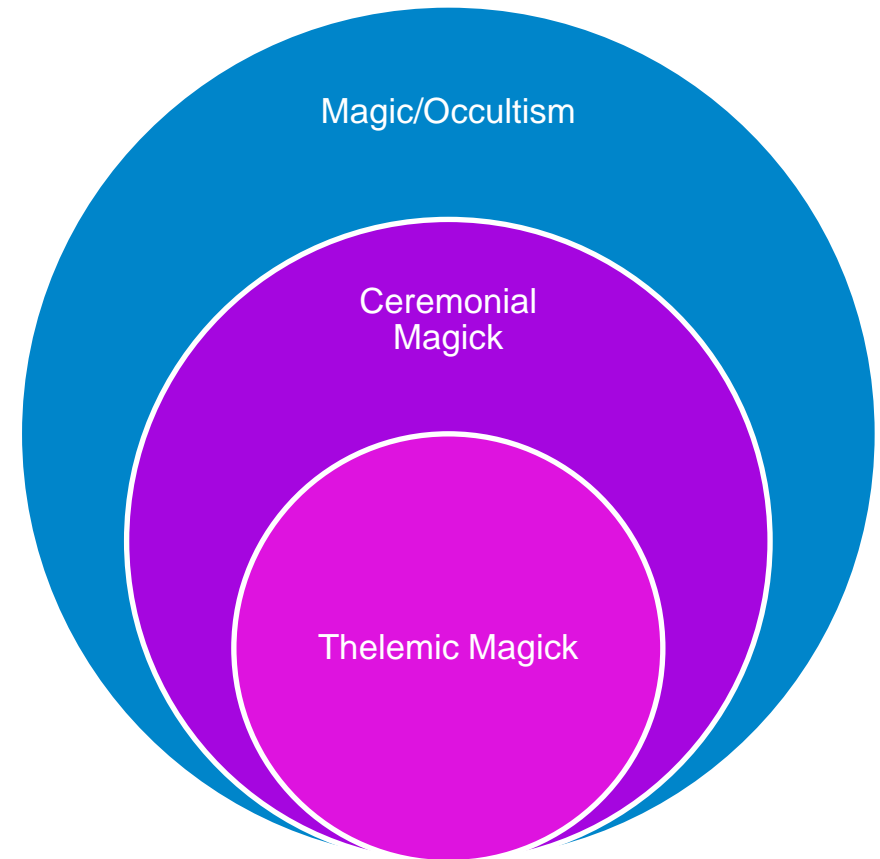
## What is special about Thelemic magick?



# A Form of Ceremonial Magick

## Not a great approach!

- Reduces Thelemic magick to mere technical nuances
- Obscures relationship between Thelema and magick
- Difficult to make sense of Crowley's definition of magick



## Aleister Crowley's Definition of Magick

“Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.”

—Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*



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- Not restricted to ceremonial magick.
- Involves *Will* – concept at center of *Thelema* (= will in Greek).

# Thelema and Magick

## Alternative Approach

- Interior relationship between Thelema and magick
- Understanding one necessarily involves understanding the other
- In order to understand Thelemic magick, must understand *Will*
- Must understand Thelema
- An understanding of magick naturally emerges from an understanding of Thelema

WHAT IS THELEMA?



“Religion is magic sanctioned by authority.”

—Eliphas Levi







“Whoso denies “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” confesses that he still clings to the conflict in his own nature; he is not, and does not want to be, true to himself.”

—Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*



# What is Thelema?

## The Book of the Law

- *Liber AL vel Legis*
- Latin for *Book AL* (pronounced “EL”) or *The Book of the Law*
- “Received” text
  - Aleister Crowley, *Equinox of the Gods*
  - Richard Kaczynski , *Perdurabo*
- Foundation of Thelema
- Problem: The Comment

# What is Thelema?

## The Comment to the Book of the Law

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

The study of this Book is forbidden. It is wise to destroy this copy after the first reading.

Whosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril. These are most dire.

Those who discuss the contents of this Book are to be shunned by all, as centres of pestilence.

All questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself.

There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

Love is the law, love under will.

The priest of the princes,

Ankh-f-n-khonsu



## What is Thelema?

### The Comment as interpreted by Ordo Templi Orientis

“O.T.O. has no policy forbidding study or [private] discussion of The Book of the Law. These matters are left, largely, to the personal judgment of the individual. However, O.T.O. does take the official position that every man and woman has the sacred right to interpret Liber AL for him or herself with the Master Therion’s various writings as guide and reference. Therefore, O.T.O. strongly recommends that any study of Liber AL be accompanied by a study of the Master Therion’s various writings on Liber AL.”

—O.T.O. Policy Statement, 2000 e.v.

## What is Thelema?

### Elaboration on policy by Sabazius X°

“...in order to comply with the spirit of The Comment, any ‘explanation’ of the Law at such (O.T.O.) social gatherings would, of course, need to be limited to an appeal to Crowley’s writings. There is nothing wrong with studying Crowley’s evolving commentaries and writings dealing with Liber AL, such is encouraged by The Comment and was clearly the intent. But we know from experience that group discussion, especially in official contexts within a hierarchical organization, inevitably evokes the dynamic of intellectual leaders and followers, and subtle pressures to conform. O.T.O. is full of what might be considered operative paradoxes, and this is a significant one. We believe that by actively working to discourage the creation of social contexts in which individuals are expected to state their personal views on Liber AL and its meaning, we preserve their freedom.”

—Sabazius X°, *Agapé*, Vol XII, No. 4 (Winter 2012 e.v.)

# What is Thelema?

## The Plan

- Limit myself to passages from *Liber AL* and Aleister Crowley's commentaries on it. All available on my [From the Mouth of the Beast](#) site.
  - “Old Comment” (OC) and “New Comment” (NC)
  - Djeridensis Comment (DC)
  - Introduction to *The Book of the Law* (Intro)
  - Their quotations of *Liber II* and *Liber Aleph*
  - *Magick in Theory and Practice*
- No questions or discussion are permitted during that portion
- Will indicate passages from *Liber AL* in red and without quotes:
  - **Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.**
- Will indicate Crowley's commentaries in blue without quotes:
  - **From this the Law “Do what thou wilt” follows logically.**

## Why bother??

- Must understand Thelema itself
- Only possible through *The Book of the Law* and Crowley's commentary
- Applying Thelema itself to your life *is* magick
- Will get you reading Crowley faster
- Put you in the driver seat
- Better position to judge other authors

# The Book of the Law

## The Passages

1. Every man and every woman is a star. (AL I.3)
2. For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. (AL I.29)
3. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. (AL I.40)
4. Love is the law, love under will. (AL I.57)

# The Book of the Law

## Context

This Book explains the Universe.

The elements are Nuit— Space— that is, the total of possibilities of every kind— and Hadit, any point which has experience of these possibilities. (This idea is for literary convenience symbolized by the Egyptian Goddess Nuit, a woman bending over like the Arch of the Night Sky. Hadit is symbolized as a Winged Globe at the heart of Nuit.)

—Introduction to *The Book of the Law*



## The Book of the Law

Every man and every woman is a star. (AL I.3)

Every event is a uniting of some one monad with one of the experiences possible to it.

“Every man and every woman is a star,” that is, an aggregate of such experiences, constantly changing with each fresh event, which affects him or her either consciously or subconsciously. (Intro)

## The Book of the Law

Every man and every woman is a star. (AL I.3)

In a similar way, Nuith and Hadith include all possible forms of existence; they can only realize Themselves by creating an infinite variety of forms of Themselves, each one real as it is Their image, illusory as it is a partial and divided aspect of Them. (NC on AL I.29)

Therefore you have an infinite number of gods, individual and equal though diverse, each one supreme and utterly indestructible ... If we presuppose many elements, their interplay is natural. It is no objection to this theory to ask who made the elements—the elements are at least there; and God, when you look for him, is not there. Theism is *obscurum per obscurius*. (Diary entry, 14 May 1919, 6.30 p.m., as quoted in NC on AL I.3)



## The Book of the Law

Every man and every woman is a star. (AL I.3)

...each 'star' is the Centre of the Universe to itself, and that a 'star' simple, original, absolute, can add to its omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence without ceasing to be itself; that its one way to do this is to gain experience, and that therefore it enters into combinations in which its true Nature is for awhile disguised, even from itself.

This theory is the only one which explains *why* the Absolute limited itself, and why It does not recognize Itself during its cycle of incarnations. It disposes of “Evil” and the Origin of Evil; without denying Reality to “Evil”, or insulting our daily observation and our common sense. (NC on AL I.3)

## The Book of the Law

For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. (AL I.29)

[T]his Ego is only conscious by virtue of having formulated itself, or the Universe (as it happens to view the case), in the form of Duality ... In other words, life is an attempt to realize one's own nature in one's own soul. (NC on AL I.29)

...once he acquiesces in the necessity of the course of events, and considers his body and mind as no more than the instruments which interpret himself to himself by means of dualistic presentation, he should soon acquire a complete indifference to the nature of the incidents which occur to him. (NC on AL I.29)

## The Book of the Law

For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. (AL I.29)

To know itself, each such Star, or Soul, must eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, by accepting labour and pain as its portion, and death as its doom. That is, it must reveal its nature to itself by formulating that nature as duality. It must express itself by a series of symbolic gestures ostensibly external to it, just as a painter reveals one facet of his Delight-Diamond by covering a canvas with colours in such a way that the picture seems at first sight to represent something outside himself. It must, in fact, repeat for itself the original Magick of Nuith and Hadith which created it. (NC on AL I.29)

## The Book of the Law

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. (AL I.40)

[E]ach human being is an Element of the Cosmos, self-determined and supreme, co-equal with all other Gods. From this the Law “Do what thou wilt” follows logically. One star influences another by attraction, of course; but these are incidents of self-predestined orbits. (NC on AL I.3)

This means that each of us stars is to move on our true orbit, as marked out by the nature of our position, the law of our growth, the impulse of our past experiences. All events are equally lawful—and every one necessary, in the long run—for all of us, in theory; but in practice, only one act is lawful for each one of us at any given moment. Therefore Duty consists in determining to experience the right event from one moment of consciousness to another. (Intro)

From these considerations it should be clear that “Do what thou wilt” does not mean “Do what you like.” It is the apotheosis of Freedom; but it is also the strictest possible bond. (*Liber II* as quoted in NC on AL I.40)

## The Book of the Law

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. (AL I.40)

Again “Do that thou wilt...”, the most sublimely austere ethical precept ever uttered, despite its apparent licence, is seen on analysis to be indeed “...the whole of the Law”, the sole and sufficient warrant for human action, the self-evident Code of Righteousness, the identification of Fate with Freewill, and the end of the Civil War in Man's nature by appointing the Canon of Truth, the conformity of things with themselves, to determine his every act. “Do what thou wilt...” is to bid Stars to shine, Vines to bear grapes, Water to seek its level; man is the only being in Nature that has striven to set himself at odds with himself. (“Notes for an Astral Atlas,” in *MITAP*, Appendix III)

Whoso denies “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” confesses that he still clings to the conflict in his own nature; he is not, and does not want to be, true to himself. (*MITAP*, Ch XXI, Sec II, fn)

## The Book of the Law

Love is the law, love under will. (AL I.57)

Each action or motion is an act of love, the uniting with one or another part of “Nuit”; each such act must be “under will,” chosen so as to fulfil and not to thwart the true nature of the being concerned.

The technical methods of achieving this are to be studied in *Magick*, or acquired by personal instruction from the Master Therion and his appointed assistants. (Intro)

This is the evident and final Solvent of the Knot Philosophical concerning Fate and Freewill, that it is thine own Self, omniscient and omnipotent, sublime in Eternity, that first didst order the Course of thine own Orbit, so that that which befalleth thee by Fate is indeed the necessary Effect of thine own Will. These two, then, that like Gladiators have made War in Philosophy through these many Centuries, art made One by the Love under Will which is the Law of Thelema. (*Liber Aleph*, "De harmonia voluntatis cum destinia," as quoted in NC on AL I.57)

## The Book of the Law

Love is the law, love under will. (AL I.57)

This is to be taken as meaning that while Will is the Law, the nature of that Will is Love. But this Love is as it were a by-product of that Will; it does not contradict or supersede that Will; and if apparent contradiction should arise in any crisis, it is the Will that can guide us aright. (*Liber II* as quoted in NC on AL I.40)

The method of Magick: Love the mode in which Will operates. The method of Magick in this—and in all—Work is: “love under will.” The word love (Ἀγάπη in Greek) has the value of 93, like that of Θελημα, will. This implies that love and will are in truth one and the same, two phases of one theme. Love is thus shown as the means by which will may be brought to success. (DC on AL I.55-56)

# The Book of the Law

## Thelema In Nuce

- The sum total of all possibilities is represented by Nuit, and a particular perspective on those possibilities—a point of view—is represented by Hadit.
- While there is one sum total of possibilities, there are infinite perspectives on it.
- Each perspective is a self-identical monad = God = star.
- Each god/star/monad/Hadit seeks to understand itself.
- It can only do this through experience, but being a monad, it can only experience itself.
- So it formulates itself to itself dualistically. It presents part of its own nature to itself as other, thereby limiting itself and concealing its own godhead from itself.



# The Book of the Law

## Thelema In Nuce

- Its own power thus limited, it experiences a world in which self and world, I and thou, pain and pleasure, love and hate are opposed. It endures a world of suffering.
- Yet behind the illusion of duality lies the truth, that each of us is a self-determining, supreme god, subject to no other, and therefore no one is ultimately subject to any law other than “Do what thou wilt.”
- While we exist in a world in which we are fated to suffer and die, the monad representing our truest self chose this in order to know itself. Therefore fate is reconciled with choice.
- Each event (change of one thing to another) following this original choice to divide is a reunification of the Self with itself, and therefore is called *love*.
- To live is to *love under will*.
- Love under will is the method of *magick*. To live is to do magick.

# Aleister Crowley's Definition of Magick

## Redux

“Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.”

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“Magick is the Science of understanding oneself and one's conditions. It is the Art of applying that understanding in action.”

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Could also say: “Magick is the Art of Life Itself.” (NC on AL I.37)

## What kind of story is this?

### Meta-narrative reflection

- Four passages from *The Book of the Law* and Crowley's commentaries on them.
- This does not exhaust the essence of Thelema, but the rest are largely implications.
- To be a Thelemite means to take the *truth* of this account of things onboard.
- What is the nature of this truth?
  - Factual?
  - Mythological?
- Archetypical hero tale
  - Descent of man into feminine darkness
  - Come back with “treasure”: some new insight
- What does this story demand of us?







# PRACTICING MAGICK

## Metaphysical Setup

Every star must calculate its own orbit. All is Will, and yet all is Necessity. To swerve is ultimately impossible; to seek to swerve is to suffer. (NC to AL I.51)

- Magick is the Art and Science of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.
- You cannot help but do your Will, so every act whatsoever is magick. The perception otherwise is an illusion.
- You can, however, desire not to do your Will. (This is also an effect of Will.) This causes suffering.
- Suffering ceases when you cease to desire anything other than doing your Will. It is the acceptance of “Do what thou wilt” and is the end of opposition within oneself.

# PATHS OF PRACTICE



# No Practice “I am.”

“Come unto me” is a foolish word: for it is I that go. Who worshipped Heru-pa-kraath have worshipped me; ill, for I am the worshipper.

—Liber AL vel Legis, II:7-8





# The Path of Love

“I adore.”

- Emergence of duality between self and true self.
- My purpose and my ground are outside of me. Work with this illusion.
- Devote yourself to your Angel/Augoeides. Construct a ritual of devotion.
  - Banishing/consecration
  - Invocation/prayer
  - Astral work



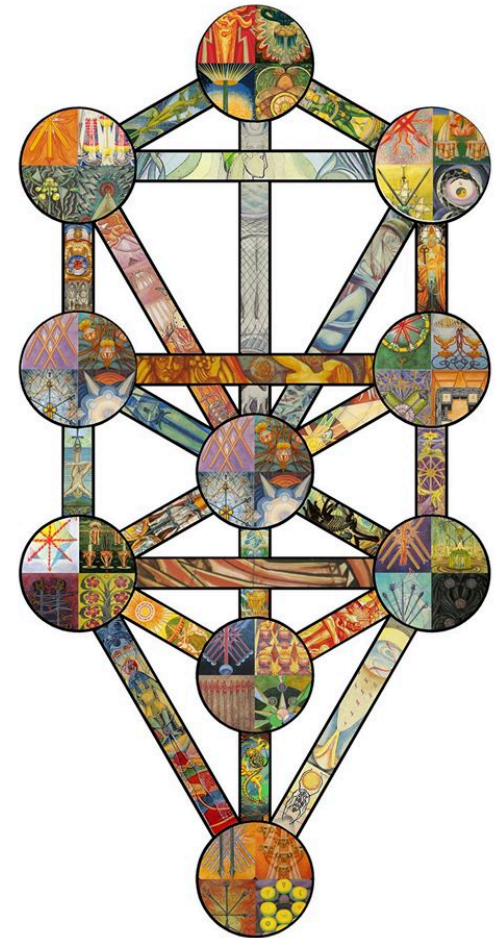
# The Path of Beauty

“I balance.”

- Teach yourself the correspondences of the Tree of Life. Start with Hebrew letters, their English names, their numeric values, planetary/zodiacal/elemental attributions, and tarot attributions.

<http://lapis-mercurii.org/qbl/>

- Perform rituals for all the paths, exploring the particular relationship with divinity implied in each.
- Bring all aspects of yourself into balance.
- Learn to see divinity in all things.



# The Path of Willing

“I do.”

- If you know your true will, do it.
- If you don't know your true will, discover it and write it down.
- Process of self-reflection and analysis.
- Not necessarily esoteric.
- Helps to have a neutral third party.



# Path of Remembrance

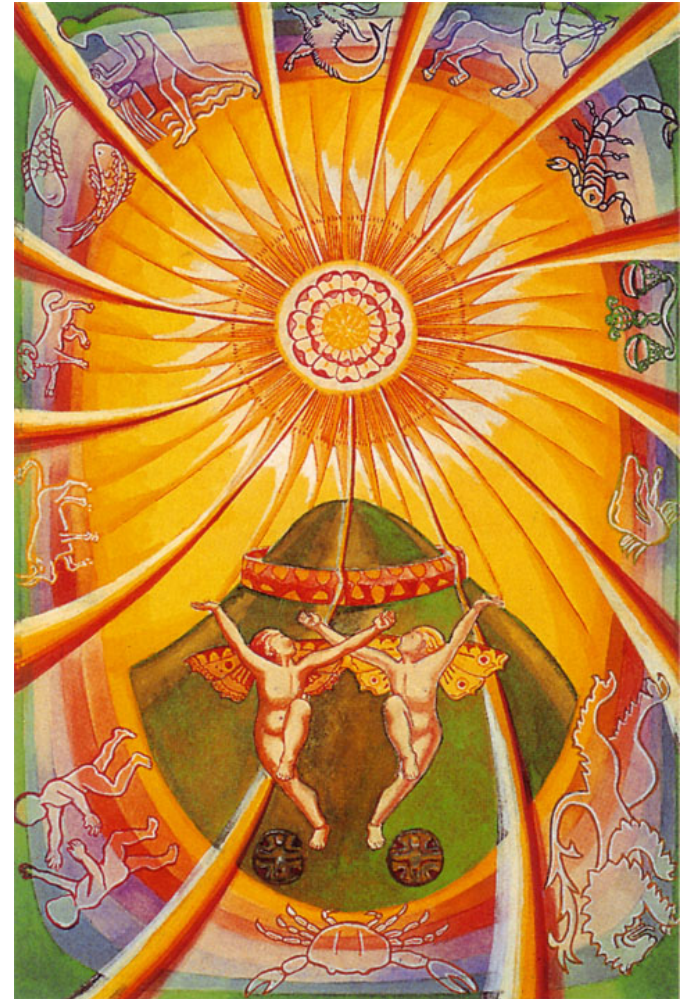
“I remember.”

## Remember to be Hadit.

“But remember, O chosen one, to be me; to follow the love of Nu in the star-lit heaven; to look forth upon men, to tell them this glad word.” (AL II:76)

## Thelemic Mindfulness Practices

- Saying Will
- Liber Resh vel Helios
- Gāyatrī Mantra
- Liber Astarte vel Berylli



## Resources

- From the Mouth of the Beast: An Introduction to Thelema in the Words of Aleister Crowley: <http://lapis-mercurii.org/motb/>
- Interactive Qabalah Site: <http://lapis-mercurii.org/qbl/>
- Find Your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team by Simon Sinek: <https://www.amazon.com/Find-Your-Why-Practical-Discovering/dp/0143111728>



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