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Sol in Cancer

# Sky's Embrace

The Official Publication of Horizon Oasis O.T.O.

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“THE CIRCLE OF THE  
HORIZON IS THE EARTH  
AND SKY’S EMBRACE”

SKY’S EMBRACE  
VOLUME 2  
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SOL IN CANCER

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#### ADDITIONAL WEBSITES

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sea-oto/>  
<http://www.cafeshops.com/horizonoasis>  
[http://www.livejournal.com/community/horizon\\_oasis/](http://www.livejournal.com/community/horizon_oasis/)

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## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Sky’s Embrace is looking for new regular contributors to undertake a commitment of at least 1-2 pages (approx. 750 words per page) of written content at least every other month.

Additionally, we are taking new contributions of any painting, drawing, photography or other visual art. Visual pieces do NOT have to be related to Thelema or the occult to qualify for publication (but they are subject to editorial approval).

Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sea-oto/message/1565> for more information or contact the editor at the address to the left to arrange a submission!





Daughters of Lilith: A Gathering Women  
present  
**The Shekinah**  
by Soror 207<sup>1</sup>



*Shekinah* is the frequently used Talmudic term denoting the visible and audible manifestation of God's presence on earth. It may be thought of as that aspect of the divine to be revealed "on earth, as it is in heaven". In medieval Kabbalah the term "Shekinah" becomes ambiguous, sometimes meaning the Presence of God, and sometimes the Soul of Israel. The Shekinah was introduced by the Talmudic rabbis in the early centuries of the Common Era, as she developed in Midrashic literature the Shekinah became an independent, feminine divine entity caused by her compassionate nature to advocate for humans before God. She is given her fullest expression in the major Qabalistic work of 13th century, the Zohar.

Emerging within the patriarchal tradition of Judaism, the Shekinah identifies a specifically feminine aspect of God which is reflected in the receptivity of human beings. The Biblical conception of God may not have been so much of a person, as it was of a process. Hebrew or Semitic words refer back to a meaningful three-letter root. The divine name YHVH (יהוה), which in English has been translated as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh" is in Hebrew more a verb than a noun. The Hebrew letters YHVH are a combination of the future participle *y* with the verb *hvh*, which means "present" or "existing". The name Y-vh suggest something like "Unfolding-being" or "Becoming-is". God is characterized as being masculine, but this happens for grammatical as much as for cultural reasons. There is no neuter

pronoun "it" in Hebrew, whatever is not identified specifically as "her" becomes identified as "him". God in the Bible is not a male "god". In contrast with the Fertile Crescent's various nature religions.

In early Judaism God was thought of to dwell in 'shakkan' (נִשְׁכָּן) clouds, as Baal had been in the older Canaanite mythology. The sanctity of the desert Tabernacle and the Solomonic Temple was the myth of YHVH descending in a cloud into the sanctuary. The presence of God was regarded as something more tangible than its visual aspect. At the completion of Solomon's Temple, "the cloud filled the House of YHVH so that the priests could not stand by reason of the cloud, for the glory of YHVH filled the House of YHVH. The nouns "cloud" and "glory" are used interchangeably, and the "cloud" was regarded as the visible form taken by the "glory" of YHVH.

While the quasi-physical manifestation of God's "dwelling" in the sanctuary is an integral feature of Biblical theology, the term Shekinah (הִשְׁכִּינָה) "the act of dwelling" does not appear in the Bible. In the late Biblical period a theological tendency surfaced which laid the foundation for the emergence of the Talmudic Shekinah. The inclination was of personified mediating entities interceding between God and humans. These entities were thought of either as having been created by God or being an emanation and gradually developed into angel-like beings, who act upon man and the world under instruction by God. The most frequent of these

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

mediators is Chokmah or Wisdom. *The Book of Proverbs* asserts that Wisdom was the earliest creation of God, and that she is God's playmate. In the Wisdom of Solomon Chokmah is regarded as God's wife.

The Goddess of Wisdom appears in nearly every culture and society. She is concerned with the survival and maturation of all creation. She is primarily the keeper of earthly and heavenly wisdom and the guardian of its laws. At the other end of the archetype, Wisdom is gloriously beautiful, ageless, eternal, and a mediating transcendent spirituality. The earth which is our home and dwelling place becomes a prime mythic symbol of Shekinah's presence, the holy dwelling of the Divine upon earth. Wisdom is the guardian of all that is made, because she helped make it, appearing in *Proverbs* as the co-creator of the universe. She has kept open the channels of communication between the Divine and earthly realms. The Goddess of Wisdom has also played a great part in the work of justice: "behind each law, mercy is concealed", is a Jewish saying.

Wisdom played a particularly important role among the Jewish Gnostics. References to the role of Wisdom in the primordial days of the world seem to indicate the existence of a Gnostic Chokmah-myth which originated in Jewish circles and was hypothetically reconstructed as follows: Out of the primeval Chaos God created the seven archons through the intermediacy of Wisdom, which was identical with the "dew of light". Wisdom now cast her eidolon, or shadow-image, upon the primeval waters of the Tohu wa-Bohu, whereupon the archons formed the world and the body of man. Man crawled about upon the earth like a worm, until Wisdom endowed him with spirit. Satan, in the shape of the serpent, had intercourse with Eve who thereupon bore Cain and Abel. The sons of Seth fought the sons of Cain. When the daughters of Cain seduced the sons of Seth, Wisdom brought the flood upon the earth. Later, in her efforts to help

mankind, Wisdom sent seven prophets from Moses to Ezra, corresponding to the seven planets. In this myth Wisdom, acting like a female deity, clearly resembles the Gnostic concept of the anima mundi, the "world soul."

While Wisdom had all the prerequisites for developing into a veritable female deity, no such development took place within Judaism. Instead, post-Biblical Judaism created itself a new concept of feminine divinity in the figure of the Shekinah, who first appears in the Aramaic translation-paraphrase of the Bible, the *Targum Onkelos*.

There is a tendency to endow the Shekinah with more physical attributes than those associated with God, and thus to distinguish between the deity who is beyond all sense-perception and deity's tangible manifestation as the Shekinah. The rabbis of the Midrash could not leave the designation "Shekinah" as an impersonal abstraction. The rabbis reinterpreted the Shekinah not as an impersonal "Presence" of God, but as a symbolic figure who is distinctly feminine. The Shekinah is related to the presentness, the feminineness, and the sexiness of the divine. The Biblical notion that the Tabernacle was built in order to serve as a dwelling place for YHVH is transformed in Talmudic literature into the idea that both the desert sanctuary and the Solomon Temple were the earthly abode of the Shekinah. It was the Shekinah who dwelt in the Temple, lining it with love.

According to Rabbi Yehoshua (1st century CE) "While the Children of Israel were still in Egypt, the Holy One, blessed be He, stipulated that He would liberate them from Egypt only in order that they build him a Sanctuary so that He can let His Shekinah dwell among them... As soon as the Tabernacle was erect, the Shekinah descended and dwelt among them."; and later in a 3rd century text "On that day a thing came about which had never existed since the creation of the world. From the creation of the world and up to

that hour the Shekinah had never dwelt among the lower beings. But from the time that the Tabernacle was erected, she did dwell among them.”

And in some traditions The Shekinah is the Spirit of God which accompanies the Israelites as a Pillar of Cloud and Fire. The Shekinah originally did dwell on earth and was self-exiled from Paradise in order to accompany the generations of Adam and Eve. Although when Adam sinned, she removed herself to the first heaven. With each succeeding generation of sinners from the times of the Deluge to the Sodomites she became more remote until she took refuge in the seventh heaven. The chief occupation of the Shekinah in rabbinic literature is her yearning for the Community of Israel, a community separated from her because of the people’s sins. But when the seven righteous men (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kehat, Amram and Moses) arose, they brought her back to earth step by step. The figure of the Shekinah comes alive in relation to a specific idea – her exile from her rightful dwelling place in the Temple, at the heart of her people, because of their transgressions. In the Midrash the Shekinah is clearly feminine, yearning for the restoration of the loss of wholeness. Her brief sojourn in the Temple before its destruction was a honeymoon before the Shekinah had to be borne within the individual soul of each pious Jew.

As to the presence of the Shekinah in the Second Temple opinions were divided. Some said that while in the First Temple the Shekinah dwelt continuously, in the Second Temple she was present only intermittently. Some sages asserted that the Shekinah never graced the Second Temple with her presence, and that this circumstance constituted one of the seven features marking the inferiority of this sanctuary in comparison with the First. Others held not only that the Shekinah was present in the Second Temple, but that, following its destruction, she transferred her seat to several important

synagogues in Babylonia, where her presence was both visible and audible. In general, it was an accepted article of faith that wherever their exile took the people of Israel, whether to Egypt, to Babylonia, or to Edom (Rome), the Shekinah went along with them, and that she would remain with them until the time of their redemption. The Shekinah comforts the sick, helps the needy, and walks with the humble. She has special concerns for the repentant sinners of Israel: these “are accepted by the Shekinah as if they were righteous and pious persons who never sinned. They are carried aloft and seated next to the Shekinah...He whose heart is broken and whose spirit is low and whose mouth rarely utters a word, the Shekinah walks with him every day...Good deeds, even if performed by idolaters, attract the Shekinah; when the prophets of Baal practiced hospitality, the Shekinah descended and rested upon them.

The Shekinah is the love-aspect of God which touches the world of human beings, particularly in the area of sexual intimacy. Talmudic sources relate that for the husband and wife who merit it, the Shekinah comes to rest between them. The Shekinah also has a punitive aspect that closely parallels the cruel aspect of the ancient Near Eastern love-goddesses. A mixture of the punitive and the merciful aspects of the Shekinah appear in the legends which attribute to her the function of taking the souls of exceptionally meritorious men. There were six individuals, we read in the Talmud, whom the Angel of Death could not overcome, and who died only through a kiss of the Shekinah; they were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron and Miriam. According to another passage, it was God who took the soul of Moses by kissing him on the mouth. But after Moses dies, it was the Shekinah who carried him on her wings a distance of four miles to the place where he was to be buried, which parallels the Ugaritic myth about Anath carrying the body of her husband-brother, Baal, to his burial place.

Lest one think that the Shekinah was thought of as ranking merely with the angels, we adduce a few passages which emphasize her superiority to them. The splendor of the Shekinah feeds the ministering angels. Her radiance is so great that the angels must cover their faces with their wings so as not to see her. The ministering angels are removed from the Shekinah by myriads of parasangs, and the body of the Shekinah herself measures millions of miles. These ideas are complementary without being contradictory: on the one hand, the Shekinah can be so small as to find place in the Tabernacle or even in the small ark of bulrushes next to the child Moses, on the other, her size overshadows the world. The problem of how to reconcile the omnipresence of the Shekinah with her "dwelling" in the sanctuary was solved by the introduction of the concept of "contraction" of which the Qabalah was later to make extensive use in its cosmology.

Of special importance in Qabalistic thinking and practice is the relation between the sixth Sephirah, *Tiphareth* (the 'Beauty', also the 'Compassion' of God) and the tenth Sephirah, which is called *Malkuth* or *Shekinah*. Tiphareth is the central Sephirah; it functions as the hub and pivot of the whole system. In the dynamic give-and-take of the Sephiroth, Tiphareth receives the power and influx of the higher potencies and, harmonizing them, passes them on to the lower ones. It embodies the creative dynamism of the Sephirothic Tree and is conceived exclusively in male symbols: king, sun, bridegroom, heaven. Standing at the lower end of the Sephirothic cluster is Malkuth.

Standing at the lowest, receiving end of the system, Malkuth is the receptive womb, the earth, the bride and the queen. It is only in relation to the lower worlds that Malkuth, as that aspect of the deity which is nearest to them, acquires active, creative or even ruling characteristics. Then the royal aspect of Queenship is emphasized and the bride is also the mother.

It is the erotic imagery in the description of the relations between Tiphareth and Malkuth which is one of the most striking features of the Qabalistic symbolism of the Zohar. The supreme and central mystery of the Qabalah is the Holy Union of 'sacred marriage' between the two aspects of the Divine, or in other words the unification of God. The greatest catastrophe that the Qabalist can imagine is the destruction of the unity within the godhead, the separation of the Shekinah from her husband.

In the beginning God was All in All. In order that creation (which means, that which is not God) might be, God had to empty space by withdrawing or 'retracting' Its all-pervading presence. This is the mystery of the *Tzimtzum* ('retraction' or 'contraction'). Into this newly created vacuum, God wanted to infuse Its carefully veiled light, thus bringing into being a created cosmos, according to Isaac Luria, the most influential of the post-Zohar Qabalists, this outpouring of the Divine from Ain-Soph was originally mediated by *Adam Qadmon*, the macrocosmic Universal Man. The Light poured into the first three Sephiroth in orderly fashion. This divine substance then began to pour in a powerful torrent, but the channels or pipes through which the creative light-essence of God poured into creation-in-the-making could not contain the Divine light. The next six vessels collapsed and broke in the *Shebirath ha-kelim*, 'the breaking of the vessels', and the divine sparks fell into chaos resulting in a mixing of good with evil on the lower spheres of the Tree. The final Sephirah, Malkuth, representing the Shekinah – the Presence of God, often seen as a "feminine" aspect of the Divine – was thus exiled amongst the *Qelipoth*, the shells of the broken vessels. Yet amidst these shells in our world, there are also sparks of divine light contained within all things.

Here a Gnostic type of primeval catastrophe is assumed in the very heart of God's creation. Since then the history of the world,

including the creation of man is the drama of the struggle for restoration (*tikkun*) with its ups and downs, its progress and setbacks.

There is a tendency to personify the Shekinah and to conceive of her as a manifestation of the deity in a lower form capable of being perceived by the human senses. She was not originally conceived of as a goddess, but as a specific potential of God. Shekinah was the direct heir of the Biblical Cloud of Glory which had dwelt in the sanctuary and had been the visible manifestation of YHVH's presence. There is as yet no indication that the Shekinah was considered a divine entity separate from God to the extent of being able to confront God. In view of the mystical dualistic theosophy of Philo and the Cherubim-symbolism of the Second Temple, it was inevitable that the step from regarding the Shekinah as the manifestation of God to seeing in her a discrete divine entity should be taken. The earliest evidence that it was, dates from the end of the 3rd century CE.

The relationship of the two Talmudic concepts of the Shekinah and of the "Holy Spirit". These two concepts were used synonymously in

the Talmudic period. When a Talmudic teacher speaks of the Holy Spirit, he may as well have used the term Shekinah.

In one Talmudic passage there is the idea that the "Holy One, blessed be He" or God, and the Shekinah or Holy Spirit, are separate and discrete divine entities. The Holy Spirit is said here to have admonished God not to practice retribution and to refrain from punishing Israel. She (she because the "Holy Spirit", like the Shekinah, is feminine) was considered to have an opinion, a mind, a will, and a personality of her own. She is opposed to God and tries to influence him.

Sources:

The Hebrew Goddess by Raphael Patai

Gnosis Magazine Vol 14 The Redemption of the Shekinah by Ya'qub ibn Yusuf

Gnosis Magazine No. 13 Sophia: Goddess of Wisdom By Caitlin Matthews

Man, Myth & Magic Vol. 3



## *Lilith*

*will be the next Goddess featured in Sky's Embrace.*

*Please join us to celebrate the feminine at our monthly social to explore Women's Mysteries, with a Evocation of the Shekinah in August.*

*Open to the Public, Newcomers Welcome!!!*

*Where: Horizon Oasis*

*When: Friday August 21, 2009 at 7:00pm*





Artist: Zwahk  
Title: Metal Wings  
Medium: Ink on Paper  
Year: 2009



# Upcoming Horizon Fundraisers!

Several of our members are taking time out of their busy schedules to provide discounted trades and services to the Horizon community at discounted prices, with all proceeds going directly to Horizon Oasis! Take a look and make an appointment before all the spots fill up...

## From Soror Melissa:

It is my honor and privilege once again as a Liscensed Massage Practioner in the state of Washington to once again offer a special deal to my brothers and sisters at Horizon Oasis.

On Sunday, July 5th I will be offering theraputic and relaxation massage at the temple to any Horizon member who wishes to book an appointment.

Payment is by donation (minimum \$.50/minute) and 100% of proceeds go to Horizon Oasis.

Minimum appointment length is 30 minutes.

Maximum appointment legnth is 2 hours.

Appointments will be available all day BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. If you'd like to set an appointment please call me at 206-227-1290 or email me at [scathan@gmail.com](mailto:scathan@gmail.com).

## From Soror Shellay:

On Sunday, July 26th, Soror Shellay will be giving Tarot readings at the temple for members and friends of Horizon. This is a fundraiser to benefit Horizon Oasis; payment is by donation with a \$20.00 minimum, and all proceeds go to Horizon.

Readings will be about 45 minutes long, and can include multiple throws to fully explore your questions. They are private and confidential, of course.

Write [matertiamat@gmail.com](mailto:matertiamat@gmail.com) to schedule your reading.

Soror Shellay has been a student of magick and the tarot for over 40 years. An ordained priestess and initiator, she has been a member of O.T.O. since January of 2000 and Body Master of Horizon Oasis since 2007.

It's a 4th Sunday but there's no mass that day, we canclcd it so we could get ready for NOTOCon.

## July 11th Horizon Community Meeting

Our next Community Meeting will be after mass on Saturday, July 11th, about 7:30. All members of Horizon Oasis are encouraged to attend. Topics we'll be discussing are:

- Horizon's finances

We've been in our own space for almost 2 years now, and overall things have gone very well. Recently however, Horizon has begun to feel the effects of our current economy - dues are down, and this is a matter of concern. We'll have more specific details at the meeting, and will be talking about ways to make sure we have enough income to keep our temple open.

- Training of Gnostic Mass officers

Some changes to both Horizon's E.G.C. training and the Novitiate Training program from Tau James.

- Transitions and other updates
- NOTOCon Vending for Horizon

We'll have a vending table, and could use some help!

- NOTOCon Report from the national committee

See you there!

Agape,  
Shellay



## **NOTOCON UPDATE**

### **The home stretch!**

**At press time, there will be 17 days until the July 15 deadline to register for NOTOCON! Are you registered? Registration is required for all on site volunteers as well as attendees. The conference is also something that you just won't want to miss. After all, how often to hundreds of Thelemites converge in your own back yard?**

**Learn more about NOTOCON VII and register at [vii.notocon.org](http://vii.notocon.org).**

**If you'd like an opportunity to volunteer that doesn't require registration, you can show up to our pre-NOTOCON work party on Saturday, July 25th at the Horizon temple, 4:00 pm. We'll assemble registration packets, review the conference weekend volunteer schedule, and trouble shoot any last minute issues that come to mind.**

**The conference is really coming together. Thank you all for being a part of it, without you it wouldn't happen.**

**Sr. Melissa Holm**

Onsite Coordinator

NOTOCON '09





# NOTOCON VII

## The Seventh Biennial National O.T.O. Conference

### Unity Uttermost Showed!

### Aug 7-9th, 2009 EV – Seattle, WA

## Horizon Oasis Regular Monthly Events for July 2009

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

July 11th @ 6PM

July 18th @ 8PM (White Robe)

July 26th **Mass Cancelled**

Horizon performs Liber XV, The Gnostic Mass, on the 2nd & 3rd Saturday and 4th Sunday of each month. All are welcome.

### Saturday Social

2nd Sat. - July 11th (After Mass)

Drinks, fellowship and cake. Stick around after mass and have some fun!

### Horizon Orientation

4th Sunday - Cancelled for July  
Will return in August.

### Horizon Monthly Class

4th Tuesday - Cancelled for July

Will return in August.

### Novice Night - ON HIATUS

E.G.C. related training events will continue after NOTOCon... updates forthcoming!

### Enochian Magic Class

2nd Tuesday - July 14th @ 7PM

A focus on detailed knowledge about the history, symbolism and practice of the Enochian magic system.

### 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.

### RPG Night

1st & 3rd Thurs. - July 2 & 16 @ 6PM

Join fellow Horizoners for a night of gaming.

### Offsite Events

#### Magic in Theory and Practice

1st Sunday - July 5th @ 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](mailto:mkolson@attglobal.net) for details.

#### Garden of Pomegranates

3rd Saturday - July 18th @ 12PM

Each month Brs. Diego & Ken offer a discussion of *Garden of Pomegranates* by Israel Regardie, an essential text of western esoteric qabalah. Contact [ken\\_r\\_barton63@hotmail.com](mailto:ken_r_barton63@hotmail.com) to RSVP.



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

July 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Liber XV The Gnostic Mass 6PM  Horizon Orientation 7:30PM	29 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	30	1	2 RPG Night 6PM	3	4
5 <b>Massage Fundraiser ALL DAY</b>  Offsite Study Group 5PM Magic in Theory & Practice	6 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	7	8	9	10	11 Liber XV The Gnostic Mass 6PM  Community Meeting 7:30PM
12	13 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	14 Enochian Magic Class 7PM	15	16 RPG Night 6PM	17	18 Offsite Study Group 12PM Garden of Pomegranates  Liber XV The Gnostic Mass 8PM (White Robe)
19 <b>*** at 3PM Members and guests only</b>	20 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	21 <b>Offsite Officers Meeting 7PM</b>  <b>Horizon officers and invited guests only</b>	22	23	24	25 <u>NOTOCon</u>  <u>Work Party</u> <u>4PM</u>
26 <b>Tarot Readings by Shellay ALL DAY</b>  MASS CANCELED	27 Kundalini Yoga 6:30PM	28	29	30	31	1 <b>Minerval Initiations</b> <b>Order Members 0° and above only ALL DAY</b>