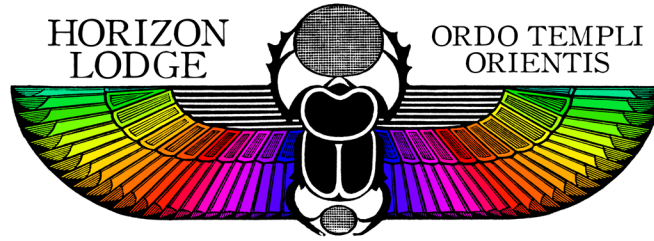


*The circle of the horizon is the earth and sky's embrace*

Volume 11  
Issue 2



Autumn 2019 e.v.

## *Sky's Embrace*

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*A Publication of Horizon Lodge, OTO*

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HEART CENTER BY SARAH RILEY  
*Oil on canvas 22 × 30*

“I conjure thee, O BOOK, to be useful and profitable unto all those who shall read thee for success in their affairs.”

*Grimoire of Pope Honorius*

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### THE SCARLET TENT 2019/2020 TOUR

Horizon Lodge, Seattle  
WA – Oct 26-27, 2019

Alombrados Oasis, New Orleans  
LA – March 7-8, 2020

Knights Templar Oasis, Salem,  
MA – Sept 11-13, 2020

### THE SCARLET TENT 2021/2022 TOUR

Blazing Star Oasis, Oakland  
CA – Mar 5-7, 2021

Crux Ansata Oasis, Denver  
CO – Sept 17-19, 2021

Black Sun Lodge, Cleveland  
OH – March 4-6, 2022 – *The  
Revival Tour – Open to all new  
and previous attendees!*



## THE SCARLET TENT

The U.S.G.L. Kaaba Colloquium Committee would like to invite all female-identifying and non-binary initiates, to join us in celebrating the power of gender minority leadership in The Scarlet Tent, a limited tour of regional retreats that brings these members of O.T.O. together to learn, share, celebrate, and find the joy in communion with each other.

We come together in a safe and supportive space to share in an intimate weekend designed to discuss issues facing us in our Work with topics offered by invited regional leaders and facilitated by sisters of the local body and Kaaba Committee.

Registration is \$40.00 per person and all monies support the local body in providing meals for the weekend. You must be an active O.T.O. member to attend.

For more information, or to register, visit [thescarlettent.org/info](http://thescarlettent.org/info).

Horizon Lodge is a local body of Ordo Templi Orientis. We are located in Seattle, Washington.

The O.T.O is a hierarchical, fraternal membership organization. Our mission is to effect and promote the doctrines and practices of the philosophical and religious system known as Thelema, with particular emphasis on cultivating the ideals of individual liberty, self-discipline, self-knowledge, and universal brotherhood. To this end, we conduct sacramental and initiatory rites, offer guidance and instruction to our members, and organize social and educational events.

For more information, visit our web site at <http://seattle-oto.org>

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NOTOCON XII was held August 2-4 2019 in Cleveland, Ohio. Pictured are the Horizon Lodge members who attended.

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From left to right: Mark Dalton, Kellen Barber, Cristin Williams, Noah Ober, Shellay M., Jon Sewell, Cate Englehart, Brother Jim, Scott Wilde, Lisa Hamaker, Melissa Holm.

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## Faith or Experience?

BY JANICE VAN CLEVE

*Janice Van Cleve is a priestess with the Women Of The Goddess Circle in Seattle at <http://wotg.doodlekit.com>. She has jumped out of airplanes and the fairies in her house are real.*

Once upon a time, a skier was swooshing down a steep mountainside when he missed his turn and flew over a dangerous cliff. With quick reflexes he grabbed the limb of a tree that grew out of the side of the cliff and caught himself. Down a thousand feet below he could see jagged rocks poking out of the snow. He looked up and shouted as loud as he could, "Hello! Hello! Help! Is anybody up there?"

Suddenly a bright cloud appeared over the top of the mountain and a voice from the cloud said, "Do you have faith?" The skier said, "Yes, yes! I have faith!" The voice said, "Do you believe?" The skier replied, "Yes, yes! I do believe." Finally the voice said, "Then let go."

The skier blinked for a second. He looked down at the jagged rocks below him and up to the cloud above. Then he said, "Is there anybody else up there?"

This little story illustrates the difference between faith and experience and serves as a convenient introduction to an examination of Wicca as an experience-based religion and not a faith-based religion. To begin the examination, we must first take a look at what exactly is included in these two terms and what is not.



Faith believes in things for which it has no proof. There may be proofs out there that have not yet been discovered—at least not yet discovered by the believer—but the believer doesn't care. He or she accepts faith for its own sake without proof and makes decisions based upon it. Faith accepts as fact outcomes to which no natural, logical, or scientific path leads. Sometimes the word "faith" is used incorrectly as in "I have faith that my car can safely get over the pass without chains." That is not really faith. That is an informed judgment based upon past performance of the car and the weather report—in other words, that is experience.

Faith is something believed rather than something known. The word "believe" is also often used incorrectly as in "I believe in the freedom of religion." That statement is an empty abstraction. Freedom of religion—to do what? To merely exist requires no belief at all because religions exist in our experience all over the place. Freedom to collect tithes? Freedom to sacrifice babies? Freedom to preach? Freedom to hide pedophile priests? Once we begin to define which freedoms we choose to permit and which to deny, we are making choices on the basis of some rationale. Rational choices are by definition experience- or at least logic-based.

Pure faith for its own sake is what is accepted as the deciding factor based upon absolutely nothing but personal conviction. That is not to diminish its existence. Missionaries, visionaries, and conspiracy theorists are loaded with pure faith.

Experience, on the other hand, is something known rather than something believed. It has proofs. Granted, the person claiming experience may use proofs that are incomplete, inconsistent, and not rightly understood. Nevertheless they are based in some rationale which in turn is based on education, past encounters, or logical deduction. For example, we may not know how the chemistry of aspirin works, but we take aspirin to relieve our headaches because the instructions on the bottle say they will. We are not exercising "faith" in the instructions because if the product fails we know there is a finite cause such as criminal activity or quality failure.

Experience is never pure. It runs the gamut from a tragedy seared into our memory to something

we heard on the television; from a disciplined scientific study to hearsay. We may not personally have knowledge of black holes but we accept that Stephen Hawking does. We may not personally know what is wrong with our body but we trust our doctor's advice. Trust is born of experience. When we have a bad experience with someone we lose trust in them and we all know that simple faith alone will not rebuild that trust.

Of course our lives rarely divide themselves neatly into predetermined categories. The line between faith and experience is often thin and for each person in each situation that line may be in a different place. For example, two first time sky divers may jump from the same airplane with different perspectives. One may take a leap of faith while the other paid attention in class and learned the location of the rip cord. Nevertheless when they get to the ground they will both have gained experience.

By the same token, religions divide more neatly in the abstract than they do in practice. Faith-based religions like Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, etc. often claim their origins on some sort of supernatural revelation. Experience-based religions are those which have "grown up out of the soil" so to speak, like Nature religions, Paganism, and shamanism. Other experience-based religions have derived from logical thought like Buddhism. Making changes to a faith-based religion is very difficult because it requires either a new revelation or a reinterpretation of existing revelation. It took the Roman Catholic Church 400 years to admit Galileo was right! Making changes to an experience-based religion requires nothing more than a new idea or a rational evaluation of what worked and what didn't. The healing arts of witches evolved over time as new cures were discovered and the Neo-Pagan movement was radically affected by the archetype theories of Carl Jung.

In practice, however, people often join a religion not so much out of either faith or experience but because of a myriad of practical reasons, such as appealing rituals, friendly people, help in need, social acceptance, brute force conversion, political advantage, etc.

So it is that many people these days are turning to experience-based religions because of the failings of faith based ones. Wicca is one experience based re-

ligion that has grown rapidly as a result of this religious migration. The word “wicca” comes from the Anglo-Saxon and means “wisdom.” It also means to bend or shape, as in shaping energy (wicker baskets come from “wicca”, too!). Wiccans (or “witches”—another word derived from “wicca”) are those who possess this wisdom or ability to bend. They gain wisdom from study, practice, experiment, and teachers. This is why Wicca is called The Craft. It is a learned body of knowledge and skills. It is a proven path that requires work, not faith, to practice. It is more than spells and Sabbats. It is a way of living mindfully, in harmony with Nature and people, in the understanding that all things share in a divine spirit.

Technically speaking, then, Wiccans do not actually “believe” in the Goddess or God or in Magic—they know Her/Him and they know Magic. They have actually experienced some aspect of the Goddess or God. They have actually experienced the power of Magic. For example, when a priestess is invoked to carry a Goddess, she becomes Her voice and performs Her will. It is similar to what passes for channeling in some New Age groups, but I think more consciously deliberate and prayerfully spiritual. One writer called it “sleeping with the Goddess”. She was reporting on how she felt for months prior to her performance at a mystery festival where she was to carry a Goddess. She found herself saying and doing things differently. I myself recall one Summer Solstice when I was carrying the Goddess and the priestesses forgot to devoke me. I was buzzing for three days afterwards until She left on her own!

Recently I tried an experiment to demonstrate for myself the difference between faith and experience. I deliberately avoided the use of the word “believe”. The first thing I noticed was how often that word showed up in my normal vocabulary. “I believe you are correct.” “I believe the facts will show that yada yada.” And so on. Instead I inserted words like “I know,” or “I think,” or “I choose.” These are not ephemeral faith based words. These are power words that exercise my will in the here and now.

These words also force me to admit that there are things I don’t know. I don’t know a lot of things. How liberating! Instead of inventing myths of creation and afterlife, good and evil, and all sorts of other ideas and then putting faith in those myths, I

can simply say I don’t know and be perfectly comfortable with that. After all, is it really going to affect the quality of my daily life to speculate on the ineffable actions of a Creatrix or a Big Bang?

I choose to stay grounded in the here and now. If there is something I need to know or that my curiosity demands, I can research it with the tools at my disposal. I can ask for directions. If all else fails, I can turn within and try to come up with a rationale that works for me at least for the time being. Since my religion is based on my own experience and reason, I do not have to invent elaborate theories to defend it. In addition, I lose nothing when what I think or know is changed by new facts, since what I think or know is based on facts in the first place – or at least how I perceive them.

Faith-based religions are not based on knowable facts and thus they feel threatened by new facts or other faiths. They cannot tolerate differences. They have to be Right, which means that other faiths have to be Wrong. How many wars have been fought, how many people have been killed, burned, raped, and tortured, in order for one faith show it is more Right than another faith? How many myths of some supposed afterlife have been used to justify injustice in this life or horrible crimes in the hope of some future paradise?

In contrast, experience-based religions are very comfortable with other religions because experience is personal. Every person grows up with their own experiences. Even my perception of the differences between faith and experience in this article may run counter to someone else’s experience. Many good people believe in faiths and it serves them well. Fine! Experience-based religions have no need to proselytize or persecute to prove they are Right. They don’t live in a world of absolute Rights and Wrongs. They live in a world of “An ye harm none, do what ye will.”

That’s one of the things I most appreciate about Wicca. It gives me room to learn and grow, to appreciate the wise ones in my life without any dogma forced upon me, and to understand my life and the world around me in a way that makes sense. If by sharing these thoughts I can provide words and ideas that are useful to someone else, so much the better! Blessed Be!

# THE MAGICIAN

[TRANSLATED FROM ELIPHAZ LEVI'S VERSION OF THE  
FAMOUS HYMN]

O LORD, deliver me from hell's great fear and gloom!  
Loose thou my spirit from the larvæ of the tomb!  
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:  
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

I bid the night conceive the glittering hemisphere.  
Arise, O sun, arise! O moon, shine white and clear!  
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:  
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

Their faces and their shapes are terrible and strange.  
These devils by my might to angels I will change.  
These nameless horrors I address without affright:  
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

These are the phantoms pale of mine astounded view,  
Yet none but I their blasted beauty can renew;  
For to the abyss of hell I plunge without affright:  
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

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Editor's Note: The "famous hymn" is a prayer found in the so-called *Grinoire of Pope Honorius*. I have not been able to find Levi's version. This translation, presumably by Aleister Crowley, was published in *The Equinox*, Volume I, Number 1.

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## The Exorcist

BY FRATER ENTELECHEIA

One of the reasons you would want to go to the underworld is because that's where demons live.

It's a little paradoxical, sort of like saying, "You want to drink poison, because that will make you sick." But there's reason in this.

Demons disturb the quiet tranquility of village life. They burn down homes, possess individuals and livestock, and knock an otherwise happy, successful life off course. I've met people possessed by hosts of them.

Demons are very bad!

The normal human reaction to being confronted with a demon is to flee it, to take shelter, to barricade against it. This often requires a lot of effort on the part of the human trying to achieve safety. Unfortunately it's a rather simple thing for a demon to walk through a wall or across water. Space and time aren't obstacles to it, and a meal is a meal.

In fact, most demons I've encountered aren't even aware that time exists.

The one thing you almost never want to do is to follow a demon back home, back down into the hollows of the Earth from which it sprang, deep into the darkness where neither light nor reason can find any purchase. Demons steal the light from us, they steal our will, they steal our capacity to think clearly and to do what we know is right. Who would want to just hand it all to them on a silver platter?

No one.

But you need someone who is at least willing to do it. Because a demon can never be bound on the surface of the Earth. It can only be bound in the dark. And if we don't bind demons, humanity will be enslaved to night.

But you do not only need someone willing to do it. You also need someone who stands a reasonable chance of succeeding—and coming back alive.

So in most cases like this, you need a magician.

Most people end up in the underworld by accident. Some are able to find a passageway down there, maybe in a cave in a dark forest or at the bottom of a plastic bag of drugs. The magician just creates one. They don't need a

shovel or even a piece of chalk. They can go there pretty much instantly just by thinking about it.

The magician doesn't bother bringing a lantern or a flashlight or even a smartphone down there. That's not the kind of light you need in order to see in the darkness down there. Strangely, the underworld is filled with light anyway, so an entirely different kind of sense is required in order to make one's way around.

As the magician pursues the demon deep into the recesses of the underworld using this magical sense, the demon will try to trick the magician in various ways, to throw them off the trail. The air will be made unbreathable. One's legs will no longer seem to work. Phantoms will appear in mid-air. Time will be bent back upon itself.

You might suppose a magician travels with all sorts of equipment, things like wands, daggers, holy water, whips, machine guns and the like. But you would be wrong. There's not much else a magician can fit in their backpack, not with all that fear in there.

The magician eventually makes their way by some preternatural sense to that place in the underworld where the demon resides. All its other deceptions having failed, the demon has one last trick up its sleeve. It's the most cunning trick of all, the main one by which it possesses a host.

The demon presents alongside an exact copy of itself. Or to put it more precisely, the demon itself is an exact, atom-for-atom copy of something real and good. It is indistinguishable from the beloved in every way.

Except it is not the same. It is different. And once this illusion has been dispelled—once the demon has been called by its real name, which is different from that of the beloved—then the demon will be permanently bound in the underworld.

Now as it turns out, only a magician can tell the difference between the demon and its double. This is because only a magician has the ability to tell apart two things which are in all respects identical.

(This skill is the inverse of the other gift of a true magician, which is the ability to look at two things which are different in every way yet see they are the same thing. But that's a story for another time...)

The magician is not fooled by this trick of the demon. The magician knows the difference between what is real



and what is shadow. Being pure of heart, they remember and know and love the beloved. They would know the beloved anywhere, even down in the blinding light of the underworld.

So the magician utters the demon's true name. The demon is bound down in the underworld.

The magician utters the true name of the beloved, and the beloved is unbound. (Speaking a demon's name binds it; speaking the beloved's name unbinds him/her.)

Together they are instantly transported back to the surface of the Earth. And the villagers rejoice, because they know their lives will never be disturbed again by that particular demon.



SHARING WITH MY ANGEL BY SARAH RILEY

*Oil on canvas 18 × 24*

*Inquiries: SarahLunaRiley@gmail.com    <https://www.instagram.com/sarahlunariley>*



## Altar

BY SOROR MAO

I sat in the cold and I wanted.  
Offerings of cakes and honey and wine  
not sating the gnaw in my bones.  
The silk and furs and heavy jewels  
offering no warmth.

The need of nothing rising in my  
sternum and spreading into my ribs  
and spinal column, into my marrow,  
polluting my blood and intoxicating  
the mad hunger behind my eyes.

I detach my jaw at the joint to  
break the chains that were meant to  
always hold me and walked from  
the temple I was born in out into the  
place I can consume all the  
You that ever was.

## Tome

BY SOROR MAO

The data is fleeting.  
The tactile sensation of keystroke,  
Pen in hand,  
Paper and page pressed and burned  
Into our retinas.

My scorched fingertips tracing  
Lines of ink and blood on your skin,  
The transparency of your warm  
Emanation as I sit among reams  
Of paper and scrolls, attempting  
With manic fervor to document  
Every piece of you.  
As if a record will fill the hole  
That was etched in me when first  
The fiction tore through me.

Because these stories vanish,  
The command of language lost.  
This soft touch, the harsh summons,  
Slipping from my grasp.  
There is nowhere to hold the information,  
The words passing from tongue to hand to nothing.

## My Path to Thelema

By SB. KAFELE KION

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

Whenever there is a clear sky in the great Pacific Northwest, I try to spend a little time outside after sunset lying on the trampoline and staring at the night sky. I ponder the luminosity, temperature, and position of pinpoints of light littered across the nocturnal canvas. This year my night time habit has been a little different and I owe it all to the fact that in January I recognized Thelema as my path. Now, as I study the stars, I can't help but whisper, "Every man and every woman is a star." We each possess something unique that we bring to the whole. We exist in the same night sky but rule our own lives. Or at least, that's the goal. Before realizing that I was part of this group of gaseous, volatile lights, I had a past, a road without Thelema.

From the sassy age of five, I spent almost two decades under the rule of a midwest group of religious Protestants who I describe as living one step to the right of our current Vice President. As a young adult, I decided that I had enough of strict rules and corn fields. I moved two thousand miles away from my roots and started a spiritual journey that has made those I left behind cringe. I first settled into a group that found themselves in a weird world between Christianity and Judaism. My interaction with them was brief, but it was here I first heard the term, Kabbalah. I was warned that only the most observant could grasp the power and depth of Kabbalistic concepts. I was also sternly warned that the study of Kabbalah was strictly for married Jewish men over the age of 40. Being in my late twenties, unmarried, and not an observant male Jew, I thought it perfectly permissible to disregard the warning and to start studying the

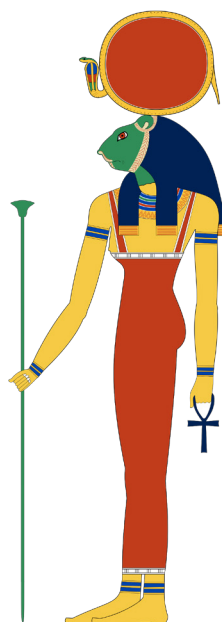
Kabbalah system. I immersed myself in the study of Sefer Yetzirah and adopted the meditative practices of Avraham Abulafia. The new practice brought many things including new and deeper levels of meditation and rapid spiritual growth. I never talked explicitly about my interests

in Kabbalah. If someone inquired about my religious beliefs, I simply answered, "Meditation." That answer had to evolve as one day I thought it would be a good idea to have my favorite meditation tattooed on my upper arm. It consisted of three Hebrew letters repeated several times. Yud-Zayin-Lamed. Then when asked, I expanded the answer by one word, "Kabbalah meditation." For most, it was sufficient.

My path soon took what I like to call a sudden and unexpected turn. A

friend was establishing her incense business and I added incense to my meditative practice. Of the line of products, I had my favorites and on one fateful shopping trip, I strayed and ended up buying a jar labelled, Sekhmet.

The description on the jar described her as an Egyptian goddess that was fierce and passionate. But, I practice Kabbalah meditation. Why would I want to deal with a fierce and passionate Egyptian goddess? I couldn't find a good reason why I should or shouldn't. So, I bought it. I used it. I admit I should have done a little research first. The experience was ridiculously profound. I immediately started studying everything about Sekhmet I could get my hands on and there was not much. I've come to know Sekhmet another way. My familiarity of her came about through my Kabbalah meditative practice — a practice built on the ideas I stole from a 13th century ostracized Jewish rabbi and a funky Jewish text translated by a mid century physicist. Who



was going to believe me? My incense friend believed me. She kept telling me to write everything down and keep practicing. That is exactly what I did.

After being alone in my strange little spiritual path for almost 20 years, I bothered my friend one more time. I told her I really wanted to find a group of people to be around or do ritual together. I asked her for recommendations. I think you can guess where she suggested I go. I have to admit I was not thrilled with the idea of the OTO. The only reason was because Thelema and the OTO could be traced back to one person, Aleistar Crowley. In my right of right Christian upbringing, he was one name I heard every summer at Bible camp. They warned us about this wicked man and equated him with Satan. But, once again, I disregarded the warning and went to my first Gnostic Mass.

It was January 13th, 2019 when I arrived on the doorstep of Horizon Lodge in the great Valley of Seattle. The first thing I noticed was that every window and door was covered and I could not see inside. I figured that I had lived a good life, took a deep breath, uttered my favorite mantra, and pushed the door open. With barely one foot inside the door, I almost whispered, "What the hell is this?" I noticed the Egyptian symbols and solar deities. I noticed the Hebrew letters and all of the Kabbalistic symbolism that was so much a part of me. I had so many questions, but these were complete strangers and I really didn't want to be asked to leave. The sweetest brother came and sat beside me and we talked until it was time for the mass to start.

I walked into the temple and found my seat on a pew. I had not sat on a pew since I was a teenager in a Christian church, but the situation could not have been more different. I looked up and immediately saw that the light fixtures had been configured in a Tree of Life pattern. I counted the candles and found twenty two. I saw the priest start at

Malkuth and watched the drama unfold while the players travelled paths. Everything was screaming at me! I was stunned. My legs were shaking. My eyes were starting to fill with tears. I felt as if my friend was going to come running into the room laughing hysterically and ending the practical joke. But, it wasn't a joke. This was real. My turn came to walk up to the front and consume my cake of light and goblet of wine. I turned around and for the first time announced, "There is no part of me that is not of the gods." My voice cracked. I walked back to my seat smiling. I knew I had found home.



For the past seven months, my ride with Thelema and the OTO has been a roller coaster ride. Sometimes a little scary, but always exciting enough to get back in line and go again. I always thought my spiritual path was a sort of Dr. Frankenstein creation, but it all finally made sense. On a clear night, when I'm lying on that trampoline under those same stars, I remind myself of all the years of thinking I was alone and then whisper, "Come forth, o children, under the stars, & take your fill of love! I am above you and in you. My ecstasy is in yours. My joy is to see your joy" (Liber AL vel Legis I. 12-13).

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Picture credits:

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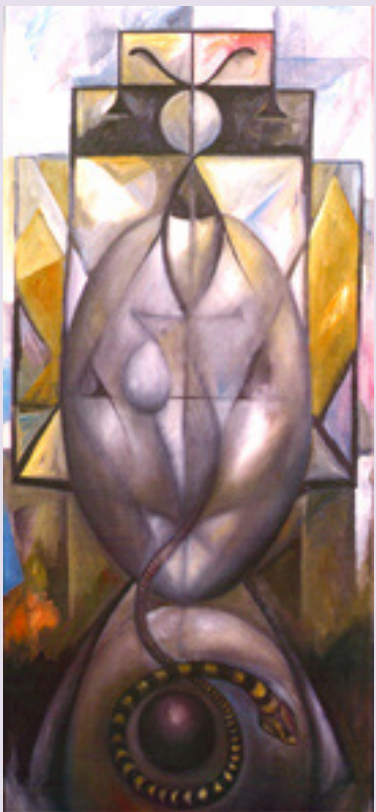
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The OTO Lamén. © by the OTO.

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All files accessed 31 August 2019.





AIR (UPPER LEFT), WATER (UPPER RIGHT), EARTH (LOWER LEFT), FIRE (LOWER RIGHT) BY AION 131