




Ars Congressus Cum Daemone: Aleister Crowley and the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel

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ABSTRACT This article analyses experiential knowledge in the writings of the British occultist Aleister Crowley's (1875–1947) writings, and more specifically the so-called Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. I will first discuss Crowley's own account of his attainment of communion with his Guardian Angel, which he set out to accomplish in 1900 and finally realised in 1906. Second, I will discuss a few key texts written by Crowley in which the method for attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is described, with a special focus on *Liber Samekh* (1920). The first part of this article can thus be seen as the *practiced* aspect of the Holy Guardian Angel experience, while the second part is the *prescribed* aspect. By way of concluding, I will address the entangled nature of the instructional texts of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

KEYWORDS Experiential knowledge, Aleister Crowley, Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, magic, occultism, Holy Guardian Angel

'I am indeed SENT to do something.' For whom? For the universe; no partial good could possibly satisfy his equation. I am, then, the 'chosen Priest and Apostle of Infinite Space'. Very good: and what is that message? What shall I teach men? And like lightning from heaven fell upon him these words: 'THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONVERSATION OF THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL.' (Crowley 1912, 13)

Introduction

The relationship between magic, initiation, and experiential knowledge is perhaps nowhere so systematically and dramatically expressed as in the writings of the British poet and magus Aleister Crowley (1875–1947).¹ Ever since his initiation into the Hermetic Order of the Golden

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1 On Crowley's concept of magic, or 'Magick,' as he preferred to spell it, see, inter alia, Aspren (2008), Otto (2011, 600–614), Pasi (2012).

Dawn at the age of 23, Crowley devoted his life to what he termed the Great Work, and central to his understanding of this work was a specific set of experiences which he claimed had a transformative effect.² Framed in the terminology of the Golden Dawn, the experiences were to a large extent conceptualized by Crowley as initiations leading to “Spiritual Progress and Illumination.”³ These transformative experiences were, moreover, not unique to Crowley himself, for Crowley saw himself as a teacher, and by following his teachings, he claimed, everybody from a banker to a factory girl could attain similar experiences.⁴

There is a staggering amount of references to initiation and experiential knowledge in Crowley’s writings, both published and unpublished, but in this article I will focus on what is arguably the most important and significant initiatory or transformative experience in Crowley’s magical system, the so-called Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.⁵ More specifically, I will discuss first Crowley’s own account of his attainment of communion with his Guardian Angel, which he set out to accomplish in 1900 and finally realized in 1906. Second, I will discuss a few key texts written by Crowley in which the method for attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is described. The first part of this article can thus be seen as the *practiced* aspect of the Holy Guardian Angel experience, while the second part is the *prescribed* aspect. By way of concluding, I will address the entangled nature of the instructional texts of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. However, before venturing into the topic of the Guardian Angel, I will briefly discuss Crowley’s understating of Initiation and the Great Work.

[2]

Initiation—the Journey Inwards

The concept of “initiation” is central to Aleister Crowley’s particular form of occultism, Thelema.⁶ Not only were the two organizations he used to promulgate his system—the O.T.O. and the A.:A.:—*initiatory* societies whose rituals of initiation were influenced (directly or indirectly) by eighteenth-century Freemasonry, but Crowley’s process of spiritual enlightenment was explained as a series of initiations or spiritual transformations.⁷ These initiations can best be described as particular experiences that have transformative effects on the initiate’s understanding of existence. But what did Crowley mean by the term initiation? Crowley stated repeatedly that his definition of initiation is the “Way In” or “Journey Inwards”, that is, an inner journey whereby different levels of consciousness are explored (e.g. Crowley [1938]

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2 Following William James’s classic study *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902), scholars of religion have dealt with the importance of religious experiences. More recently, the scholar of religion Ann Taves has referred to such experiences or “revelatory events” as the “building blocks” of religion, thus pointing towards the centrality of religious experiences in the construct of religious traditions. See Taves (2009) and Taves (2016).

3 “Primarily, this Body exists for the purpose of conferring Initiation. Secondly, It prepares people for Initiation by means of courses of instruction” (Crowley 1919a, 11); “It offers instruction in the Way of Spiritual Progress and Illumination to individual seekers” (Crowley 1919b, 10).

4 As stated in his magnum opus, *Magick In Theory and Practice*: “I have written this book to help the Banker, the Pugilist, the Biologist, the Poet, the Navy, the Grocer, the Factory Girl, the Mathematician, the Stenographer, the Golfer, the Wife, the Consul—and all the rest—to fulfill themselves perfectly, each in his or her own function (Crowley 1929b, xv).

5 The second most important transformative experience is the so-called Crossing of the Abyss, which, however, falls outside the scope of the present article.

6 For a brief introduction to Thelema, see Bogdan (2015).

7 On the OTO, see Hedenborg White (2022); Aspren (2016); Giudice (2015); Pasi (2005). A scholarly history and analysis of the A.:A.: remains to be written. For a post-Crowley account of these two organizations, see Readdy (2018).

1991, 49) and (Crowley [1954] 1991, 204). Crowley furthermore stated that it is impossible to distinguish initiation from enlightenment and that the initiatory process ultimately aims at the realization of the Self. Or to use Crowley's own words as he put it towards the end of his life to one of his female disciples: "What is the meaning of Initiation? It is the Path to the realization of your Self as the sole, the supreme, the absolute of all Truth, Beauty, Purity, Perfection" (Crowley [1954] 1991, 428).⁸

Crowley elaborated on his understanding of Initiation to the same disciple in another letter, in which he explained that initiation "implies the liberation and development of the genius latent in us all (is not one of the names of the 'Holy Guardian Angel' the Genius?) [...]" (Crowley [1954] 1991, 460). The cultivation of the genius or creative power in man and woman was, furthermore, linked to Crowley's concept of True Will. According to the religious system of Thelema, of which Crowley saw himself as the prophet, each man and woman has a True Will or essence, and it is the main task of each one of us to discover and act according to this True Will, famously expressed in the words "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" (*Liber AL vel Legis* 1938 [sic], I:40). As indicated above, Crowley connected the discovery of the True Will with the transformative experience of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. To Crowley, the Holy Guardian Angel was nothing but the unconscious aspect of the mind, and consequently the object of his magical system was to become conscious of the unconscious. Furthermore, Crowley believed that the unconsciousness contained the very essence of each human being, and by discovering this essence one would find the answers to humankind's basic existential questions: Who am I, and what is the purpose of my life? Or to put it in the words of Crowley himself:

It should now be perfectly simple for everybody to understand the Message of the Master Therion [i.e., Crowley]. Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will, (2) Do that Will with (a) one-pointedness, (b) detachment, (c) peace. Then, and then only, art thou in harmony with the Movement of Things, thy will part of, and therefore equal to, the Will of God. And since the will is but the dynamic aspect of the self, and since two different selves could not possess identical wills; then, if thy will be God's will, *Thou art That*. (Crowley 1919c, 42)

But where did Crowley encounter the idea of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel? [6]

The Golden Dawn, Initiation, the Great Work, and the Holy Guardian Angel

A few months after Crowley's death on December 1, 1947, his former disciple and so-called Magical Son, Charles Stansfeld Jones, stated bluntly in a letter to Albert H. Handel that "all of Aleister Crowley's work is based on the Golden Dawn."⁹ While this might be a bit of an exaggeration, it is undeniably true that although Crowley would remain an active member of the Golden Dawn for only two years, from 1898 to 1900, the peculiar epistemology and initiatory system of the Order would stay with him for the rest of his life. Looking back over

8 Crowley's last major work was written in the 1940s in the form of letters to his student Anne Macky (1887–1964). Originally called *Aleister Explains Everything*, it was published posthumously in 1954 as *Magick without Tears* (Hampton, NJ: Thelema Publishing Co.).

9 Charles Stansfeld Jones to Albert H. Handel, June 9, 1948. Private collection.

two decades later on his first initiation in the Golden Dawn on November 18, 1898—a date which he would commemorate until he died—Crowley recollected the impact it had upon him:

I took the Order with absolute seriousness. I was not even put off by the fact of its ceremonies taking place at Mark Mason's Hall. I remember asking [...] whether people often died during the ceremony. I had no idea that it was a flat formality and that the members were for the most part muddled middle-class mediocrities. I saw myself entering the Hidden Church of the Holy Grail. This state of my soul served me well. My initiation was in fact a sacrament (Crowley 1970, 176). [8]

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn stands as the most influential of all occultist and magical orders to have emerged in the English-speaking world.¹⁰ Its influence lies primarily in the systematisation, on the one hand, of the theoretical occult knowledge that its members were expected to learn before advancing to the next degree in the Order's hierarchical system of initiation, and, on the other hand, of the initiatory process that the teachings and practices were believed to result in (see on the Golden Dawn also Johannsen's article 2023; for a very recent adaptation of Golden Dawn techniques, see Otto 2023, both included in this special issue of *Entangled Religions*). This process took the outward form of the kabbalistic Tree of Life, in which each degree corresponded to a sephira or path on the Tree.¹¹ [9]

During his brief stay in the Golden Dawn, Crowley made a swift ascent from Malkuth to Tiphereth, that is, from the grade of Neophyte to that of Adeptus Minor, but he would continue to measure or map his spiritual development by the Tree of Life after he had left the order.¹² In January 1906 he claimed the Grade of Adeptus Exemptus (Chesed), and by December the same year he Crossed the Abyss and claimed the grade of Magister Templi (Binah).¹³ Eight years later, while staying in the US, he embarked on his initiation leading to Magus (Chokmah), which would take him two and a half years to complete, from November 3, 1914, to June 9, 1917. Finally, although he never stated it publicly, on May 23, 1921 he took the Oath of an Ipsissimus $10^\circ = 1^\square$, and underwent the initiation leading to the highest sephirah, Kether, which would take him three years to complete. [10]

I am by insight and initiation an Ipsissimus; I'll face the phantom of myself, and tell it so to its teeth. I will invoke Insanity itself, but having thought the Truth, I will not flinch from fixing it in word and deed, whatever come of it (Kaczynski 2010, 370). [11]

10 The best historical account of the Golden Dawn remains Ellic Howe's *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order 1887-1923* (1972). See also Gilbert (1983); Gilbert (1986) and Regardie (1937–1940).

11 Crowley published (somewhat abridged versions of) the rituals of initiation of the Golden Dawn in Crowley (1909a) (Outer Order), Crowley (1909b, 244–88), and Crowley (1910, 208–23) (Adeptus Minor). Regardie published the rituals of one of the Golden Dawn's offshoots, the Stella Matutina, in part 3 of his *The Golden Dawn: An Account of the Teachings, Rites and Ceremonies of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn* (1937–1940, vol. 3). The first publication of the complete rituals of the original Outer Order of the Golden Dawn is Torrens (1972).

12 Crowley's advancement through the initiatory system of the Golden Dawn was as follows: Neophyte in November 1898; Zelator, December 1898; Theoricus, January 1899; Practicus, February 1899; Philosophus, May 1899; Adeptus Minor, January 1900. The latter initiation was performed at the Athathoor Temple in Paris, since the adepts of the Second Order in London refused to initiate Crowley on charges of immoral conduct. See Crowley (1970, 178).

13 These two initiations were confirmed by Crowley's collaborator, George Cecil Jones (1873–1960), and thereby afforded Crowley and Jones with the spiritual legitimacy to found the Order of the Silver Star, or A ∴ A ∴. The final two grades, Magus and Ipsissimus, were claimed by Crowley on his own.

The unique point about the Golden Dawn was that at the centre of its initiatory structure, a specific type of experiential knowledge or *gnosis* was believed to be accessed. Technically, this was believed to occur once the adept had been admitted to the inner order of the Golden Dawn, at the Adeptus Minor Grade 5° = 6□ which corresponded to Tiphereth on the kabbalistic Tree of Life.¹⁴ It was at this stage of the initiatory process that it was believed that the member should establish contact with his or her genius or higher self (Augoeides).¹⁵ In the Adeptus Minor initiation ritual, the candidate was obliged to take the following obligation:

I further promise and swear that with the Divine Permission I will, from this day forward, apply myself to the Great Work—which is, to purify and exalt my Spiritual Nature so that with the Divine Aid I may at length attain to be more than human, and thus gradually raise and unite myself to my higher and Divine Genius, and that in this event I will not abuse the great power entrusted to me. (Regardie 1937–1940, 2:214)

The Divine Genius that the members of the Golden Dawn sought to unite with was referred to by different names, such as the Higher Self, the Daemon, and the Holy Guardian Angel.¹⁶ The latter term derived from the notion of the “Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel” found in *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage* (1898). This book, first translated into English and published in 1898 by the Golden Dawn Chief Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers (1854–1918), would come to have a marked influence on Crow-

14 The initiatory structure of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was based on the kabbalistic Tree of Life, and each grade was attributed to a specific sephira, which was indicated through the two numbers following the grade name. Thus, in the case of the Adeptus Minor Grade, the numbers 5° = 6□ refer to the fact that this grade is the *fifth* grade of the Order, and that it refers to the *sixth* sephira on the Tree of Life, counted from the top down, i.e., Tiphereth.

15 Augoeides is usually translated as luminous body or the Body of Light. The early Neoplatonist Porphyry (c. 234–c. 305) wrote of the Augoeides, and it became a popular concept in late nineteenth-century Theosophical and occultist literature through Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s novel *Zanoni* (1842). For a genealogy of the subtle body in Western culture, see Cox (2022).

16 Crowley argued that the transformative experience referred to by names such as the Higher Self or the Holy Guardian Angel was universal and that it could be found in all religious systems—the name differed, but the experience was the same. “Lytton calls him Adonai in ‘Zanoni,’ and I often use this name in the note-books. Abramelin calls him Holy Guardian Angel. I adopt this: 1. Because Abramelin’s system is so simple and effective. 2. Because since *all* theories of the universe are absurd it is better to talk in the language of one which is patently absurd, so as to mortify the metaphysical man. 3. Because a child can understand it. Theosophists call him the Higher Self, Silent Watcher, or Great Master. The Golden Dawn calls him the Genius. Gnostics say the Logos. Zoroaster talks about uniting all these symbols into the form of a Lion—see Chaldean Oracles. Anna Kingsford calls him Adonai (Clothed with the Sun). Buddhists call him Adi-Buddha—(says H. P. B.) The Bhagavad-Gita calls him Vishnu (chapter xi.). The Yi King calls him “The Great Person.” The Qabalah calls him Jechidah. We also get metaphysical analysis of His nature, deeper and deeper according to the subtlety of the writer; for this vision—it is all one same phenomenon, variously coloured by our varying Ruachs—is, I believe, the first and the last of all Spiritual Experience. For though He is attributed to Malkuth, and the Door of the Path of His overshadowing, He is also in Kether (Kether is in Malkuth and Malkuth in Kether—‘as above, so beneath’), and the End of the ‘Path of the Wise’ is identity with Him. So that while he is the Holy Guardian Angel, He is also Hua and the Tao. For since *Intra Nobis Regnum del* all things are in Ourselves, and all Spiritual Experience is a more or less complete Revelation of Him. Yet it is only in the Middle Pillar that His manifestation is in any way perfect. The Augoeides invocation is the whole thing. Only it is so difficult; one goes along through all the fifty gates of Binah at once, more or less illuminated, more or less deluded. But the First and the Last is this Augoeides Invocation” (Crowley 1909b, 159–60).

ley.¹⁷ First published in German in 1725, (Worms 1725)¹⁸ this early seventeenth-century magical handbook follows a similar *modus operandi* as other grimoires in the sense that the magician, through purifications and divine empowerment, seeks to control demonic forces for material ends.¹⁹ *Abra-Melin* differs, however, from other grimoires in that the divine force is envisioned as a personal guardian angel with whom the magician can establish contact through a six-month long elaborate ritual which includes daily prayers, mediations and a strict moral conduct.²⁰ Once the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel has been experienced, the magician is supposed to consecrate 49 talismans which provide him with 316 servitors. In his lengthy introduction to the book, Mathers was conspicuously brief about this unique feature of the *Abra-Melin* system of magic, and he merely stated that:

[...] to each man is attached naturally both a Guardian Angel and a Malevolent Demon, and also certain Spirits that may become Familiars, so that with him it rests to give the victory unto the which he will. (κ) That, therefore, in order to control and make service of the Lower and Evil, the knowledge of the Higher and Good is requisite (*i.e.*, in the language of the Theosophy of the present day, the knowledge of the Higher Self). [15]

From this it results that the *magnum opus* propounded in this work is: by purity and self-denial to obtain the knowledge of and conversation with one's Guardian Angel, so that thereby and thereafter we may obtain the right of using the Evil Spirits for our servants in all material matters. [16]

This, then, is the system of the Secret Magic of *Abra-Melin*, the Mage, as taught by his disciple Abraham the Jew; and elaborated down to the smallest points (Mathers 1898, xxvi). [17]

It is perhaps not all that surprising that Mathers did not elaborate any further on the notion of the Guardian Angel, since the importance and full significance of this concept in the Golden Dawn system was, presumably, restricted to members of the highly secretive Second or Inner Order, the *Rosæ Rubeæ et Aureæ Crucis* (the Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold).²¹ What is surprising, however, is the lack of any official Golden Dawn documents or instructions for uniting with the Divine Genius, or in the terminology of *Abra-Melin*, for reaching the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.²² As we will see, there is in fact only one Golden Dawn instruction for this particular purpose, a Second Order invocation which Israel Regardie named “The Bornless Ritual for the Invocation of the Higher Genius” [18]

17 Mathers's translation of the book was based on a French manuscript held at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, entitled “La sacrée magie que Dieu donna à Moïse Aaron David Salomon, et à d'autres saints patriarches et prophètes, qui enseigne la vraie sagesse divine, laisse par Abraham à Lamech son fils, traduite de l'hebreu. 1458” (MS. 2351). For a detailed discussion of the publishing history of Mathers's edition of *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, see Howe (1972, chap. 12 and 13).

18 For a modern English translation, see Dehn (2015).

19 For a discussion of the grimoire genre, see Davies (2009) and Davies' article published in this special issue of *Entangled Religions* (2023).

20 The earlier German manuscript version, and the von Worms edition of 1725, prescribed an 18-month long ritual, rather than six months as prescribed in the Mathers's edition. See Dehn (2015, 123–29).

21 See the Adeptus Minor obligation quoted above.

22 For a complete catalogue of all Second Order documents, see Gilbert (1986, 98–117). References to the Divine Genius, Daimon, etc., can be found in various Golden Dawn papers—see, for instance, the paper called “The Microcosm”—but there are no papers that deal exclusively with this central concept, as far as I have been able to ascertain.

(1937–1940, 4:259–265).²³ However, this ritual is not listed among the official Second Order rituals, and this raises the question as to what degree this transformative experience was actually an established part of the Golden Dawn tradition. Be that as it may, Crowley was deeply impressed with *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Magic*, and his encounter with the book deserves to be quoted in full:

It was not long before I found out exactly where my destiny lay. The majority of old magical rituals are either purposely unintelligible or actually puerile nonsense. Those which are straightforward and workable are, as a rule, better adapted to the ambitions of love-sick agricultural labourers than those of educated people with a serious purpose. But there is one startling exception to this rule. It is *The Book of the Sacred Magick of Abra-Melin the Mage*. [19]

This book is written in an exalted style. It is perfectly coherent; it does not demand fantastic minutiae of ritual or even the calculations customary. There is nothing to insult the intelligence. On the contrary, the operation proposed is of sublime simplicity. The method is in entire accordance with this. There are, it is true, certain prescriptions to be observed, but these really amount to little more than injunctions to observe decency in the performance of so august an operation. One must have a house where proper precautions against disturbance can be taken; this being arranged, there is really nothing to do but to aspire with increasing fervour and concentration, for six months, towards the obtaining of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Once He has appeared, it is then necessary, first, to call forth the Four Great Princes of the Evil of the World; next, their eight sub-princes; and, lastly, the three hundred and sixteen servitors of these. A number of talismans, previously prepared, are thus charged with the power of these spirits. By applying the proper talismans, you can get practically anything you want. [20]

It cannot be denied that the majesty and philosophical irreproachability of the book are sensibly diminished by the addition of these things to the invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel. I should have preferred it without them. There is, however, a reason. Anyone who reaches a new world must conform with all the conditions of it. It is true, of course, that the hierarchy of evil appears somewhat repugnant to science. It is in fact very hard to explain that we mean by saying that we invoke Paimon; but, to go a little deeper, the same remark applies to Mr. Smith next door. We do not know who Mr. Smith is, or what is his place in nature, or how to account for him. We cannot even be sure that he exists. Yet, in practice, we call Smith by that name and he comes. By the proper means, we can induce him to do for us those things which are consonant with his nature and powers. The whole question is, therefore, one of practice; and by this standard we find that there is no particular reason for quarrelling with the conventional nomenclature. At this time I had not worked out any such apology for the theories of transcendentalism. I took everything as it came and submitted it to the test of experience. As it happened, I had no reason at any time to doubt the reality of the magical universe (Crowley 1970, 172–73). [21]

23 In a paper written 1978 by Regardie entitled “The Bornless Ritual: Several versions and a cursory analysis,” it is stated that the ritual was actually compiled by Regardie himself, using Golden Dawn formulae.

The Abra-Melin Working & The Bornless Invocation

On February 21, 1900, Crowley commenced the Abra-Melin working at Boleskine House by Loch Ness in Scotland, which he had bought a few months earlier for the specific purpose of carrying out the elaborate rituals described in *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*. At the outset of his diary for the period, he recorded the following Oath: [22]

I, Perdurabo, Frater Ordinis Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis. A Lord of the Paths in the Portal of the Vault of the Adepts. A 5° = 6° of the Order of the Golden Dawn; and an humble servant of the Christ of God; do this day spiritually bind myself anew: by the Sword of Vengeance: by the Powers of the Elements: by the Cross of Suffering: that I will devote myself to the Great Work: the Obtaining and Communion with my own Higher and Divine Genius (called the Guardian Angel) by means of the prescribed course: and that I will use any Power so obtained unto the Redemption of the Universe So help me the Lord of the Universe and mine own Higher Soul! (Crowley [Forthcoming](#))²⁴ [23]

Crowley prepared the Abra-Melin Working by acquiring the necessary equipment, such as a new censer for the incense. Surprisingly, he commenced the work by constructing and charging the Abra-Melin squares or talismans, contrary to the instructions laid out in *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, in which it is stated that the talismans should be consecrated *after* the magician had reached the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.²⁵ On March 10, he reaffirmed the Oath of carrying out the Abra-Melin magic and to unite his consciousness with the divine, but only a few weeks later he had to abandon the working and travel to Paris and London in order to assist Mathers in his attempt to resume control over the Golden Dawn, which ultimately failed. The perhaps most conspicuous feature of this abortive attempt at carrying out the Abra-Melin magic is the emphasis that Crowley placed on interpreting his dreams, and it appears that he believed that the invocations of various deities manifested in his dreams. Although Crowley would continue to place great importance on dreams as a means to explore the unconscious, the direct correlation between invocations and dreams seems to have become less important for Crowley as he matured as a magician. [24]

It would take six years, until February 1906, before Crowley made a new attempt at attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel.²⁶ At the time, Crowley was travelling with his wife Rose (1874-1932) and their baby daughter Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith (1904-1906) across China, and since they were travelling on horseback Crowley did not have the possibility of carrying out the elaborate rituals as described in the *Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*. Instead, Crowley chose to use the so-called “Preliminary” or “Bornless Invocation”, which he had included in his 1904 edition of the classic grimoire *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King* (Crowley 1904, vii-ix).²⁷ The inclusion [25]

24 All subsequent quotes from Crowley’s diaries in this article are taken from this source, unless otherwise stated.

25 Crowley kept his Abra-Melin squares in a large-sized scrapbook, which remained with him until he died in Hastings in 1947. The book was later shipped to Crowley’s successor as head of the O.T.O. and A.∴A.∴ Karl Germer (1885-1962) in the US, from whose library it was eventually stolen by members of the Solar Lodge. See Shiva (2007, 162-65). See also Yorke (1972, xvi).

26 On a very different but related take on the Holy Guardian Angel, see Otto’s chapter on Frater Acher (2023) and the latter’s recent book *Holy Daimon* (2020).

27 For a full discussion of Crowley’s edition of *The Goetia*, see the Editor’s Foreword, written by Hymenaeus Beta, to the second edition of *The Goetia* (1995, xiii-xxvi).

of this invocation to *The Goetia* was a strange decision, for the text had nothing to do with the grimoire tradition of Western Learned Magic.²⁸ In fact, it is an exorcism taken from the Greek London Papyrus 46, first published in English in 1852 by Charles Wycliffe Goodwin (1817–1878) under the title *Fragment of a Græco-Egyptian Work upon Magic* for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society.²⁹ The exorcism (named “An address to the god drawn upon the letter” by Goodwin) was written down in fourth century-Egypt and obtained in the early nineteenth century by the Armenian merchant and collector of Egyptian antiquities Giovanni Anastasi (1780–1857). Anastasi, who was appointed Consul-General in Egypt to Sweden and Norway in 1828, amassed a huge collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts, including a large number of important papyri. The Trustees of the British Museum acquired many of these papyri at an auction held in London in September 1839, one of which was the exorcism later published by Goodwin.³⁰

As can be seen below in Table 1, the “Preliminary Invocation” from Crowley’s edition of *The Goetia* closely follows Goodwin’s English translation of section four of the Greek London Papyrus 46, together with the “Barbarous Names” included by Goodwin in the Greek text only (such as Ar, Thiao, Rheibet, Atheleberseth, etc.).³¹ While Crowley had commissioned Mathers to “translate” *The Goetia*—the manuscripts which Mathers used were actually written in English—it is unclear who the actual author of the “Preliminary Invocation” was, although it seems likely that it was Mathers.³² Significantly enough, it was Crowley who decided to include “The Preliminary Invocation” in Mathers’s translation of *The Goetia*.³³ [26]

In contrast to *The Goetia* and other grimoires, the Bornless Invocation is not directed towards any Judeo-Christian divinities or demonic powers, but instead includes so-called Barbarous Names of Evocation (which Crowley would analyze in detail in *Liber Samekh*).³⁴ Furthermore, the exorcism is reinterpreted as an invocation, and “the headless one” is renamed “the Bornless one”, understood to represent the Genius or the Holy Guardian Angel. Not only has the original Greek exorcism been radically reinterpreted as an invocation, but the division of the text into several parts headed by Hebrew letters indicates that the “Preliminary Invocation” was construed as a ritual of purification through the elements—an intrinsic component of the Golden Dawn system of magic. Thus Aleph, the first subdivision, represents the element Air. Shin, the second, represents the element Fire. Mem, the third, represents Water, and Tau, the fourth, represents the element Earth. Finally, the word Amen (Aleph, Mem, Nun) would [27]

28 For a thorough discussion of the scholarly category “Western Learned Magic”, see Otto (2016).

29 The title of the invocation, consisting of section 4 of the papyrus, is given as “An address to the god drawn upon the letter”. The original Greek with an English translation can be found on pp. 6-9. The first 12 lines of Goodwin’s English translation were reprinted by the Egyptologist A.E. Wallis Budge (1857–1934) in *Egyptian Magic* (1899, 176). A modern English translation can be found in Betz (1986, 103), specifically PGM V, “Stele of Jeu the Hieroglyphist in his letter”.

30 For a brief overview of Giovanni Anastasi’s role in bringing Egyptian antiquities to Europe, see Dawson (1949, 158–66).

31 Frater Acher, the practitioner discussed in Otto’s article in the present special issue (2023), in a similar manner implemented an ancient recipe from the Greek Magical Papyri into his *Arbatel* workings.

32 The Golden Dawn and Crowleyana collector Gerald Yorke (1901–1983) states unequivocally that “The Preliminary Invocation” was written by Mathers (Yorke 1972, xv).

33 “I had employed Mathers to translate the text of *The Lesser Key of Solomon the King* of which *The Goetia* is the first section. He got no further; after events of 1900, he had simply collapsed morally. I added a translation of the conjurations into the Enochian or Angelic language; edited and annotated the text, prefixed a ‘Preliminary Invocation’, added a prefatory note, a Magical Square [taken from Abra-Melin] (intended to prevent improper use of the book) and ultimately an Invocation of Typhon when the First Magical War of the Aeon of Horus was declared” (Crowley 1970, 362).

34 See also Goodwin’s detailed discussion of these names (1852, 38–42).

in this context represent the fifth element, Spirit. Crowley would, almost two decades later, expand on these attributions to the elements in *Liber Samekh*.

Table 1 Comparison between “An address to the god drawn upon the letter” (1852) and “Preliminary Invocation” (1904)

“An address to the god drawn upon the letter”	“Preliminary Invocation”
<p>I call thee, the headless one, that didst create the earth and the heaven, that didst create night and day, Thee the creator of light and darkness. Thou art Osoronno-phris, whom no man has seen at any time; thou art Iabas thou art Iapos: thou hast distinguished the Just and the unjust, thou didst make female and male, thou didst produce the seeds and the fruits, thou didst make men to love one another and to hate one another.</p>	<p>Thee I invoke, the Bornless one. Thee that didst create the Earth and the Heavens: Thee that didst create the Night and the Day. Thee that didst create the Darkness and the Light. Thou art Osorronophris: Whom no man has seen at any time. Thou art Iäbas Thou art Iäpôs: Thou hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust. Thou didst make the Female and the Male. Thou didst produce the Seed and the Fruit. Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate one another.</p>
<p>I am Moses thy prophet, to whom thou didst commit thy mysteries, the Ceremonies of Israel: thou didst produce the moist and the dry, and all manner of food. Listen to me: I am an angel of Paphro Osoronno-phris; this is thy true name, handed down to the prophets of Israel.</p>	<p>I am Mosheh Thy Prophet, unto Whom Thou didst commit Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies of Ishrael: Thou didst produce the moist and the, dry, and that which nourisheth all created Life. Hear Thou Me, for I am the Angel of Paphrô Osorronophris: this is Thy True Name, handed down to the Prophets of Ishrael.</p>

“An address to the god drawn upon the letter”

Listen to me,..... hear me drive away this spirit.
 I call thee the terrible and invisible god residing in the empty wind,
 thou headless one, deliver such an one from the spirit that possesses him.
 strong one, headless one, deliver such an one from the spirit that possesses him.
 deliver such an one.....
 This is the lord of the gods, this is the lord of the world, this is he whom the winds fear, this is he who made voice by his commandment, lord of all things, king, ruler, helper, save this soul.....
 angel of
 God.....

“Preliminary Invocation”

[Aleph]
 Hear Me:–
 Ar: Thiao: Rheibet: Atheleberseth:
 A: Blatha: Abeu: Ebeu: Phi:
 Thitasoe: Ib: Thiao.
 Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether; upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.
 [Shin]
 I invoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God: Who dwellest in the Void Place of the Spirit:–
 Arogogorobraô: Sothou:
 Modoriô: Phalarthaô: Döö: Apé, The Bornless One:
 Hear Me: etc.
 [Mem]
 Hear me:–
 Roubriaô: Mariôdam: Balbnabaoth: Assalonai:
 Aphniaô: I: Thoteth: Abrasar: Aëöôü: Ischure, Mighty and Bornless One!
 Hear me: etc.
 [Tau]
 I invoke thee:–
 Ma: Barraio: Jôêl: Kotha:
 Athorêbalô: Abraoth:
 Hear Me: etc.

“An address to the god drawn upon the letter”

I am the headless spirit, having sight in my feet, strong, the immortal fire; I am the truth; I am he that hateth that ill-deeds should be done in the world; I am he that lighteneth and thundereth; I am he whose sweat is the shower that falleth upon the earth that it may teem; I am he whose mouth ever burneth; I am the begetter and the bringer forth (?); I am the Grace of the World; my name is the heart girt with a serpent. Come forth and follow. – The celebration of the preceding ceremony. – Write the names upon a piece of new paper, and having extended it over your forehead from one temple to the other, address yourself turning towards the north to the six names, saying: – Make all the spirits subject to me, so that every spirit of heaven and of the air, upon the earth and under the earth, on dry land and in the water, and every spell and scourge of God, may be obedient to me. – And all the spirits shall be obedient to you.

“Preliminary Invocation”

[Aleph, Mem, Nun]
 Hear me!
 Aôth: Abaôth: Basum: Isak:
 Sabaoth: Iao:
 This is the Lord of the Gods:
 This is the Lord of the Universe:
 This is He Whom the Winds fear.
 This is He, Who having made Voice by His Commandment, is Lord of All Things; King, Ruler and Helper.
 Hear Me, etc.
 Hear Me:–
 Ieou: Pûr: Iou: Pûr: Iaôt: Iaeô: Ioou: Abrasar:
 Sabriam: Do: Uu: Adonaie: Ede: Edu: Angelos
 ton Theon: Aniaia Lai: Gaia: Ape: Diathanna
 Thorun.
 I am He! the Bornless Spirit! having sight in the feet: Strong, and the Immortal Fire!
 I am He! the Truth!
 I am He! Who hate that evil should be wrought in the, World!
 I am He, that lighteneth and thundereth.

I am He, from Whom is the Shower of the Life of Earth:
 I am He, Whose mouth ever flameth:
 I am He, the Begetter and Manifester unto the Light:
 I am He; the Grace of the World:
 “The Heart Girt with a Serpent” is My Name!
 Come Thou forth, and follow Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land, or in the Water: of whirling Air or of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God, may be obedient unto Me!
 Iao: Sabao:
 Such are the Words!

So why did Crowley choose to include the “Preliminary Invocation” in *The Goetia*, and perhaps more importantly, why did he use it as a substitute for the Abra-Melin magic when invoking his Holy Guardian Angel in 1906? The answer is simply that he got it from the Golden Dawn, where an extended version was circulated among select members of the Second Order.³⁵ It was most likely MacGregor Mathers, or perhaps Allan Bennett (1872–1923), who devised this extended version, which was divided into five parts corresponding to the elements Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and Spirit, respectively (see Appendix). Although not stated explicitly by Crowley in the account of his attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, it seems likely that Crowley used the extended Golden Dawn version in 1906.³⁶ [28]

The first recorded invocation of the Guardian Angel, using the Bornless Invocation from *The Goetia*, is dated February 16, 1906. From then until June, when he had returned to England, Crowley performed the invocation on an almost daily basis, and over 140 invocations are recorded in his diary for the period. Crowley noted the quality of the invocations, from bad to good, and the conditions, such as being sleepy or suffering from fever and diarrhea. Upon his return to England on June 2, he learned of his daughter’s death (Rose and the baby had taken another route back to England). He noted in his diary the same day that he “solemnly reaffirmed the oath of mine obligation to perform the operation, offering under these terrible circumstances all that yet remains. On the following day, he simply noted “I have lived through the day. [The invocation] a sad mechanic exercise”. Despite being devastated about his daughter’s death, Crowley continued with the invocations, and on October 9 he finally reached what he called the greatest event in his career: “Tested new ritual and behold it was very good! [...] I did get rid of everything but the Holy Exalted One, and must have held Him for a minute or two. I did. I am sure I did.” The published version of the event does not explain what this “new ritual” was, but he wrote down in his private diary that he had taken hashish, resulting in “many very strange illusions of sight, sense of proportion, locality, illusions of muscular distortion [...]”. On the following day, Crowley noted in his private diary: “But the hashish enthusiasm surged up against the ritual-enthusiasm; so hardly know which phenomenon to attribute to which.” [29]

Whether or not Crowley’s attainment of the “greatest event in his career” was due to the use of hashish, the event had a profound effect upon him. Not only had he mastered the technique of communicating with the divine, and as a consequence was able to repeat the communication, but he took it upon himself to teach others to reach similar experiences. Less than a year later, Crowley founded his reformulated version of the Golden Dawn, the Silver Star or A ∴ A ∴ ∴, in which the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel was described as “the crisis” of each member’s career in the Order. As in the Golden Dawn, this attainment was attributed to the Adeptus Minor grade, corresponding to Tiphereth. In the official description of the Grades of the A ∴ A ∴ ∴, *One Star in Sight* first published in 1921, the importance of the attainment was spelled out in full: [30]

35 The version consulted for this article is contained in a notebook entitled “2nd Order Invocations”. The notebook is to be found in the George E.H. Slater Collection. For the significance of this collection, see Bogdan (2016b, 91–111). For an expanded and commented version, see Regardie (1937–1940, 3:259–265).

36 I am basing this assumption on the fact that Crowley, in his *Confessions*, emphasizes that he did not merely recite the invocation but performed it as a ritual set in a temple: “I did not need an aeroplane: I had a magical carpet. I could travel in my astral body to my temple and perform the Operation, perhaps even more conveniently than in the flesh. *Per contra*, I could construct my own temple about me and perform the Operation in my physical body. For various reasons, I preferred the latter method” (Crowley 1970, 517).

The Grade of Adeptus Minor is the main theme of the instructions of the A : A :. It is characterised by the Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. [...] This is the essential work of every man; none other ranks with it either for personal progress or for power to help one's fellows. This unachieved, man is no more than the unhappiest and blindest of animals. He is conscious of his own incomprehensible calamity, and clumsily incapable of repairing it. Achieved, he is no less than the co-heir of gods, a Lord of Light. He is conscious of his own consecrated course, and confidently ready to run it. (Crowley 1929c, 238) [31]

It was furthermore stated that it is impossible to lay down precise rules by which one may attain to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel since “that is the particular secret of each one of us”, and that the “Masters of the A : A : have therefore made no attempt to institute any regular ritual for this central Work of their Order,” save two generalized instructions: *The Vision and Voice* and *Liber Samekh* (Crowley 1929c, 239). [32]

The Vision and Voice and Liber Samekh

The first of these generalized instructions was communicated to Crowley by his own Guardian Angel on December 8, 1909, in the Algerian desert between Bou-Saada and Biskra. Being part of the record of Crowley's exploration of the 30 Aethyrs of the Enochian system of magic, discussed in detail by historian Alex Owen, the instructions for attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel were given in the Eight Aethyr, in which a 91-day long ritual was described (Owen 2012).³⁷ The instructions were clearly based on those found in *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, and included descriptions of the temple, the lamp, the altar, the anointing oil, the robe, wand, pentacle, etc. It differed, however, in that it included the Thelemic divinities Nuit, Hadit, and Ra-Hoor Khuit rather than the Judeo-Christian god names found in *The Book of Abra-Melin*. The climax of the ritual described in the Eight Aethyr is the appearance of the Guardian Angel: [33]

Then, at his prayer, shall the chamber be filled with light insufferable for splendour, and a perfume intolerable for sweetness. And his Holy Guardian Angel shall appear unto him, yea, his Holy Guardian Angel shall appear unto him, so that he shall be wrapt away into the Mystery of Holiness. [34]

All that day shall he remain in the enjoyment of the knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. [35]

And for three days after he shall remain from sunrise unto sunset in the temple, and he shall obey the counsel that his Angel shall have given unto him, and he shall suffer those things that are appointed (Crowley 1911, 112–13). [36]

The clearest and most comprehensive instruction for attaining the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, however, is given in *Liber Samekh*, which Crowley wrote while staying at his Abbey of Thelema in Cefalù, Sicily. This ritual is a revised version of the full Bornless Invocation, which Crowley had used in 1906. The revisions consist in large part of adapting the ritual to Thelema, in addition to an exegetical commentary from a Thelemic perspective. What is striking about *Liber Samekh*, however, is the ecstatic nature of the ritual. [37]

³⁷ For an historical overview of the Enochian magical tradition, see Asprem (2012). See also Bogdan (2016a).

Not only did Crowley emphasize the importance of frequently invoking the Guardian Angel, but he used words such as rapture, illumination, enthusiasm, intoxication, ecstasy, intimacy, spiritual spasm and intensive consummation to describe the union with the Guardian Angel.

The full title of this work is “Liber Samekh Theurgia Goetia Summa Congressus Cum Daemone, Sub Figura DCCC, being the Ritual employed by the Beast 666 for the Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel during the Semester of His performance of the Operation of the Sacred Magick of ABRAMELIN THE MAGE.” It was written in 1920 by Crowley at the Abbey of Thelema in Cefalù, Italy, to one of his Australian disciples, Frater Progradior, Frank Bennett (1868–1930).³⁸ The text is divided into three points or parts: (1) “Evangelii Textus Redactus”, consisting of a revised version of the Bornless Invocation; (2) “Ars Congressus Cum Daemone”, a line-by-line commentary on the Bornless Invocation; and (3) “Scholion on Sections G & Gg”, an explanatory comment on the nature of the ritual. Sections 2 and 3 are mainly concerned with kabbalistic and Thelemic exegesis, and while these aspects deserve to be studied in detail, it falls outside the scope of the present article. It is section 1, however, which concerns us here. As shown in the Appendix, the Bornless Invocation is here divided into ten parts, lettered from A to J, with an additional three subparts (Aa, Ff, and Gg). The text here closely follows an expanded Golden Dawn version of the Bornless Invocation, which has survived in the George E.H. Slater Collection, consisting of papers from Mathers’s Golden Dawn Temple in Paris, the Ahathoor Temple. Given the fact that Crowley had access to this Golden Dawn ritual, it seems likely that he received it before he left the order in 1900, and that this is the version which he used when reaching the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel in 1906. The main differences between the Golden Dawn version and the “Evangelii Textus Redactus” version of the Bornless Invocation are, on the one hand, the substitution of certain key names in conformity with Thelema, and, on the other, Crowley’s interpretation of the Barbarous Names of Evocation. As for the first, Osorronophris is exchanged for Asar Un-Nefer (“Myself made Perfect”) in section A; Moses is exchanged for Ankf-f-n-Khonsu, the Angel of Phapro Osorronophris is exchanged for Ptah-Apo-Phrasz-Ra, and Israel for Khem in section Aa; Balbnabaoth for Babalon-bal-Bin-Abaft (“Babalon! Thou Woman of Whoredom. Thou, Gate of the Great God ON! Thou Lady of the Understanding of the Ways!”) in section D, etc.³⁹ As for the second difference, the addition of Crowley’s interpretations of the Barbarous Names of Evocation, it includes some more or less idiosyncratic interpretations, e.g., Sabaoth explained as “Nuith! Hadith! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! Hail, Great Wild Beast! Hail, IAO!” in section F.

So, what is this higher self, this Holy Guardian Angel which Crowley was so preoccupied with? Judging by *Liber Samekh*, it is clear that we are dealing with an ecstatic transformative experience, an altered state of consciousness, which would lead to an existential shift in how one relates to the divine: the Godhead is within, not without, or, to put it in the words of Crowley, “There is no god but man” (Crowley 1941).⁴⁰ Crowley tried to explain his 1906 experience in mystical terms such as *samadhi*, *Atmadarshana*, and *Shivadarshana*, but he was quick to point out that these terms were inadequate for describing his experience. In his discussion of the encounter with the Guardian Angel in *Liber Samekh*, he refers to visual and auditory phenomena which are frequently found in literature on mystical experiences, such as

38 On Frank Bennett, see Bennett (2004) and Crowley et al. (2009). The fact that Crowley included Abra-Melin in the title of his revised and extended version of the Golden Dawn rendition of the Bornless Invocation shows the extent to which Crowley regarded these two systems of attainment as interconnected.

39 On the role and significance of the goddess Babalon in Thelema, see Hedenborg White (2020).

40 For a discussion of the concept of God in Crowley’s magical writings, see Bogdan (2020).

[38]

[39]

brilliant light, outbursts of stupendous and sublime sounds, and visions of glittering galaxies. A common topos in mystical tradition, it is, according to Crowley, difficult or even impossible to describe the encounter with the Guardian Angel, as that would limit the experience to mere words. In fact, the experience can be so overwhelming that one cannot even remember what has happened, or to put it into Crowley's own words:

But the results of the Ritual are too various to permit of rigid description. One may say that, presuming that union to be perfect, the Adept need not retain any memory soever of what has occurred. He may be merely aware of a gap in his conscious life, and judge of its contents by observing that his nature has been subtly transfigured. Such an experience might indeed be the proof of perfection (Crowley 1929a, 296).

[40]

During the Cefalù period in the early 1920s, when *Liber Samekh* was written, Crowley rejected supernatural explanations of the experience, and instead interpreted spiritual enlightenment as a to all intents and purposes psychological process.⁴¹ Inspired by Freud, Jung and depth psychology, Crowley sought to explore the unconscious, and he stated openly that “A thorough comprehension of Psycho-analysis will contribute notably to the proper appreciation of this Ritual”. In fact, the communion with the Holy Guardian Angel was not interpreted by Crowley as a divine intervention but as becoming conscious of the unconscious, or to quote Crowley's own words: “The Holy Guardian Angel is the Unconscious Creature Self”, or “This means the recognition of the Angel as the True Self of his subconscious self, the hidden Life of his physical life.” In this respect, Crowley is an illustrative example of the psychologisation of the occult, identified by Wouter J. Hanegraaff as part of the secularisation of Western esotericism, but we can also approach the Holy Guardian Angel experience as an early version of what Paul Heelas has termed “Self-Spirituality” (1996, 18–20), in that the Guardian Angel is seen as a higher aspect of ourselves that we are normally not aware of.⁴²

[41]

41 Whilst the psychologization of magic and initiation in Crowley's writings falls outside the scope of the present article, it should be mentioned that Crowley relied on different—and sometimes even conflicting—types of psychology: For instance, he would rely on Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) for his naturalistic framework, on William James (1842–1910) for his understanding of mystical experiences, and on Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and C.G. Jung (1875–1961) for psychoanalysis and the concept of the unconsciousness, while at the same time stating in private that the best psychoanalytical author was Alfred Adler (1870–1937), the founder of the school of individual psychology.

42 Towards the end of his life, however, Crowley appears to have rejected the idea that the HGA is merely the unconscious and he was highly critical of popular notions of the so-called higher self. Instead, he seems to have reverted to a more enchanted interpretation of the HGA as a separate and individual entity or intelligence, existing outside of the individual mind. See Pasi (2012). Crowley's last recorded thoughts on the HGA can be found in a letter to his close friend Gerald Yorke, dated March 26, 1945: “With regard to the H.G.A., one is obliged to restrain oneself by a feeling which I can only describe as personal delicacy, the sort of thing which prevents a Mohammedan asking even his dearest friend—‘How is your wife this morning?’ Unless anyone had attained to that Knowledge and Conversation, it is difficult to explain. It is in fact so powerful that one does not wish to say anything about it at all. If you will look back at your *Magick* page XXIX. You will notice that the Motto in the Grade of 5 equals 6 is left blank—and that is why. I cannot agree with you wholly when you say that the Hindu had no H.G.A. In the important Samadhi's there is one between Vishnarupadarshana and Atmadarshana, the Sanskrit name of which I have unfortunately forgotten, which is at least of this character. I never experienced it, and so can tell you nothing about it. [...] The relation between the H.G.A. and His client is strictly a personal matter. Two different men could not have the same H.G.A. [...] I think it would be fair to say that the H.G.A. is a Being in the identical Path with that of His client and this fact is probably the reason for the confusion between Him and the ‘Higher Self’” (Aleister Crowley to Gerald Yorke, March 26, 1945. Gerald Yorke Collection, Warburg Institute).

Concluding Remark

Today, the Bornless Invocation as a means to achieving the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel can be found in a wide range of practical manuals, both in printed form and online. As such, it is a remarkable testament to the entangled nature of Western Learned Magic. An exorcism once written down in fourth-century Egypt, obtained by the renowned collector and dealer of antiquities Giovanni Anastasi and sold to the British Museum, found its way via an English translation edited for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society in 1852 into a highly secretive society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, where it was reinterpreted as an invocation of the divine aspect of man, the genius or the Holy Guardian Angel. From there it appeared in print in an unlikely context, as a “Preliminary Invocation” to *The Goetia*, part of the infamous grimoire *Clavicula Salomonis Regis*. It was used by none other than the Great Beast 666, Aleister Crowley, on a daily basis in 1906 when he travelled across China, resulting in the “greatest event in his career”—the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel. Published again in 1929, the text was now reinvented as an official instruction for a new religious movement, Thelema, offering a new dispensation to mankind. In addition to this, the Bornless Invocation was conflated and entangled with the early modern grimoire tradition, through *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, and the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel. A strange adventure for a text. [42]

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welche Moses in der Wüste aus dem feurigen Busch erlernet, alle Verborgenenheiten der Kabbala umfassend. Cologne.

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Appendix

Table 2 Comparison between Second Order Golden Dawn Invocation, George E.H. Slater Collection and Liber Sameck, Part 1.

MS. 2 nd Order Invocations. George E.H. Slater Collection. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn	Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.
<p>INVOCATION (West of Altar, facing East)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thee I invoke, the Bornless One: 2. Thee that didst create the Earth and the Heavens: 3. Thee, that didst create the Night and the Day: 4. Thee, that didst create the Darkness and the Light. 5. Thou art OSORRONOPHRIS, Whom no man hath seen at any time. 6. Thou art IÄBAS: 7. Thou art IÄBAS: 8. Thou art IÄPOS 9. Thou hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust: 10. Thou didst make the Female and the Male. 11. Thou didst produce the Seed and the Fruit. 12. Thou didst form Men, to love one another, and to hate one another. 	<p>Section A. The Oath</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thee I invoke, the Bornless One. 2. Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens. 3. Thee, that didst create the Night and the Day. 4. Thee, that didst create the darkness and the Light. 5. Thou art ASAR UN-NEFER (“Myself made Perfect”): Whom no man hath seen at any time. 6. Thou art IA-BESZ (“the Truth in Matter”). 7. Thou art IA-APOPHRASZ (“the Truth in Motion”). 8. Thou hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust. 9. Thou didst make the Female and the Male. 10. Thou didst produce the Seeds and the Fruit. 11. Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate one another.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am MOSES Thy Prophet, unto Whom Thou didst commit Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies of Israel. 2. Thou didst produce the Moist and the Dry; and that which nourisheth all Created Life. 3. Hear Thou Me; for I am the Angel of PHAPRO OSORRONOPHRIS; this is Thy True Name, handed down to the Prophets of Israel. 	<p>Section Aa.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am ANKH - F - N - KHONSU thy Prophet, unto Whom Thou didst commit Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies of KHEM. 2. Thou didst produce the moist and the dry, and that which nourisheth all created Life. 3. Hear Thou Me, for I am the Angel of PTAH - APO - PHRASZ - RA (vide the Rubric): this is Thy True Name, handed down to the Prophets of KHEM.

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Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

AIR

At East

Section B.

Air

Hear Me:

Hear Me:

AR

AR

“O breathing, flowing Sun!”

THIAO

ThIAF

“O Sun IAF! O Lion-Serpent Sun, The Beast that whirlst forth, a thunder- bolt, begetter of Life!”

RHEIBET

RhEIBET

“Thou that flowest! Thou that goest!”

ATHELEBERSETH

A-TheLE-BER-SET

“Thou Satan-Sun Hadith that goest without Will!”

A

A

“Thou Air! Breath! Spirit! Thou without bound or bond!”

BLATHA

BELAThA

“Thou Essence, Air Swift-streaming, Elasticity!”

ABEU

ABEU

“Thou Wanderer, Father of All!”

EBEN

EBEU

“Thou Wanderer, Spirit of All!”

PHI CHITASOE

Phi-ThETA-SOE

“Thou Shining Force of Breath! Thou Lion-Serpent Sun! Thou Saviour, save!”

IB

IB

“Thou Ibis, secret solitary Bird, inviolate Wisdom, whose Word in Truth, creating the World by its Magick!”

MS. 2nd Order Invocations. George E.H. Slater Collection. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

THIAO

ThIAF

“O Sun IAF! O Lion-Serpent Sun, The Beas that whirlest forth, a thunder- bolt, begetter of Life!”

HEAR ME; and make all Spirits subject unto me; so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether, upon the Earth and under the Earth; and in the Water; of Whirling Air and of Rushing Fire; and every Spell and Scourge of God, may be obedient unto Me!

The conception is of Air, glowing, inhabited by a Solar-Phallic Bird, “the Holy Ghost”, of a Mercurial Nature.

Hear me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me; so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth, on dry land and in the water; of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire, and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

FIRE

Section C.

At South

Fire

I invoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God, Who dwellest in the Void Place of the Spirit:

I invoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God: Who dwellest in the Void Place of the Spirit: -

AROGOGOROBRAO

AR-O-GO-GO-RU-ABRAO

“Thou spiritual Sun! Satan, Thou Eye, Thou Lust! Cry aloud! Cry aloud! Whirl the Wheel, O my Father, O Satan, O Sun!”

SOCHOU

SOTOU

“Thou, the Saviour!”

MUDORIO

MUDORIO

“Silence! Give me Thy Secret!”

PHALARCHAO

PhALARThAO

“Give me suck, Thou Phallus, Thou Sun!”

OÖÖ

OOO

“Satan, thou Eye, thou Lust!” Satan, thou Eye, thou Lust! Satan, thou Eye, thou Lust!

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Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

APÉ

AEPE

“Thou self-caused, self-determined, exalted, Most High!”

THE BORNLESS ONE:

The Bornless One. (Vide supra).

HEAR ME; and make all Spirits subject unto me; so that every Spirit of the Firmament; and of the Ether: upon the Earth; on dry Land; and in the Water; of Whirling Air and of Rushing Fire; and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto me!

The conception is of Fire, glowing, inhabited by a Solar-Phallic Lion of a Uranian nature.

Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire, and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

WATER

Section D.

At West

Water

HEAR ME: -

Hear Me: -

ROUBRIO

RU-ABRA-IAF

“Thou the Wheel, thou the Womb, that containeth the Father IAF!”

MARIODAM

MRIODOM

“Thou the Sea, the Abode!”

BALBNABAOTH

BABALON-BAL-BIN-ABAFT

“Babalon! Thou Woman of Whoredom. Thou, Gate of the Great God ON! Thou Lady of the Understanding of the Ways!”

ASSALONAI

ASAL-ON-AI

“Hail Thou, the unstirred! Hail, sister and bride of ON, of the God that is all and is none, by the Power of Eleven!”

APHNIAO

APhEN-IAF

“Thou Treasure of IAO!”

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Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

I

I

“Thou Virgin twin-sexed! Thou Secret Seed!
Thou inviolate Wisdom!”

THOLETH

PhOTETH

”Abode of the Light

ABRASAX

ABRASAX

“.....of the Father, the Sun, of Hadith, of the spell of the Aeon of Horus!”

ÄËÖÖÜ

AEOOU

“Our Lady of the Western Gate of Heaven!”

ISCHURE

ISChURE

“Mighty art Thou!”

MIGHTY AND BORNLESS ONE

Mighty and Bornless One! (Vide Supra)

HEAR ME; and make all Spirits subject unto me, so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether; upon the Earth and under the Earth; on dry Land; and in the Water; of Whirling Air; and of Rushing Fire; and every Spell and Scourge of God, may be obedient unto me!

The conception is of Water, glowing, inhabited by a Solar-Phallic Dragon-Serpent, of a Neptunian nature.

Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

EARTH

At North

Section E.

Earth

I invoke Thee;

I invoke Thee: -

MA

MA

“O Mother! O Truth!”

BARRAIO

BARRAIO

“Thou Mass!”

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Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

IOEL

IOEL
“Hail, Thou that art!”

KOTHA

KOThA
“Thou hollow one!”

ATHOREBALO

AThOR-e-BAL-O
“Thou Goddess of Beauty and Love, whom Satan, beholding, desireth!”

ABRAOTH

ABRAFT
“The Fathers, male-female, desire Thee!”

Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether: upon The Earth and under the Earth: on dry land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

The conception of Earth, glowing, inhabited by a Solar-Phallic Hippopotamus² of a Venereal nature.

Hear Me: and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether: upon The Earth and under the Earth: on dry land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

SPIRIT
At West of Altar

Section F.
Spirit

Hear Me;

Hear Me:

AOTH

AFT
“Male-Female Spirits!”

ABAOTH

ABAFT
“Male-Female Sires!”

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Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

BASUM

BAS-AUMGN

“Ye that are Gods, going forth, uttering AUMGN. The Word that goeth from (A) Free Breath. (U) through Willed Breath. (M) and stopped Breath. (GN) to Continuous Breath. thus symbolizing the whole course of spiritual life. A is the formless Hero; U is the six-fold solar sound of physical life, the triangle of Soul being entwined with that of Body; M is the silence of”death”; GN is the nasal sound of generation & knowledge.

ISAK

ISAK

“Identical Point!”

SABAOTH

SA-BA-FT

“Nuith! Hadith! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! Hail, Great Wild Beast! Hail, IAO!”

FGF

Section Ff.

This is the Lord of the Gods:
This is the Lord of the Universe:
This is He Whom the Winds fear:
This is He, Who having made Voice by His Commandment is Lord of all things, King, Ruler and Helper.

1. This is the Lord of the Gods:
2. This is the Lord of the Universe:
3. This is He whom the Winds fear.
4. This is He, Who having made Voice by His commandment is Lord of all Things; King, Ruler and Helper. Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

HEAR ME; and make all Spirits subject unto me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether; upon the Earth, and under the Earth; on dry Land and in the Water; of Whirling Air and of Rushing Fire; and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

Section G.
Spirit

HEAR ME: –

Hear Me: -

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Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

IEOU

IEOU

“Indwelling Sun of Myself”

PUR

PUR

“Thou Fire! Thou Sixfold Star initiator compassed about with Force and Fire!”

IOU

IOU

“Indwelling Soul of Myself”

PUR

PUR

(Vide Supra)

IAOT

IAFTh

“Sun-lion Serpent, hail! All Hail, thou Great Wild Beast, thou I A O!”

IAEO

IAEO

“Breaths of my soul, breaths of mine Angel.”

IOOU

IOOU

“Lust of my soul, lust of mine Angel!”

ABRASAX

ABRASAX (Vide Supra).

SABRIAM

SABRIAM

“Ho for the Sangraal! Ho for the Cup of Babalon! Ho for mine Angel pouring Himself forth within my Soul!”

OO

OO

“The Eye! Satan, my Lord! The Lust of the goat!”

UU

FF

“Mine Angel! Mine initiator! Thou one with me - the Sixfold Star!”

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Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

ADONAÏE

AD-ON-A-I

“My Lord! My secret self beyond self, Hadith, All Father! Hail, ON, thou Sun, thou Life of Man, thou Fivefold Sword of Flame! Thou Goat exalted upon Earth in Lust, thou Snake extended upon Earth in Life! Spirit most holy! Seed most Wise! Innocent Babe. Inviolable Maid! Begetter of Being! Soul of all Souls! Word of all Words, Come forth, most hidden Light!”

EDE

EDE

“Devour thou me!”

EDU

EDU

“Thou dost devour Me!”

ANGELOS TOU THEOU

ANGELOS TON THEON

“Thou Angel of the Gods!”

ANLAIA LAI

ANLALA

“Arise thou in Me, free flowing, Thou who art Naught, who art Naught, and utter thy Word!”

LAI

“I also am Naught! I Will Thee! I behold Thee! My nothingness!”

GAIA

GAIA

“Leap up, thou Earth!” (This is also an agonising appeal to the Earth, the Mother; for at this point of the ceremony the Adept should be torn from his mortal attachments, and die to himself in the orgasm of his operation.)

APA

AEPE

”Thou Exalted One! It (i.e. the spritual ‘semen’, the Adept’s secret ideas, drawn irresistibly from their ‘Hell’ by the love of his Angel) leaps up; it leaps forth!

MS. 2nd Order Invocations. George E.H.
Slater Collection. The Hermetic Order of
the Golden Dawn

Liber Sameck, Part 1: Evangelii Textus
Redactus. Aleister Crowley, 1920.

DIACHANNA
CHORUN

DIATHARNA THORON
“Lo! the out-splashing of the seeds of
Immortality”

Section Gg.
The Attainment

I am He, the Bornless Spirit, having sight in
the feet, strong, and the Immortal Fire:
I am He, the Truth:
I am He Who hateth that Evil should be
wrought in the World:
I am He, that lighteneth and thundereth:
I am He from whom is the Shower of the
Life of Earth:
I am He, Whose mouth ever flameth:
I am He, the Begetter and Manifester unto
the Light:
I am He; The Grace of the World.
THE HEART GIRT WITH A SERPENT IS MY
NAME!

1. I am He! the Bornless Spirit! having sight
in the feet: Strong, and the Immortal Fire!
2. I am He! the Truth!
3. I am He! Who hate that evil should be
wrought in the World!
4. I am He, that lighteneth and thundereth!
5. I am He, from whom is the Shower of
the Life of Earth!
6. I am He, whose mouth ever flameth!
7. I am He, the Begetter and Manifester
unto the Light!
8. I am He, The Grace of the Worlds!
9. “The Heart Girt with a Serpent” is my
name!

Section H.
The “Charge to the Spirit”

Come THOU forth, and follow me, and
make all Spirits subject unto me, so that
every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the
Ether; upon the Earth and under the Earth;
on dry Land or in the Water; of Whirling
Air and of Rushing Fire; and every Spell
and Scourge of God may be obedient unto
me!

Come thou forth, and follow me: and make
all Spirits subject unto Me so that every
Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether,
upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry
Land, or in the Water: of Whirling Air or of
rushing Fire, and every Spell and scourge
of God, may be obedient unto me!

Section J.
The Proclamation of the Beast 666

IAO: SABAO
Such are the Words!

IAF: SABAF
Such are the Words!
