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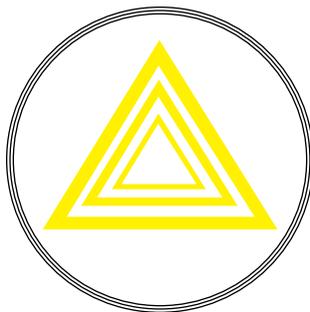
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ISSUE

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SOLAR GODDESSES

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Daughters of Lilith: A Gathering of Women

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Solar Goddesses

by Soror 207*



The goddesses researched in this article are associated with our star Sol. The sun in many societies is accorded divine honors; it is visible but mysterious, constructive and destructive, the source of life upon the earth with its warming rays as well as a burning power of devastation. It can be considered as an aggregate of the traits humans have assigned to their deities.

The sun signifies the qualities of leadership, success and awesome remoteness. In astrology it represents the masculine principle, the father, husband and men in general. The Sun governs over health, vital principles, authority and bosses, rank, title, high office, progress, dignity, energy, sense of identity and capacity for experience. Its effects are fortifying and vitalizing.

The sun is a deity that influences the life of humans recurrently; it measures the progression of the days and the seasons as it marches daily across the heavens. In some traditions the sun deities did not create order but administrated its systematization. The sun is the vice regent of a greater unknown deity and further higher divine order. Unlike the planets that wandered the heavens, the sun is bound to the regularity of its course. And it is not worshipped in isolation but in relationship to the other heavenly bodies, its myths are especially connected to its sibling and lover the moon. Its daily course is typically represented as being driving across the sky in a golden chariot, drawn by horses in Indo-European myths; a belief which led to the horse being deemed as particularly revered. In the Tanakh sun worship is forbidden and is

punishable by stoning, they identified sun worshippers by those who bowed to the east or incorporated horses and chariots into their rituals. And in Egypt the sun travels the heavens in a bark with attendant deities. The sun maintains the fabric of the universe by the continuity of its pattern, the sun functions in many cultures as a blueprint of natural order backed by divine favor.

Shapash

In the Semitic languages the sun is spelled Shin, Mem, Shin and in Hebrew is called Shemesh. The Akkadian sun god, Shamash stems from this tri-literal root word and is the Mesopotamian masculine correlative of the Canaanite goddess of the sun Shapash, the daughter of El and Asherah.

Shapash is called the Torch or Light of the Gods in the Ras Shamra texts; in the Canaanite Baal myth which reflects the seasonal ritual of his brothers Yam, the sea god and the underworld god Mot the personification of death, sterility and drought that conquers Baal 'the Lord'. She is allied with Mot when the crops wither from her excessive heat; at such times Baal is considered dead. It is Anath his bellicose sister, the chief fertility goddess, who after lamenting over the demise of Baal that retrieves his body for burial by procuring the assistance of the all-seeing Shapash whose help is invaluable, since, according to ancient belief, the sun on its journey passed nightly under the earth. The belief of the sun as a traveler to the Underworld is common in other cultures such as Egypt, where in their myths the sun journeys each night through the land of the dead or the dark side of the world to emerge once more in the East. She

* The information laid before the reader, doctrinal, illustrative or dialectical is drawn from many different sources. Little is attributed to myself personally, except the manner of presenting it. In any case the truth belongs to all equally, in proportion to each person's power and willingness to assimilate it; there is no room for claims of human originality in respect of the truth itself. Thanks to Frater Doug Blake for editing, proofing this article and his other contributions.

is an ambivalent deity, for when Baal does battle with Mot, Shapash persuades Mot to concede who is killed, grounded and planted. Baal is victorious and is restored; the drought of summer has ended and she causes Baal to spring from the earth as grain and the crops to grow with her gentle warmth. Thus she perpetuates the battle of the seasons in which Baal continually confronts Mot in a cycle which ensures eternal life.

Hathor/Het-Heru

In the Near East solar goddesses do not take a major role in the myths, but in Egypt paramount goddesses in their pantheon have significant solar attributes, such as Hathor, Sekhmet and Bast. The great goddess Hathor is one of the oldest known deities of Egypt, her cult and the various forms of the Sky-god Horus, and of the Sun-god Ra, are the earliest of all the Egyptian cults. The Greek name Hathor comes from Het-Hert which means the 'House above' specifically the region of the sky or heaven known as Qebh or Qebhu. Het-Heru is the oldest form of Hathor and means the 'House of Horus', this indicates that she is a personification of the house in which Horus, the earliest form of the Sun-god, resides. In this context she signifies and characterizes the portion of the sky in which Horus had been conceived and brought forth; her domain was in the east of the sky. Eventually she came to symbolize the course of the sun and finally the whole sky. She is also often referred to as "Lady of the West" (Nebt-Amentet) in many Egyptian texts.

Hathor is a cosmic goddess when the theogony of the Egyptians originated. She is coupled with the sun-god Ra her husband and father, who is her primary male counterpart. Hathor's mother is Nut who gave birth to her in Dendera in the appearance of a black-skinned or blackish-red skinned child that is identified as Isis in the form of Hathor. The priests of Dendera called her Khnemet-ankhet (the lady of love); this name is derived from the last hour of the day, Khnemetankh. The priests of Heliopolis in their theological structure called her 'the mother of the light', her first act of creation was to give birth to light, subsequently she produced certain characteristics of the gods Shu and Tefnut; for according to a very old tradition their begetter and producer is Temu.

There are numerous forms in which Hathor is represented, since throughout the dynastic period she was identified with every significant local goddess, and all their traits were attributed to her.



"THE CIRCLE OF THE
HORIZON IS THE EARTH
AND SKY'S EMBRACE"

SKY'S EMBRACE
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The animal symbolic of the goddess Hathor is the heavenly or cosmic cow; and in this form she was worshipped in the early part of the archaic period. Her symbol of the head and horns of the cow has been found among the early archaic flint models up to the late predynastic flints. As a celestial cow goddess she is responsible for the existence of the stars which is her milk that spilled from her udders, this motif is repeated in classical Greek mythology in the story of Hera suckling Heracles a descendant of another cow goddess Io.

Her appearance as the cow is depicted mainly in funeral scenes and in the Book of the Dead, until the beginning of the Roman period. In the Egyptian underworld Amentet¹ 'the hidden place' Hathor has the title of 'Lady of the Holy Land'. She is sometimes depicted as a cow walking out from the funeral mountain or as a cow standing in a boat surrounded by papyrus plants that are growing up to a significant height above her body. As the cow goddess of Amentet she wears a long, pendent collar and on the back of her neck is the menat, an emblem of joy and pleasure. On her back is a saddle-cloth that has a linear design and her entire body is at times marked with crosses, which are most likely meant to represent the stars of her celestial origin.

Hathor, as Lady² of Amentet, performed a very important function with the wellbeing of the dead, for without her gracious assistance and protection the deceased could not achieve eternal life. It was she in the appearance of a cow who welcomed the departed when they entered Amentet, she gave them new life, and celestial food to sustain themselves. In the Hall of Maati the left foot of the deceased was called the 'Staff of Hathor', she makes their thighs large among the goddesses, and she causes their legs to walk with ease in Amentet. With the

swathing of Hathor the decedent's face is made perfect among the gods, she opens their eyes so that they can see each day, she expands their place in Amentet, and she makes their voice to triumph over their enemies.

As the Lady of the Southern Sycamore she has the head of a cow and as Mistress of Amentet she is frequently shown in the appearance of a woman wearing upon her head a pair of horns within which rests the solar disk. She is depicted as a woman standing in a sycamore tree and pouring out water from a vase, for the souls of the dead who come to her. The decedent eats food under the sycamore tree of the Lady Hathor a tree of refuge for weary souls during the fiery heats of the afternoon sun in the summertime. She is also associated with the date palm an invaluable tree that provides fruit that stores well, oil, an intoxicating drink can be made from its sap, the leaves used for thatching, walling and fencing, for matting and baskets, rope and timber. The deceased sits in a clean place on the ground beneath the foliage of the date palm, praying to have power over cakes and to eat of the cakes under the leaves of the palm tree of the goddess Hathor.

In one judgment scene she is one of the company of the gods who watch the 'weighing of words', and when the decedent's heart has been weighed and found just, she declares happiness. Hathor is also among the group of gods consisting of Netcheb-ab-f, Tem, Nentcha, Seb, Nut, and Khepera, who encourage the deceased to battle the monster Apep of whom she is terrified of. And when the deceased has become deified their eyes become the eyes of Hathor.

A special chapter was composed with the objective of facilitating the deceased to be among those who are in the following of Hathor. The deceased are conducted by the hand of every god to Het-Heru which is in the heaven of Qebhu (the cool waters of the canopy of the sky) and his ka (double) shall be able to make his voice take effect on Seb (earth). The Egyptians held her to be thoroughly important enough to have in her train attendant gods or ministering angels.

1 Amentet is the Egyptian word for "West" with the feminine word ending (t).

2 The English words "Lady" and "Mistress" are often used in translating the Egyptian word "Nebt." The Egyptian word "Neb" is usually translated as "Lord" or "Master." In the Ancient Egyptian Languages (as with others within the Semitic Language family) adjectives and nouns need to agree with each other in their use of gender indicative suffixes. Thus, Neb(t)-Ament(et), is 'Lady [or Mistress] of the West'.

Other judgment scenes show her knelling and lamenting at the head of her brothers Osiris' bier.

She is also known as Nebt-Hetepet who is glorious in heaven, and mighty upon earth, and queen of the underworld. As the goddess Temt she is the Lady of the Two Lands, and of the red covering; she shines in the cities of Buto and Bubastis.

That as the goddess of the underworld Hathor is identified with the four great and ancient goddesses, Nekhebet of Nekhebet, Uatchet of Per-Uatchet, Bast of Bubastis, and Neith of Sais who are the four usual goddesses of the four cardinal points, this identification is the product of late period.

Frequently the personality of a female decedent is merged in that of this goddess in the funeral texts, just as male decedents are merged in that of Osiris.

The beginning of the Inundation of the Nile is marked when the dog-star Sirius or Sothis starts to ascend in the heavens. Hathor is connected with the rising of the River Nile preparatory to the Inundation by being identified astronomically with the star Sothis or Sept³ which is called the 'second sun' in heaven. She emerges in the form of Sothis in the locality of the sun during the second half of July which coincides when Sothis rises heliacally on the first day of the Egyptian New Year. Hathor, the goddess of the star Sothis, then boards along with the sun-god Ra onto his bark, taking her place like a crown upon his forehead. As one myth relates, Hathor as the star Sothis takes the place of Horus or Ra's right eye; the right eye is customarily considered the sun as the left eye is deemed the moon. And in another myth she is the night sky which makes her the moon therein; therefore the eyes of Hathor are the sun and moon, and the deceased looks upon these as their own eyes. The Nile goddess Isis also identified with Sothis bears a resemblance to Hathor as both wear the horned head-dress.

The worship of Hathor was universal throughout Egypt and she had many shrines to

the extent that they outnumbered the shrines of Horus. Besides being a ruler in the Underworld, she is the creator of heaven and earth and of everything which is in them. Hathor is the great mother of the world in Egyptian culture; she embodies the great power of nature and is continually conceiving and creating, and bringing forth, and rearing, and maintaining all things. She is the 'mother of her father, and the daughter of her son'; her devotees declared that she is the mother of every god and every goddess. Hathor takes on all the powers of every solar god. She always became the chief female counterpart of the head of the company or triad in which she entered as a guest. Hathor is among the company of the gods of Heliopolis, as well as one of the nine deities in the company of the gods of Amen-Ra.

By the late dynastic times Hathor became the representative of all the great goddesses in Egypt.

Shrines in her honor were built in most of the great cities of Egypt; and in all the important shrines of the local goddesses she was honored with them and became identified with them. Of the numerous names and forms she took in all the large cities in Upper and Lower Egypt, a few examples are: Tetet, daughter of Ra and Tefnut, in the form of a lion, and Hert i.e., the female counterpart of Horus, and Nesert; Bast in Bubastis; Isis and Uatchet in Ammet; Sekhmet and Maat in Cusae; Mut and Amenthet in Thebes; Isis and Anit in Coptos; Satet and Anqet in Elephantine; Behutet in Apollinopolis Magna; Isis and Khent and Anthat in Aphroditopolis; Nehemauait and Sefkhet-aabut, and Meh-urt in Hermopolis; Uatchet in Alabastronpolis; Anthat and Mersekhent in Herakleopolis Magna; Isis and Tep-ahet in Aphroditopolis; Bast, Sekhmet and Renpit in Memphis; Neith in Sais; Isis in Canopus; Uatchet in Buto; Tatet or Tait in Busiris; and Nehemauait, Tefnut, and Isis in Hermopolis.

For any ancient Egyptian worshipper of Hathor, to name all the forms of the goddess that exist would not be a feasible task. Some of her forms were regarded as of greater importance than the others; as an outcome that at an early period in Egyptian history a selection

³ Sopdu

of the Hathors was made, and that it usually contained seven. The Seven Hathors who were worshipped at Dendera were 1.) Hathor of Thebes, 2.) Hathor of Heliopolis, 3.) Hathor of Aphroditopolis, 4.) Hathor of the Sinai Peninsula, 5.) Hathor of Momemphis (Ammu), 6.) Hathor of Herakleopolis, and 7.) Hathor of Kaset. These are depicted in the form of young and beautiful women clothed in close-fitting tunics, wearing vulture head-dresses surmounted by bovine horns with the solar disk between the horns and they are holding tambourines in their hands. The company of the Seven Hathors did not always comprise the same forms of the goddess. Another set of the Seven Hathors includes Hathors of Dendera, Kaset (Cusae), Nehet of the Two Mounts (Gebelen), Eileithiaspolis, and Mafek (Sinai), Kepenut (Byblos) and Het-seshesh, (Diospolis Parva). Each great city probably possessed its own collection of Hathors, and that the forms of the goddess whose names were inscribed on funeral papyri were only the most popular forms.

Some of the forms in which Hathor is represented: she is the Chieftainess of Thebes; as the Lady of Hetepet, she wears the vulture tiara, with a uraeus in front and five uraei on the top of it; as the Lady of Senemet, she appears in the form of a woman with the headdress or with plumes and horns; as the Lady of Abshek, she wears a disk between horns; as the great goddess of Dendera, she is representing in the form of a lioness, with a uraeus on her head and as a woman wearing bovine horns with a solar disk between the horns and an ostrich feather or pair of ostrich feathers or a solar disk with uraeus and bovine horns with a solar disk between the horns and a pair of ostrich feathers or the Sistrum or the North and South Crown and an ostrich feather or North and South Crown and a pair of ostrich feathers and she typically carries a scepter in one hand and the symbol of life, the ankh, in the other; as the lady of Annu her headdress is the Atef Crown with Ram Horns; as the goddess of turquoise land, Sinai, called Mafek, she wears the crown of the north or Atef Crown and bovine horns and in another form she wears the vulture head-dress surmounted by a tiara formed of uraei, and above these is

a pylon set among a mass of lotus flowers and buds. A particular noteworthy form of Hathor is her clasping in her hand the notched palm branch, a representation generally attributed to the goddess Sefekh-aabut (Seshat). Sefekh-aabut a chronographer and chronologist is linked to the god Thoth and with this depiction Hathor is considered as a female counterpart of Thoth. Another notable representation of Hathor is as a sphinx, wearing the vulture headdress, with uraeus and disk; the side of her body is made to resemble a part of a menat, and she rests upon a pylon. The titles which are associated with this last form are Lady of Hetep, the Eye of Ra, Dweller in his Disk, Lady of Heaven and Mistress of all the Gods.

It is easy to see how the Greeks identified Hathor with their goddess Aphrodite, for Hathor in Egyptian mythology is a goddess of love, mirth, social joy, happiness, and of everything which contributed to pleasure. Hathor represents not only what is true, but what is good, and all that is finest in woman as wife, mother, and daughter. Hathor is the patron goddess of singers, dancers, and merry-makers of every type, of artists and artistic works. The vine and wine as well as ale and beer are under her care.

In ancient times, after Ra established in the city of Nesu-henen or Henen-su his throne of power, Hathor the all-seeing eye of the sun god espied the human race, whose conduct she learned was appalling. The humans were expressing derogatory and rebellious words against Ra and the great god became resolute to punish them.

Ra convened Hathor, Shu, Tefnut, Seb, and Nut to counsel him on this issue. He assured the council that he would not slay the rebels until he had learned what Nu the first-born god and the ancestor of the gods had to say on the matter. In reply Nu stated that Ra is the sovereign of those who were created by Ra and recommended to let his daughter Hathor 'the Eye of Ra' to go forth and slay those who voiced blasphemies. The council concurred with Nu encouraging Ra to let his Eye destroy those who spoke evil words against Ra. Ra agreed to their recommendation and Hathor descended to earth and

slaughtered the people. Ra was well pleased with the accomplishment of her work.

It came to pass Sekhmet (as a form of Hathor) waded about in the night season in their blood, beginning at Nesu-henen (Herakleopolis Magna). Being fiercely aroused the bloodthirsty goddess became savage and began to destroy humanity. The gods became alarmed and fearing the eradication of the human race; thought of a way to stop her. During the crushing of barley to make beer, mandrakes were placed inside the beer vessels along with the blood of the people who had been slain. There were seven thousand vessels of beer dyed red by the blood of humans. After a day of massacre, she withdrew to rest. Ra ordered that the vessels of beer be taken to the place where men and women are being slaughtered. Then Ra commanded that the beer be poured out from the vessels during the time of the beauty of the night. Sekhmet wakes in the morning and found the blood beer flooding the fields; her face beamed with joy, and drinks deeply to satisfy her still-raging blood-lust; and her heart was glad, she became drunk, and falling into a deep sleep she took no further heed of humans, thereby they escaped total annihilation. Ra then informed the goddess that there will be vessels of drink which shall make her wish to sleep at every festival of the New Year; and the number to be in proportion to the number of Ra's handmaidens. From that day Egyptians have on the occasions of the festival of Hathor made vessels of beer which will make them sleep, in number according to the number of the handmaidens of Ra.

Sekhmet

To some degree Sekhmet may be considered as a form of Hathor and by late dynastic times the Egyptians identified Sekhmet with a form of Hathor. Sekhmet is often called the 'Eye of Ra'. The name Sekhmet looks as if it is derived from or linked with the root sekhem, which means to be strong, mighty, or violent. She personifies the power of the sun and is the manifestation of the fierce, scorching and destroying heat of its rays, these features are very appropriate as a destroyer of humanity. Sekhmet uses her protective forces against a treacherous and evil

enemy in defense of her father Ra. In the form of the serpent-goddess Mehenet, Sekhmet takes the position on the head of Ra; she releases a blazing fire which scorches and consumes his enemies who are nearby and the fiends who are off in the distance she shoots swift fiery darts that pierces them all the way through. Apep the foe of Ra is assigned to the fire which achieves mastery over Apep in the name of Sekhmet, and it has power over Apep by the appellation of 'Eye burning the enemy'. Not only is Sekhmet a destroyer of Ra's enemies but is also a slayer of the enemies of the deceased. In the Book of Overthrowing Apep, Sekhmet as the 'Eye of Horus' falls upon Apep cutting and hacking his head from his neck, she tears out his intestines and kicks them on the fire with her left leg, she places them on the fire and burns into him in her name of 'Set-usert-aa', she burns into him and drives out his soul from his body, she obtains mastery over him in her name 'Sekhmet', she overpowers him in her name of Khut-nebat 'Eye of Flame' and she consumes his interior and blazes in it with the flame of her mouth. Sekhmet establishes the fierce heat of the fire between Osiris and his foes; she prevents the evil ones from approaching him or being in his territory. 'The Flame', as a destroying element, is known as Nesert is a prevalent name of the goddess. In texts throughout the Egyptian periods she is that component of power which safeguards the good and eradicates the iniquitous. The characteristics of Sekhmet can be compared with the 'Lady of Flame', Uatchet. The blood Sekhmet sheds during her battle frenzy is important as the primal matter of both life and death; the blood by divine alchemy is transmuted into a new being. By eradicating iniquity, the goddess is also preparing the world for a new generation which follows all cataclysms and populates the world once more.

When the deadly and warlike features of the Goddess are accentuated they tend to be associated with wild creatures rather than domesticated animals, in the case of Sekhmet she is generally depicted as a lion-headed goddess. Her head is often surmounted by the solar disk encircled by an uraeus, but occasionally the disk is omitted, and an uraeus only is shown; she is

clothed in a garment of red. The lion is a symbol of solar deities and their protective power, and is frequently portrayed accompanying the Pharaoh and attacking the enemy in battle scenes on bas-reliefs. Lion-headed deities are also the guardians of certain halls and pylons in the Underworld; and another connection with the funerary equipment is that the head of the bier is made in the appearance of the head of a lion, while the foot of it is normally fashioned with a representation of a lion's tail.

The Tuat or Underworld is divided into twelve parts; each division is called sekhet (field), nut (city), arret (hall), or qerert (circle). Sekhmet lends her name in a sense to the domain (or fields) of Osiris which are also known as Sekhet-Aarru or Sekhet-Aanre. As Sekhet-hrasht-aru she is one of the guardians of an arret.

In the later Recensions of the Book of the Dead Sekhet-Aarru is identical with a region called Sekhet-Aar. Aaru of Sekhet-Aaru is divided into numerous districts, the principal district is Sekhet-Hetepet (Field of Offerings) or Sekhet-Hetep, (Field of Peace), and is presided over by the god Sekhti-Hetep. To the south of this region is Sekhet-Sanehemu, (Field of Grasshoppers), and in it are the Lakes of the Tuat and the Lakes of the Jackals. In the waters of Sekhet-Aaru, Ra purifies himself, and it is here that the decedent is purified as well before they start their heavenly life.

Sekhmet-hetepet the Elysian Fields of the Egyptians is located in the fertile Delta. Sekhet-hetepet was created when Ra raised himself from the back of the goddess Nut into the sky,

he commanded that a field come into being, immediately Sekhet-hetepet, came into existence. Ra decreed that green herbs will grow in Sekhet-Hetep and without delay there came into being Sekhet-aaru.

According to one myth the gods lived upon plant life that grew near the lake in Sekhet-hetep. The concept that the beatified dead lived in a beautiful fertile region, where white wheat and red barley grew abundantly to a great height, and the canals filled to the brim with water, and they

enjoyed a material life is a common theme in Egyptian eschatology. The goddess Neheb-kau provided for the deceased the divine tchefaut food or tcheftchef, which is akin to the nectar and ambrosia on which the Olympian deities consumed. The tchefaut food grew in the section of the Sekhet-Aaru Tchefet.

The deceased prays that they become a khu (spirit) in the Sekhet-hetep, as well as to be able to eat, drink, plough, reap, fight, make love, their words to be mighty, and to never be in a state of servitude but in authority. The deceased also requests that they may have with them in Sekhet-hetep their father and mother; and prob-

ably their spouse and children and the gods of their city. Although the prayers do not state of the deceased worshipping and praising the gods of heaven or even the Great God who is said to grow Sekhet-hetep.

Sekhmet and Anpu (Anubis) were great helpers of the deceased; at the judgment it is essential that the deceased speak the necessary words of power and if the deceased's mouth is righteous and true they are immediately granted



**BUST OF SEKHMET
GRANITE STATUE
1403-1365 BC**

a place with Osiris in the Sekhet-Hetepu.

Sekhmet lends her name as such to another district in heaven called Sekhet-Sasa (Field of Fire); another abode where the beatified dead acquired food. The deceased is said to have come from the city of She-Sasa (Lake of Fire), which is in Sekhet-Sasa.

The deceased in the Pyramid Texts is originated from the thighs of the company of the gods, they are conceived by Sekhmet, by Sheskhentet and by Sothis; and the goddess Nit (Neith) gave birth to them. She also supplies her name to the belly and back of the deceased. The deceased two legs are the twin soul-gods at the head of Sekhet-tcher and the deceased comes forth and raises himself up in heaven.

Sekhmet of Thebes ministers to Osiris in the Second Hour. Sekhet-metu cares for Ra in the Ninth Hour her duty along with eleven other goddesses during this hour is to speak the words of power with which they surround the hidden soul and in so doing they cause life and strength to rise up in Osiris. In the Tenth Hour Sekhmet together with seven other goddesses are responsible to take care of and protect the Eye of Horus so that it may shine daily.

Sekhmet as a form of Hathor and Net has inherited several of their titles such as 'Lady of Amentet', 'Lady of Manu' (the mountain of the setting sun), and 'The Queen of the Libyan Lands'. Her main titles are 'Mighty Lady, Lady of Flame, Tefnut in Senemet', 'Greatly Beloved One of Ptah, Lady of Heaven, Mistress of the Two Lands', 'Lady of Tep-nef', 'Lady of Tchar and of Sehert', and 'Chief of the Libyan Lands, Mistress of Pa-mertet'. Sekhmet along with Horus created the Themehu who are the Libyans for she is the protector and redeemer of their souls. It is likely Sekhmet has western or Libyan origins.

Several forms of Sekhmet exist, 'Sekhmet, Lady of Rekht', 'Sekhmet, Lady of Sa', 'Sekhmet, Lady of Rehesau', 'Sekhmet, the Great Lady, the Queen of Ant', 'Sekhmet in Bashu', 'Sekhmet in Sah', 'Sekhmet-Nut in Het-khat' and Sekhmet in Nefer-Shuu'.

Sekhmet's principle male counterpart is

Ptah, who is her brother and husband, and the father of her son Nefer-Tem. She is a member of the triad at Memphis along with Ptah and their son I-em-hetep. When she is shown in the form of a woman, with the Utchat in place of a head, kneeling upon a rectangular throne, while a hawk with outstretched wings stands behind her she is called 'Great Lady, beloved of Ptah, holy one, powerful one, dweller in At-Tefnut'.

Sekhmet is also identified with Tefnut, the female counterpart of Shu and since Shu is a form of the Hermopolitan Thoth who is a personification of the intelligence of Ptah, the master architect and workman who carried out the designs of Thoth, Sekhmet becomes a sister form of Maat. She seems to have obtained some of the traits of the Seven Wise Ones who presided over learning and letters.

Another of Sekhmet's male counterparts is Khnemu who absorbed many of the traits of Tem and is regarded as a form of Ptah. One of Khnemu's female counterparts is Tefnut who is identified with Sekhmet in Memphis at a comparatively late period in Egyptian history.

Sekhmet taking the place of Neith as a goddess of the West along with her sister-form Bast goddess of the East, Nekhebet goddess of the South and Uatchet goddess of the North make another quadripartite of the cardinal directions.

Bast

Not only is Sekhmet a goddess of fire but Bast is as well, they both are associated with Hathor by the late dynastic times in her character as the 'Eye of Ra'. Sekhmet represents the scorching, fiery and destructive heat of the late summer sun while Bast as a nature power personifies the gentle milder warming rays of early summer and her regenerative influence is manifested in the fructifying heat of the sun which causes the seeds to germinate and vegetation to grow during the sowing and cultivation of the fields. The Egyptian the word for fire is bes, and it is in all probability where her name is derived from.

Libya is the country where Bast originated; it was common for the Egyptians to adopt foreign deities into the companies of their gods.

Bast is attired in green apparel. When she is depicted with the head of a lioness surmounted by a snake, which is typically painted green, the sistrum is in her right hand and in her left hand is a shield with the head of a cat or lioness on the top of it she represents the sunlight. Bast's association with a lioness most likely belongs to a late period in Egyptian culture; a woman with the head of a cat, her usual representation, is the form she was originally worshipped as.

Bast also is a personification of the moon; she is the mother of Khonsu, a lunar god and when in the form of a cat she is linked with the moon. The pupils of the eyes of cats become round and very large at times looking like the full moon. Plutarch held the opinion the early Egyptians identified the cat-headed goddess Bast with the moon because of the full moon-like eyes of a cat. Bast also has a special influence over women who are pregnant and she is shown as a goddess of the birth chamber on several illustrations. In his character of the moon, Khonsu the light-bearer of his mother helps to make woman fruitful and to make the human germ grow in his mother's womb.

Mut-Bast along with Amen-Ra-Heru-khuti⁴ and their son Khensu⁵ makes the great triad in the city of Thebes. At Thebes, Bast was associated with Mut, the lady of Asheru. Mut appropriated the traits and powers of older goddesses of the land with whom, originally, she had nothing in common with. When Mut has the head of the lioness which projects from one shoulder this is an indication that she was associated with Sekhmet or Bast. Some of her names are Mut-Uatchet-Bast, Mut-Sekhmet-Bast-Menhit, and Mut-Bast. Mut is also linked with Hathor, the goddess of Amentet in one of her forms as Lady of the Underworld.

Bast, Sekhmet, and Ra becomes a composite deity by late dynastic times. Sekhmet-Bast-Ra is depicted as a woman with a man's head who is wearing the united crowns of the South and North and wings are attached to her arms. There are two heads of vultures springing either from her head or neck. One of the

vulture's head is similar to that of Pekhat and has plumes upon it; the other looks like an ordinary vulture and it seems to have plumes upon it also. She has the claws of a lion and the phallus of a man. The crown and the phallus are indicative that the body of the woman, who is here called Mut, is thought to possess the male and female attributes of reproduction as well as the generative and procreative powers of Ra. When Sekhmet-Bast-Ra is Utchat-Sekhmet-urt-hent-neteru she is held to be the emanation of Mut. In this form she makes souls to be as gods, makes bodies to be sound and she delivers them from the abode of the fiends which is in the chamber of the evil one. Sekhmet-Bast-Ra along with the two dwarfs Atare-am-tcher-qemtu-rennu-parsheta and Pa-nemma-nemma helps the dead to become immortals and makes sure that the worms do not eat their bodies. They freed the souls of the dead so they may drink water at the source of the river and that they would have a homestead of their own in Sekhmet-Aanre. They make the dead to become stars of heaven. And with their assistance the dead are able to fight and overcome the fiends Tar and Nekau. In the theological system of the Heliopolitan priests, the heart of the deified dead is the heart of Bastet.

It is likely that a male counterpart of Bast is the triune god Ptah-Seker-Asar, her image as a lion-headed goddess is found on the backs of some of his porcelain figures.

The pre-eminent goddess of the eastern part of the Delta is Bast where there were numerous temples dedicated to her. The worship of Bast is very old in Egypt, at least as early as the Early Empire in the Delta. Per-Bast or Pa-Bast otherwise known as Bubastis the capital of the Am-khent, the seventh nome (Bubastites) of Lower Egypt is the center of her worship. The great triad of the city of Bubastis consisted of Osiris, Bast, and their offspring, who is generally called Heru-hekenu. In Bubastis, Bast as Shetat, the 'Hidden One' was worshipped as a personification of Isis. Her name is Bare-Ast at Sekhmet a town in the Delta. The major festivals of Bast in Bubastis were celebrated in the months of April and May. The celebration called

⁴ Amen-Ra-Temu-Kheperi-Herakhti

⁵ Sometimes Horus or Neb-aut-ab

the 'Hanging out of the Heavens', which reconstituted the heavens each year in the spring.

At Dendera the Bubastis of the South, Bast is known as Bast-Temt and is considered as a female counterpart of Tem; she is often called 'Eye of Tem'. Her husband is the god An, a form of Osiris and she is the mother of the lion-headed god Ari-hes, the lord of Aphroditopolis, the holy Sekhem, who dwells in the temple of Bast of Dendera. This triune repeats itself in Aphroditopolis.

Bast is associated with Mut and Uatchet at Memphis, with Iusaaset at Heliopolis, and with Sekhmet and Menhet in Nubia. As a female counterpart of Ra she is identified with Ra'at. And as a goddess of the east she is connected with the god Sept, 'the lord of the East'.

Pekheth

A local deity of Upper Egypt is Pekheth (Pekhet or Pekh); and as the Lady of Sept (Sothis) is identified with Isis, Hathor, and Sekhmet. She has the attributes of a cat or lioness deity, her name meaning 'tearer'. She is the Lady of Ant and of Set. Her capital is the city Pekht.

Ra'at

As early as the Vth Dynasty (2465-2323 BCE) a female complement of Ra called Ra'at is found in the pyramid texts of Unas; here she is the mother of the gods. In later times she

is refer to as 'Ra'at of the two lands', 'Lady of Heaven, Mistress of the Gods', and 'Mistress of Heliopolis'. Her complete name was, perhaps, Ra'at-taiut, (Ra'at of the World). She is shown wearing on her head a disk with horns and a uraeus, and on occasion there are two feathers above the disk; her attributes are unknown.

Shapash, Hathor, Sekhmet, Bast, Pekheth and Ra'at embody the characteristics of the Sun a universal symbol of the manifestation of God, the Higher Self, which is the central source of Light and Life within the soul. They are the golden ones of grace that liberate us with their shafts of light; they guard and guide us past the perils that thwart our progress on our paths.

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The Sacramental System of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica

by Tau Apiryon

Introduction

The word "church" derives ultimately from the Greek *Doma Kyriakon*, meaning "House of God." It is the physical structure of a place of communal worship as well as the religious community itself and the institutions established to serve that community. The purpose of such institutions is to bring the words "religious" (or "spiritual") and "community" together: to bring spirituality into the community; and to bring community into spirituality. The church must provide general access to the teachings and experience of a particular religion; must establish and maintain the relevance of the religion within the daily lives of the members of the religious community; and must foster a sense of communion, both among the members of the community, and between the earthly community and the divine community. The specific religious rites used by a church to in the activation, maintenance, and nurturing of the spiritual community are called *sacraments*.

The regular performance of a single sacramental ritual, even if that ritual is of surpassing excellence and its celebration results in great benefits, is not sufficient to accomplish all the purposes of a church. The Gnostic Catholic Church must provide more than the regular performance of the Gnostic Mass, and in the final paragraphs of *Liber XV* itself, we find reference to such rites as baptism, confirmation at puberty, weddings, and ordination. Section 9.05(B) of the O.T.O. Bylaws reflects the use of *Liber 106* in performance of last rites by E.G.C. clergy. These, along with the eucharistic service of the Gnostic Mass itself, constitute six of the seven traditional "sacraments" of the Roman Catholic Church. Crowley evidently intended for his successors to organize, as part of an overall program for creating a Thelemic society, a Thelemic ecclesiastical system with a variety of sacramental rites, which achieve the goals of a Thelemic Church by providing a religious and social context for the fraternal, initiatory and magical work of O.T.O. and A.: A.:

It may at first appear strange that Crowley would have adopted a seemingly "Old Aeon" sacramental system for promulgation of a "New Aeon" religion.

However, as demonstrated by the structure and content of *Liber XV*, the process is not one of simple "adoption," but of adaptation; not of "borrowing" but of learning. While the overlay of doctrine may change from culture to culture, and Aeon to Aeon, many of the technical tools used by various religious systems are of universal applicability, because they deal with basic factors of human psychology and consciousness which are essentially scientific in nature. The Hebrew Qabalah, the Enochian system of Dee and Kelly, the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage, the Goetia, and the system of the O.T.O. are examples of magico-religious systems whose technical principles bridge the gap between doctrines, theologies and Aeons.

While the system of the seven sacraments may be used by the Roman Catholic Church to promulgate its particular doctrines, the technical principles of this system are far older than Christianity and of far broader applicability. The Roman Catholic Church was built on the ruins of syncretistic Roman paganism. Most, if not all, of the sacramental principles adopted by the Catholic Church have their deepest roots in Egyptian, Babylonian and Greek pagan practice. The Christians found the structural and technical tools used by previous religious systems to be useful for promulgating their own message, and adapted them to their own particular use. Such tools constitute the elements of an ancient science of sacerdotalism, based on theorems rooted in the deepest psychological and spiritual needs of humanity, and reflected in the teachings and rites of the various constituent assemblies of the Western Esoteric Tradition. This sacerdotal science is one of the jewels in the scepter which, once held by Osiris as the Hierophant of past times, must now be taken up and raised by Horus as he ascends to the Throne of his predecessor.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the nature and fundamental principles of this sacerdotal science, and to evaluate its applicability within the Thelemic Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica.

Religion, the Sacred, and Sacrament

The word "religion" is from the Latin word *religio*,

meaning observant or heedful. The word *religio* may be derived from the roots *re*, again, and *ligo* to bind; meaning to re-bind or re-establish a severed connection. The word "sacred" comes from the Latin *sacer*, meaning devoted or dedicated, especially to a particular deity. Thus both words refer to the creation of a bond or a link between the worshipper and the object of worship. The Latin word *sacramentum*, from which we derive our word "sacrament," is derived from the root *sacer* and refers to that which makes something sacred, i.e. that which creates a devotional or dedicational bond or link. The usual ecclesiastical definition of sacrament is "an outward sign of an inward grace," or, as Saint Augustine put it, "a visible sign of a thing divine," i.e., a natural phenomenon possessing a supernatural significance. The actual usage of the word *sacramentum* in the Latin language carried the meaning "that which binds or obliges a person," and it referred to military oaths and legal processes as well as to religious obligations. The oath of loyalty taken in each degree of the Mithraic Mysteries, for example, was referred to as a *sacramentum*. The sacraments of a religion are thus the means whereby atonement or reconciliation with Divine Law is achieved, and a bond, agreement or covenant is established between the outer and the inner, the human and the divine; they constitute, in essence, a system of *yoga*.

The Christian Theory of the Sacraments

In the Christian tradition, the priesthood has always been defined by its responsibility to effect the reconciliation between the people and God as the successors to Christ's apostles, who received his charge and power to act on his behalf. This idea gradually developed under the influence of Neoplatonism into a liturgy of seven sacraments (or "mysteries," as they are known in the Orthodox Church), which are: baptism, confirmation, penance, the Eucharist, holy matrimony, holy orders and extreme unction. The Roman Catholic Church has many sacred rites which are not held to be sacraments per se, such as exorcism, the consecration of holy chrism, etc. These rites are termed "sacramentals."

The traditional Christian view of the theory of the seven sacraments is that they mediate and effect the atonement of the individual soul with the Godhead through the operations of purification (expiation of sin) and sanctification (instillation of virtue), thus rendering the individual fit for the reception of Divine Grace which brings salvation. The Priesthood serves as the "third

party" which mediates and administers the covenant between the members of the Church and the Godhead. In this capacity, they and the sacraments themselves are identified with Christ, the mediatorial aspect of the Godhead. Note that prayer, while certainly dealing with the relationship between humanity and Divinity, is not considered a sacrament in the ecclesiastical context because: (1) Catholic Christians do not pray directly to God, but to saints for intervention on their behalf; and (2) prayer is not administered by the priesthood, and is thus not a function of the Church per se. The administration of the Seven Sacraments is, without doubt, the principal function of the Catholic Church; and, as we have seen, any church can be defined as an institution established to administer a system of sacraments appropriate to the religion it represents.

The Number of the Sacraments

The number of the sacraments in the primitive Christian Church is difficult to ascertain, because a sacramental doctrine had yet to be established; but it was certainly less than seven. The rite of baptism was originally considered to expiate all sins, past and future; so no sacrament of penance was considered necessary. The laying on of hands which now constitutes the central rite of confirmation was originally conferred as part of the baptismal rite. The rites of baptism and the Eucharist were administered by bishops, who were elected by the congregation and had received the Apostolic Succession. The bishops were assisted by "presbyters" (elders) and "deacons" (servants, or ministers). The Order of Priesthood was instituted later, along with the minor orders, as a development of the Presbyterate. The word "priest" is ultimately derived from the Greek word *presbyteros*, "elder."

The doctrine of the sacraments was not fully developed until the middle ages. There were originally only two actual sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist, although the functions of the Church were numerous. Dionysius the Areopagite recognized six Sacraments, Abelard and Hugo of St. Victor recognized five, Bernard of Clairvaux recognized ten. Peter Lombard fixed the number at seven, a number which was affirmed by the Council of Trent in the mid-16th century.

Most Protestant churches, based on a strict reading of New Testament scripture, recognize only two sacraments: baptism and communion. Some of the Christian Gnostic systems also recognized fewer than seven sacraments. This is primarily because the Christian theory of the sacraments includes the assumption

that incarnation and generation are tainted with original sin-- which, to use Gnostic terminology, refers to the Mixture and concealment of the Light of Spirit within the Darkness of Matter. Some anticosmic Gnostic sects considered matter as being entirely valueless and unredeemable, thus they saw no virtue in baptizing with water or in sanctioning sinful activities such as sex. For example, the Cathar Church recognized only one Sacrament, called the Consolamentum, in which the Holy Spirit was received and the material life renounced. The Consolamentum combined aspects of baptism, confirmation and holy orders, and those who had received the Consolamentum were considered "Perfect." Sinful acts committed after reception of the Consolamentum were not redeemable except by voluntary self-martyrdom.

Jules Doinel's Église Gnostique (1890), which incorporated some Cathar doctrines, recognized two sacraments, the Consolamentum and the Appareillement, corresponding to baptism/confirmation and penance, respectively. Jean Bricaud's Église Gnostique Universelle (1907), a schismatic branch of Doinel's church, recognized five sacraments. Matrimony was not considered sacramental, and penance was considered a non-sacramental prerequisite for the other sacraments.

In contrast with the anticosmic Gnostic doctrine, the Catholic and Orthodox churches hold that incarnation and generation can be redeemed by the Grace of God, which may be secured through the covenant of the sacraments. Thus, the Catholic Church was able to develop, under the influence of Neoplatonist philosophy, a complete system of seven sacraments, corresponding to the interaction of the Holy Trinity (3) with the Created World (4). The Seven Sacraments may, therefore, be divided into two subdivisions: the four "natural" sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy matrimony and extreme unction correspond to the four life stages of birth, puberty, marriage and death; and the three "elective" sacraments of holy orders, penance and the Eucharist relate to the transcendence of the natural world into that of the Spirit.

The Traditional Significance of the Seven Sacraments

The Christian sacrament of baptism effects the first prerequisite for salvation-- regeneration: the second birth which purifies the body and the soul by the expiation of "original sin"-- that is, sin which is inherent in physical incarnation. The child is received into the

Church, outside of which there is "no salvation." Baptism comes from the Greek word *baptizô*, which means to bathe or immerse. The rite of baptism is far from being unique to Christianity. It was practiced by the ancient Egyptians, Etruscans, Israelites, Samaritans and Magi, the Zoroastrians, and the Manichaeans; and in the Eleusinian, Isiac and Mithraic Mysteries. It is still practiced by such decidedly non-Christian sects as the Mandaeans. Its primitive, essential significance is as a sacramental rebirth into a new life and washing away of the traces of the old life; as such, it corresponds to the beginnings of the yoga practice of *Yama*.

The Christian sacrament of confirmation effects the second prerequisite for salvation: *belief* in salvation. Whereas baptism is essentially passive, confirmation is active. The confirmand makes a conscious and voluntary profession of faith. He or she then receives the Holy Ghost (the Third Person of the Trinity) through the laying on of hands by the bishop. The word confirmation is from Latin roots which mean to "join firmly." The rite of confirmation is paralleled in other faiths by the various rites of passage performed at puberty, and represents an awakening into a new awareness of reality. The fundamental sacramental significance of this rite is the alignment of the individual, conscious will with the Divine Will, expressed as an acceptance of the essential tenets of the faith. As the active, voluntary aspect of initiation it corresponds to the beginnings of the yoga practice of *Niyama*.

The Christian sacrament of penance deals with the continuing struggle against sin after baptism, through confession, contrition and absolution. The word penance is from the Latin word *paenitentia*, meaning "a regretting." Penitential and purificatory ascetism was common to many ancient faiths, especially the Eastern religions of Mesopotamia, India and Persia. The purificatory "negative confession" was an essential rite in Egyptian magical ritual. The essential sacramental significance of this rite is the continual renewal of the Divine Covenant through self-awareness and self-discipline.

The Christian sacrament of the Eucharist effects the direct communion of the individual with the Godhead through the person of Christ (the Second Person of the Trinity). The people offer Christ as a vicarious sacrifice of themselves to God, and God returns the life-giving Substance of Christ to the people, through the principle of *do-ut-des*, "I give that thou mayest give." The word Eucharist is from the Greek word *eucharistos*,

meaning thanksgiving, which in turn can be derived from the Greek roots *eu + charismata* = "good gifts" or "good graces." The ceremony of the Eucharist derives from the sacrificial rites of the ancients. The eucharistic sacrifice of bread and wine was practiced in the Orphic and Mithraic Mysteries.

The Christian sacrament of holy matrimony deals with the purification and sanctification of generation through the exchange of devotional vows, recapitulating the covenant between God and Man as a covenant between Man and Woman. The word matrimony is from the Latin word for "motherhood." The rite of marriage is nearly universal in human culture, and its origins are lost in antiquity.

The Christian sacrament of holy orders deals further with the sanctification of confirmation through the renunciation of material life for a life dedicated entirely to the service of the Church as an agent of God, an apostle and vehicle of Christ, and a conduit for the Holy Ghost. The word ordination is from the Latin *ordinare*, meaning to "order, arrange or appoint." Nearly all of Humanity's religions have rites of ordination for those who enter into the path of service.

The Christian sacrament of extreme unction, which, together with the *viaticum* is also known as "last rites," deals with the final preparation of the soul for death, in order to ensure the salvation of the soul and its readiness to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Final purification is effected by the absolution of remaining sins and by assisting the individual to let go of all his or her worldly attachments and concerns. Final sanctification is effected by a recapitulation of the profession of faith. The priest then assists the individual to establish a final atonement with the Godhead through prayer. The word *unction* is Latin for "anointing," i.e. the application of ointment or salve; thus both "soothing" and "salvation." The word "extreme" refers to the sacrament being carried out just before death, at the "extremity" of life. The term *viaticum* is a Latin term meaning "provisions for a journey," as for a soldier going off to battle; and it refers specifically to the final administration of the Eucharist. One of the essential criteria of a religion is that it must deal, in some way, with the disposition of the individual soul, consciousness or ego after the death of the individual's body. Most sacramental religions, therefore, offer some sort of last rites to provide comfort and support to the individual prior to his or her passage into whatever lies beyond. In the ancient Egyptian religion, last rites served to ensure that the

dying person had the knowledge and provisions necessary to make a successful passage through the tests, ordeals and obstacles which he or she would encounter on the way to the Blessed Abode.

The Esoteric Significance of the Seven Sacraments

The three elective sacraments correspond to the three alchemical principles of Salt, Sulfur and Mercury; and the four natural Sacraments correspond to the four alchemical elements of air, fire, water and earth.

The seven sacraments also correspond to the seven ancient planets. Baptism by water is attributed to Luna; the confirmation of consciousness to Mercury; holy matrimony to Venus; holy orders, establishing a mediatory priesthood, to Sol; penance, the war against sin, to Mars; the Eucharist, the Royal Sacrifice and Thanksgiving for Good Graces, to Jupiter; and extreme unction at death to Saturn.

The planets are in an intermediate position between the celestial and terrestrial spheres, and are thus well suited to symbolically fulfill the role of mediators between Heaven and Earth. Qabalistically, they represent the seven rays or vessels of emanation. They also represent the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues; the seven bonds of brotherhood; and the numerous "sevens" of the Apocalypse: the seven hills of Babylon; the seven cities in Asia; the seven seals of the Book; the seven heads of the Beast and the seven eyes and horns of the Lamb; etc.

On the Tree of Life in Assiah, the four natural sacraments (baptism, confirmation, matrimony and last rites) occupy the spheres of Yesod, Hod and Netzach, and the Path of Tav. This is the First Order, the Magical Triangle, the Man of Earth Triad, the realm below the Veil of Paroketh.

The three elective Sacraments (orders, penance and the Eucharist) occupy the spheres of Tiphareth, Geburah and Chesed. This is the Second Order, the Ethical Triangle, the Lover Triad, the realm of the Adepts.

The Third Order, Supernal Triangle, Hermit Triad and Realm of Masters has but one of the seven qabalistic planets, Saturn: which is also expressed in the lowest Path, that of Tav. The Sacrament of last rites deals with the separation of Spirit and matter. Spirit goes on into the realm beyond life (the supernals)-- matter returns to Earth (Tav).

Thus, the seven sacraments can be viewed as representing the harmonizing of various aspects of the natural and voluntary life of the individual with the Will of God, or True Will, through the operational modes of the seven planets.

The Sacraments in the Thelemic E.G.C.

We read in Book 837, "The Law of Liberty," that "every act must be a ritual, an act of worship, a Sacrament." This is a requisite task for the Adept, who must ultimately be his own priest. However, it is the function of the institutions of Thelema, such as M.M.M. and E.G.C., to convey their doctrines and mysteries in sacramental form. The obligation of each degree of M.M.M. is truly a *sacramentum* in the original sense of the word; and the E.G.C., being a church, is, by our definition, an institution established to administer a system of sacraments. The sevenfold system of sacraments is the only such system which is both practicable and conformable to a comprehensive magical theory based on qabalistic principles.

While the E.G.C. is Gnostic in that it derives historically from Jean Bricaud's *Église Gnostique Universelle*, and it holds to the doctrines of emanation and of redemption through Gnosis or illumination; it has accepted the Law of Thelema, and so rejects the anti-cosmic doctrine that matter is evil and unredeemable. In fact, it rejects the notion of original sin altogether. It accepts the scientific fact that matter and energy (light) are simply distinct ranges of vibration along the same continuum. The sevenfold system of sacraments more admirably expresses this spiritual/chthonic interaction than do the reduced sacramental systems of the Christian Gnostics.

It is to be noted that the traditional Christian sacraments involve the atonement of the individual soul with God, which effects the harmonization of the individual life with Divine Law and integrates the catechumen into Christian society as a "member of the Body of Christ." In Thelema, the sacraments involve the atonement of the personality with the Self, which effects the harmonization of the individual life with the True Will and integrates the aspirant into Thelemic society as a "member of the body of Initiates." The Christian apostolic priesthood is the mediating agency of Christ. The Thelemic priesthood is part of the initiating agency of the Masters.

Thus, through the principles of qabalistic syncretism, the traditional sacraments may all have their Thelemic

parallels within the E.G.C., where they represent the harmonizing of various aspects of the individual nature with the True Will through the operational modes of the seven planets. A model for such a system of seven sacraments within the E.G.C. is described below.

Baptism (Luna - Yesod)

The ceremony of baptism is mentioned in the final paragraphs of *Liber XV*, and the Master Therion has left us with notes describing an appropriate baptismal formula for Thelemic use.

Thelema rejects the idea of original sin. So, for us, baptism represents a symbolic birth into the Thelemic community. The child heeds the call of Nuit, who declares, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." The child enters the portals of Her Church, where he or she is welcomed into the community of worshippers, leaving the profane world and its materialistic obsessions behind.

The baptized child joins the community at what is essentially a probationary level. The recitation of the creed by the congregation during the baptismal ceremony represents the instruction of the child in the essential tenets of the Church. The child is not a full member of the community until he or she has learned these tenets and has made a conscious, informed decision to accept them.

Confirmation (Mercury - Hod)

The ceremony of confirmation is mentioned in the final paragraphs of *Liber XV*. Confirmation represents the first conscious manifestation of the True Will. The recitation of the creed by the confirmand represents a statement that active participation in the Church and belief in its tenets is in conformity with the confirmand's own True Will. The Church accepts the confirmand as a Thelemite, one of its own, a rightful claimant to the heirship, communion and benediction of the Saints. The *cheirotomia* conveys the sacramental bond that joins the confirmand's consciousness with the *egregore* of the Church. The cuff on the cheek represents an awakening to the reality of Thelema and all its implications, as well as to the life-consciousness of puberty. (The Greek word *egrêgora* means, roughly, "it has awakened.")

Marriage (Venus - Netzach)

The ceremony of marriage is mentioned in the final paragraphs and the ninth Collect of *Liber XV*. In the case of Apostolic Christianity, holy matrimony expressed the redemption of an otherwise sinful and

unclean act through the blessing of the priest, and the dedication of the act to the service of God by bringing new children into the Church in accordance with scripturally acceptable procedures. In Thelema, the Mystery of Marriage is a magical expression of the divine process which continually creates the Universe, the formula of which is "love under will." The marriage ceremony thus affirms the inherent sacramental nature of sex. It represents the devotion of the most powerful energies of human organic life to the service of the Beloved: the revealer of the True Will.

Ordination (Sol - Tiphareth)

The ceremony of ordination is mentioned in the final paragraphs of *Liber XV*. In the Roman Catholic and Orthodox systems, holy orders represented the reception of the Holy Spirit in order to act as a mediating agent of God on earth. In the Protestant and Gnostic systems, the Holy Spirit or Gnosis was available to all and did not require the mediation of a Priesthood. The Thelemic E.G.C. recognizes illumination as a continuing, initiatory, evolutionary process. One stage of this process is that of the Lover, Tiphareth -- the mediator between Kether and Malkuth, who serves both. The ordinand affirms that it is his or her True Will to enter this intermediate path of dual service; to serve the Masters who have delivered the Law of Thelema to the world, and simultaneously to serve those men and women who seek the freedom provided by this Law.

Will (Mars - Geburah)

While Thelema holds to the principle that spiritual attainment requires effort and struggle, the concept of "penance" or "regretting" has little relevance to us. Our struggle is not against conventional notions of "sin," but against ignorance, illusion and distraction. Contrition, meekness and self-denial are useless weapons against such enemies-- it is the Four Powers of the Sphinx: Knowledge, Will, Courage and Silence, which we must call to our aid. The illusion of original sin has led the Christian churches away from the true significance of self-discipline-- it is our task to restore it.

The Christian Sacrament of penance was supposed to effect the expiation of sins committed after the regeneration of baptism. The penitent, recognizing that he had committed a sin, confessed the sin to the priest (in the early church, the confession had to be made before the assembled congregation). He then declared his or her contrition and regret for having sinned, and requested absolution. The priest

prescribed a penitential or ascetic activity, which the penitent was to perform as a token of repentance. If the penitent followed the priest's instructions, it was understood that the sin would be expiated through the mediatory prayer of the priest, and the penitent was free to continue his life with a clear conscience.

In Thelema, the negative concept of "sin" has given way to the positive concept of discovering and accomplishing one's True Will. As *Liber XXX* tells us, "Nevertheless have the greatest self-respect, and to that end sin not against thyself. The sin which is unpardonable is knowingly and willfully to reject truth, to fear knowledge lest that knowledge pander not to thy prejudices." The concept of expiation of sin has been transformed into that of perfection, which should be interpreted not as the achievement of a state of static flawlessness, but rather as an ongoing process whereby one's fitness for the task at hand (i.e. the accomplishment of the True Will) is increased.

The process of perfection, of striving towards truth, is aptly summarized in the Thelemic rite of "saying Will," in which the undertaking of any task or activity is related ultimately to the "accomplishment of the Great Work." The basic rubric of "Will," as said communally before meals, is set forth in a footnote to Chapter 13 of *Magick in Theory and Practice*, and this rubric should accompany all communal meals associated with E.G.C. activities. However, the rubric can be adapted to other occasions, as well. The same note states that the point of saying Will is to "... seize every occasion of bringing every available force to bear upon the objective of the assault. It does not matter what the force is (by any standard of judgment) so long as it plays its proper part in securing the success of the general purpose." Thus, the saying of Will may be adapted to any sphere of activity, individual and communal.

Using this principle, Will can be adapted as a sacramental rite for ecclesiastical, communal use in conjunction with the celebration of the Gnostic Mass, and as such would admirably fill the niche for a formal sacrament attributable to Mars. Rather than the negative struggle against sin embodied by the traditional sacrament of penance, we would have the positive struggle toward Perfection embodied by the sacrament of Will.

The Eucharist (Jupiter - Chesed)

The Eucharist represents the communion of matter and Spirit. Historically, the function of eucharistic rites was the implantation of the seed of Divine Will into the

individual body and soul. In the Thelemic E.G.C., the function of the Eucharist is to unite the body and the personality with Divine Consciousness, and symbolically with the True Will. *Liber XV* is officially appointed for this purpose.

Last Rites (Saturn - Tav/Binah)

While not specifically mentioned in the text of *Liber XV*, the performance of last rites is specifically provided for by *Liber 106*, and is recognized in the O.T.O. By-laws, section 9.05(B). Historically, the purpose of last rites has been to reaffirm the sacramental bond at the point of death in order to assure the dying person a favorable fate in the afterlife. In the Thelemic E.G.C., the purpose of last rites is to help free the dying person from any obstructions which may stand in the way of a free and peaceful death, so that those who approach death may reaffirm the sacramental bond with their own Holy Guardian Angels, and may set their sights squarely on the ultimate accomplishment of their individual True Wills, "whether they will absorption in the Infinite, or to be united with their chosen and preferred, or to be in contemplation, or to be at peace, or to achieve the labour and heroism of incarnation on this planet or another, or in any Star, or aught else."

Liber 106 is officially appointed for this purpose,

and the reading of this book should form the basis of our last rites. Ideally, these last rites should be administered by a priestess, and preferably by a priestess who is also a Dame Companion of the Holy Graal. The reading of *Liber 106* may be augmented with additional "provisions," such as a recitation of the creed, an administration of consecrated wine and a Cake of Light, an anointing with consecrated oil, and any other rites that the dying person may request.

The rite should also be preceded by an informal but detailed discussion regarding the resolution of the dying person's mundane affairs and matters of conscience. The dying person must be relieved as much as possible of fears, responsibilities, burdens and concerns. The priestess should encourage the dying person to speak freely about anything that is on his or her mind. If necessary, the priestess should be prepared to inform the dying person of arrangements that have been made regarding the estate, and to assist him or her to make any additional arrangements that might be necessary.

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References to this article are available online at <http://hermetic.com/sabazius/sacraments.htm>.

Horizon Oasis Regular Monthly Events for October 2010

All these events open to the public and held at the Horizon Oasis Temple, 1423 10th Ave, Seattle WA 98122 (except as noted).

Gnostic Mass

Oct. 9th @ 6PM

Oct. 24th @ 6PM

Horizon performs *Liber XV*, The Gnostic Mass, on the 2nd Saturday and 4th Sunday of each month. All are welcome.

Saturday Social

2nd Sat. - Oct. 9th (After Mass)
Drinks, fellowship and cake. Stick around after mass and mingle...

Kundalini Yoga

Every Monday @ 6:30PM

Local instructor Ai offers this class in our space each week, teaching the esoteric yet practical discipline of Kundalini Yoga.

Daughters of Lilith

3rd Friday - Oct. 15th @ 7PM

A monthly women-only gathering hosted by Horizon. All are welcome. E-mail matertiamat@gmail.com for more info. Order members only.

Degree Knowledge Series

4th Saturday - Oct. 23rd @ 6:30PM

Br. Blake hosts a lecture series on the symbolism of the Degrees of the Man of Earth initiation rituals.

Offsite Events

Magic in Theory and Practice

1st Sunday - Oct. 3rd @ 5PM

Br. Kolson hosts a study of *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Aleister Crowley's "treatise on magic and mysticism for beginners." Contact mkolson@attglobal.net for details.

Enochian Group Ritual

1st Friday - Oct. 1st @ 8PM

Br. Scott and Sr. Onyieh host and lead a group ritual and scrying of the Enochian aethyrs. All levels of experience welcome. Email for directions at asicath@keepsilence.org.

Schedule correct as of printing date - all events subject to change - visit the Horizon Calendar online @ <http://www.seattle-oto.org/calendar.htm> and the Sea-OTO Yahoo Group @ <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sea-oto/> for the most current information.

Horizon Oasis Calendar

October 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Liber XV The Gnostic Mass 6PM	27 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	28	29	30	1 Rite of Mercury Reception 7PM Offsite: Enochian Group Ritual 8PM	2 Rite of Mercury Reception 7PM
3 Offsite: Study Group 5PM Magic in Theory & Practice	4 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM 1st and 2nd Degree Application Deadline	5	6	7	8	9 Liber XV The Gnostic Mass 6PM Saturday Social (after Mass)
10	11 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	12 Crowleymas!	13	14	15 Daughters of Lilith Ritual 7PM	16 Horizon Social 6PM
17	18 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	19	20	21 Offsite: Officers Meeting 7PM	22	23 Degree Knowledge Lecture Series: Minerval Degree 6:30PM
24 Liber XV The Gnostic Mass 6PM	25 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	26	27	28	29	30
31						



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SHELLAY LYNNE MAUGHAN
PEN & INK
2010