



**THE RITUAL OF  
TRANSCENDENTAL  
MAGIC**

**ELIPHAS LEVI**

# **The Ritual of Transcendental Magic**

**By Eliphas Levi**

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The Sabbatic Goat

## **The Ritual of Transcendental Magic**

### **INTRODUCTION**

KNOWEST thou that old queen of the world who is on the march always and wearies never? Every uncurbed passion, every selfish pleasure, every licentious energy of humanity, and all its tyrannous weakness, go before the sordid mistress of our tearful valley, and, scythe in hand, these indefatigable labourers reap their eternal harvest. That queen is old as time, but her skeleton is concealed in the

wreckage of women's beauty, which she abstracts from their youth and love. Her skull is adorned with lifeless tresses that are not her own. Spoliator of crowned heads, she is embellished with the plunder of queens, from the star-begemmed hair of Berenice to that-white, but not with age-which the executioner sheared from the brow of Marie Antoinette. Her livid and frozen body is clothed in faded garments and tattered winding-sheets. Her bony hands, covered with rings, hold diadems and chains, scepters and crossbones, jewels and ashes. When she goes by, doors open of themselves; she passes through walls; she penetrates to the cabinets of kings; she surprises the extortioners of the poor in their most secret orgies; she sits down at their board, pours out their wine, grins at their songs with her gumless teeth, takes the place of the lecherous courtesan hidden behind their curtains. She delights to hover about sleeping voluptuaries; she seeks their caresses, as if she hoped to grow warm in their embrace; but she freezes all those whom she touches and herself never kindles. At times, notwithstanding, one would think her seized with frenzy; she stalks slowly no longer; she runs; if her feet are too slow, she spurs a pale horse and charges all breathless through multitudes. Murder rides with her on a russet charger; shaking his mane of smoke, fire flies before her with wings of scarlet and black; famine and plague follow on diseased and emaciated steeds, gleaning the few sheaves which remain to complete her harvest.

After this funereal procession come two little children, radiating with smiles and life, the intelligence and love of the coming century, the dual genius of a newborn humanity. The shadows of death fold up before them, as does night before the morning star; with nimble feet they skim the earth and sow with full hands the hope of another year. But death will come no more, impiteous and terrible, to mow

like dry grass the ripe blades of the new age; it will give place to the angel of progress, who will gently liberate souls from mortal chains, so that they may ascend to God. When men know how to live they will die no longer; they will transform like the chrysalis, which becomes a splendid butterfly. The terrors of death are daughters of ignorance, and death herself is only hideous by reason of the rubbish which covers her, and the sombre hues with which her images are surrounded. Death, truly, is the birth-pang of life. There is a force in Nature which dieth not, and this force perpetually transforms beings to preserve them. It is the reason or word of Nature. In man also there is a force analogous to that of Nature, and it is the reason or word of man. The word of man is the expression of his will directed by reason, and it is omnipotent under this leading, for it is analogous to the word of God Himself. By the word of his reason man becomes conqueror of life, and can triumph over death. The entire life of man is either the parturition or miscarriage of his word. Human beings who die without having understood or formulated the word of reason, die devoid of eternal hope. To withstand successfully the phantom of death, we must be identified with the realities of life. Does it signify to God if an abortion wither, seeing that life is eternal? Does it signify to Nature if unreason perish, since reason which never perishes still holds the keys of life? The just and terrible force which destroys abortions eternally was called by the Hebrews Samael; by other easterns, Satan; and by the Latins, Lucifer. The Lucifer of the Kabbalah is not an accursed and ruined angel; he is the angel who enlightens, who regenerates by fire; he is to the angels of peace what the comet is to the mild stars of the spring-time constellations. The fixed star is beautiful, radiant and calm; she drinks the celestial perfumes and gazes with love upon her sisters; clothed in her glittering robe, her forehead crowned with diamonds, she smiles as she chants her morning and evening canticle; she enjoys an

eternal repose which nothing can disturb, and moves solemnly forward without departing from the rank assigned her among the sentinels of light. But the wandering comet, dishevelled and of sanguinary aspect, plunges hurriedly from the depths of heaven and flings herself athwart the peaceful spheres, like a chariot of war between the ranks of a procession of vestals; she dares to face the burning spears of the solar guardians, and, like a bereft spouse who seeks the husband of her dreams during widowed nights, she penetrates even unto the inmost sanctuary of the god of day; again she escapes, exhaling the fires which consume her and trailing a long conflagration behind; the stars pale at her approach; constellate flocks, pasturing on flowers of light in the vast meadows of the sky, seem to flee before her terrible breath. The grand council of spheres assembles, and there is universal consternation; at length the loveliest of the fixed stars is commissioned to speak in the name of all the firmament and offer peace to the headlong vagabond.

“My sister,” she thus commences, “why dost thou disturb the harmony of the spheres? What evil have we wrought thee? And why, instead of wandering wildly, dost thou not fix thy place like us in the court of the sun? Why dost thou not chant with us the evening hymn, clothed like ourselves in a white garment, fastened at the breast with a diamond clasp? Why float thy tresses, adrip with fiery sweat, through the mists of the night? Ah, wouldst thou but take thy place among the daughters of heaven, how much more beautiful wouldst thou be! Thy face would burn no longer with the toil of thine incredible flights; thine eyes would be clear, thy smiling countenance white and red like that of thy happy sisters; all the stars would know thee, and, far from fearing thy flight, would rejoice at thine approach; for then thou wouldst be made one with us by the indestructible bonds of universal harmony, and thy peaceful

existence would be one voice more in the canticle of infinite love.”

And the comet replies to the fixed star: “Believe not, O my sister, that I am permitted to wander at will and vex the harmony of the spheres! God hath appointed my path, even as thine, and if it appear to thee uncertain and vagrant, it is because thy beams cannot penetrate far enough to take in the circumference of the ellipse which has been allotted for my course. My fiery hair is God's beacon; I am the messenger of the suns, and I renew my strength continually in their burning heat, that I may dispense it on my journey to young worlds which have as yet insufficient warmth, and to ancient stars which have grown cold in their solitude. If I weary in my long travellings, if my beauty be less mild than thine own, and if my garments are not unspotted, yet am I a noble daughter of heaven, even as thou art. Leave me the secret of my terrible destiny, leave me the dread which surrounds me, curse me even if thou canst not comprehend; I shall none the less accomplish my work, and continue my career under the impulse of the breath of God! Happy are the stars which rest, which shine like youthful queens in the peaceful society of the universe! I am the proscribed, the eternal wanderer, who has infinity for domain. They accuse me of setting fire to the planets, the heat of which I renew; they accuse me of terrifying the stars which I enlighten; they chide me with breaking in upon universal harmony, because I do not revolve about their particular centres, though I join them one with another, directing my gaze towards the sole centre of all the suns. Be reassured, therefore, O beauteous fixed star! I shall not impoverish thy peaceful light; rather I shall expend in thy service my own life and heat. I shall disappear from heaven when I shall have consumed myself, and my doom will have been glorious enough! Know that various fires burn in the temple of God, and do all give Him



glory: ye are the light of golden candelabra; I am the flame of sacrifice. Let us each fulfil our destinies."

Having uttered these words, the comet tosses back her burning hair, uplifts her fiery shield and plunges into infinite space, seeming to be lost for ever.

Thus Satan appeared and disappeared in the allegorical narratives of the Bible. "Now there was a day," says the book of Job, "when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan: 'Whence comest thou?' Then Satan answered the Lord, and said: 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.'"

A Gnostic gospel, discovered in the East by a learned traveller of our acquaintance, explains the genesis of light to the profit of Lucifer, as follows:

"Self-conscious truth is living thought. Truth is thought as it is in itself, and formulated thought is speech. When Eternal Thought desired a form, it said: 'Let there be light.' Now, this Thought which speaks is the Word, and the Word said: 'Let there be light,' because the Word itself is the light of minds. The untreated light, which is the Divine Word, shines because it desires to be seen. When it says: 'Let there be light!' it ordains that eyes shall open; it creates intelligences. When God said: 'Let there be light!' Intelligence was made, and the light appeared. Now, the Intelligence which God diffused by the breath of His mouth, like a star given off from the sun, took the form of a splendid angel, who was saluted by heaven under the name of Lucifer. Intelligence awakened, and comprehended its nature completely by the understanding of that utterance of the Divine Word: 'Let there be light!' It felt itself to be free because God had called it into being, and, raising up

its head, with both wings extended, it replied: 'I will not be slavery.' 'Then shalt thou be suffering,' said the Untreated Voice. 'I will be liberty,' replied the light. 'Pride will seduce thee,' said the Supreme Voice, 'and thou wilt bring forth death.' 'I needs must strive with death to conquer life,' again responded the created light. Thereupon God loosed from His bosom the shining cord which restrained the superb angel, and beholding him plunge through the night, which he furrowed with glory, He loved the offspring of His thought, and said with an ineffable smile: 'How beautiful was the light!'

"God has not created suffering; intelligence has accepted it to be free. And suffering has been the condition imposed upon freedom of being by Him who alone cannot err, because He is infinite. For the essence of intelligence is judgement, and the essence of judgement is liberty. The eye does not really possess light except by the faculty of closing or opening. Were it forced to be always open, it would be the slave and victim of the light, and would cease to see in order to escape the torment. Thus, created Intelligence is not happy in affirming God, except by its liberty to deny Him. Now, the Intelligence which denies, invariably affirms something, since it is asserting its liberty. It is for this reason that blasphemy glorifies God and that hell was indispensable to the happiness of heaven. Were the light unrepelled by shadow, there would be no visible forms. If the first angels had not encountered the depths of darkness, the child-birth of God would have been incomplete, and there could have been no separation between the created and essential light. Never would Intelligence have known the goodness of God if it had never lost Him. Never would God's infinite love have shone forth in the joys of His mercy had the prodigal Son of Heaven remained in the House of His Father. When all was light, there was light nowhere; it filled the breast of God, who

was labouring to bring it forth. And when He said: 'Let there be light!' He permitted the darkness to repel the light, and the universe issued from chaos. The negation of the angel who at birth refused slavery constituted the equilibrium of the world, and the motion of the spheres commenced. The infinite distances admired this love of liberty, which was vast enough to fill the void of eternal night and strong enough to bear the hatred of God. But God could hate not the noblest of His children, and He proved him by His wrath only to confirm him in His power. So also the Word of God Himself, as if jealous of Lucifer, willed to come down from heaven and pass triumphantly through the shadows of hell. He willed to be proscribed and condemned; He premeditated that terrible hour when He should cry, in the throes of His agony: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' As the star of the morning goes before the sun, the rebellion of Lucifer announced to new-born Nature the coming incarnation of God. Possibly Lucifer, in his fall through night, carried with him a rain of suns and stars by the attraction of his glory. Possibly our sun is a demon among the stars, as Lucifer is a star among the angels. Doubtless it is for this reason that it lights so calmly the horrible anguish of humanity and the long agony of earth -because it is free in its solitude and possesses its light."

Such were the tendencies of the heresiarchs in the early centuries. Some, like the Ophites, adored the demon under the figure of a serpent; others, like the Cainites, justified the rebellion of the first angel and that of the first murderer. All those errors, all those shadows, all those monstrous idols of anarchy which India opposes in its symbols to the magical Trimurti, have found priests and worshippers in Christianity. The demon is mentioned nowhere in Genesis; an allegorical serpent deceives our first parents. Here is the common translation of the sacred

text: "Now, the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." But this is what Moses says:

והנחש היה נערום מכל חית השדה אשר עשה יהוה אלהים

This signifies, according to the version of Fabre d'Olivet: "Now, original attraction (cupidity) was the entraining passion of all elementary life (the interior activity of Nature), the work of Jhoah, the Being of beings." But herein Fabre d'Olivet is beside the true interpretation, because he was unacquainted with the grand keys of the Kabbalah. The word Nahash, explained by the symbolical letters of the Tarot signifies rigorously

14 NUN.-The power which produces combinations.

5 HE.-The recipient and passive producer of forms.

21 SHIN.-The natural and central fire equilibrated by double polarization.

Thus, the word employed by Moses, read kabalistically, gives the description and definition of that magical Universal Agent, represented in all theogonies by the serpent; to this Agent the Hebrews applied the name of OD when it manifested its active force, of OB when it exhibited its passive force, and of AOUR when it revealed itself wholly in its equilibrated power, as producer of light in heaven and gold among metals. It is therefore that old serpent which encircles the world and places its devouring head beneath the foot of a Virgin, the type of initiation - that virgin who presents a little new-born child to the adoration of three Magi and receives from them, in exchange for this favour, gold, myrrh and frankincense. So does doctrine serve in all hieratic religions to veil the

secret of natural forces which the initiate has at his disposal. Religious formulae are the summaries of those words full of mystery and power which make the gods descend from heaven and become subject to the will of men. Judea borrowed its secrets from Egypt; Greece sent her hierophants and later her theosophists to the school of the great prophets; the Rome of the Caesars, mined by the initiation of the catacombs, collapsed one day into the Church, and a symbolism was reconstructed with the remnants of all worships which had been absorbed by the queen of the world. According to the Gospel narrative, the inscription which set forth the spiritual royalty of Christ was written in Hebrew, in Greek and in Latin: it was the expression of a universal synthesis. Hellenism, in fact, that grand and beautiful religion of form, announced the coming of the Saviour no less than the prophets of Judaism. The fable of Psyche is an ultra-Christian abstraction, and the cultus of the Pantheons, by rehabilitating Socrates, prepared altars for that unity of God, of which Israel had been the mysterious preserver. But the synagogue denied its Messiah, and the Hebrew letters were effaced, at least for the blinded eyes of the Jews. The Roman persecutors dishonoured Hellenism, and it could not be restored by the false moderation of the philosopher Julian, surnamed perhaps unjustly the Apostate, since his Christianity was never sincere. The ignorance of the Middle Ages followed, opposing saints and virgins to gods, goddesses and nymphs; the deep sense of the Hellenic mysteries was less understood than ever; Greece herself did not only lose the traditions of her ancient cultus but separated from the Latin Church; and thus, for Latin eyes, the Greek letters were blotted out, as the Latin letters disappeared for Greek eyes. So the inscription on the Cross of the Saviour vanished entirely, and nothing except mysterious initials remained. But when science and philosophy, reconciled with faith, shall unite all the various symbols, then shall the

magnificences of the antique worships be restored to the memory of men, proclaiming the progress of the human mind in the intuition of the light of God. But of all forms of progress the greatest will be that which, restoring the keys of Nature to the hands of science, shall enchain for ever the hideous spectre of Satan, and, explaining all abnormal phenomena, shall destroy the empire of superstition and imbecile credulity. To the accomplishment of this work we have consecrated our life, and do still devote it in the most toilsome and difficult researches. We would emancipate altars by overthrowing idols; we desire the man of intelligence to become once more the priest and king of Nature, and we would preserve by explanation all images of the universal sanctuary.

The prophets spoke in parables and images, because abstract language was wanting to them, and because prophetic perception, being the sentiment of harmony or of universal analogies, translates naturally into images. Taken literally by the vulgar, these images become idols or impenetrable mysteries. The sum and succession of such images and mysteries constitute what is called symbolism. Symbolism comes therefore from God, though it may be formulated by men. Revelation has accompanied humanity in all ages, has been transfigured with human genius but has ever expressed the same truth. True religion is one; its dogmas are simple and within the reach of all. At the same time, the multiplicity of symbols has been a book of poesy indispensable to the education of human genius. The harmony of outward beauties and the poetry of form must reveal God to the infancy of man; but soon Venus had Psyche for her rival and Psyche enchanted Love. It came about therefore that the cultus of form yielded perforce to those ambitious dreams which adorned already the eloquent wisdom of Plato. Thus was the advent of Christ prepared and was therefore also expected; it arrived

because the world awaited it; and to become popular, philosophy transformed into belief. Emancipated by belief itself, the human mind protested speedily against the school which sought to materialize its signs and the work of Roman Catholicism was solely an undesigned provision for the emancipation of consciences and the establishment of the bases of universal association. All these things were the regular and normal development of divine life in humanity; for God is the great Soul of all souls, that immovable Centre about which gravitate all intelligences like a cloud of stars.

Human understanding has had its morning; its noon shall come, and the waning follow; but God will be ever the same. It seems, however, to dwellers on earth that the sun rises youthful and timid in the morning, shines with all its power at midday and goes wearied to rest in the evening. Nevertheless, it is earth which revolves, while the sun is motionless. Having faith therefore in human progress, and in the stability of God, the free man respects religion in its past forms, and no more blasphemes Jupiter than Jehovah. He still salutes lovingly the radiant image of the Pythian Apollo and discovers its fraternal resemblance to the glorified countenance of the risen Redeemer. He believes in the great mission of the Catholic hierarchy, and finds satisfaction in observing the popes of the Middle Ages who opposed religion as a check upon the absolute power of kings; but he protests with the revolutionary centuries against the servitude of conscience which the pontifical keys would enchain. He is more protestant than Luther, since he does not even believe in the infallibility of the Augsburg Confession, and more Catholic than the Pope, for he has no fear that religious unity will be broken by the malevolence of courts. He trusts in God rather than Roman policy for the salvation of the unity idea; he respects the old age of the Church, but he has no fear that she will die;

he knows that her apparent death will be a transfiguration and a glorious assumption.

The author of this book calls upon the eastern Magi to come forward and recognize once again that Divine Master Whose cradle they saluted, the Great Initiator of all the ages. All His enemies have fallen; all those who condemned Him are dead, those who persecuted Him have passed into sleep for ever; but He is for ever alive. The envious have combined against Him, agreeing on a single point; the sectaries have united to destroy Him; they have crowned themselves kings and proscribed Him; they have become hypocrites and accused Him; they have constituted themselves judges and pronounced His sentence of death; they have turned murderers and executed Him; they have forced Him to drink hemlock, they have crucified Him, they have stoned Him, they have burned Him and cast His ashes to the wind; then have they turned scarlet with terror, for He stands erect before them, impeaching them by His wounds and overwhelming them by the radiance of His scars. They believed that they had slain Him in His cradle at Bethlehem, but He is alive in Egypt. They carry Him to the summit of the mountain to cast Him down; the mob of His destroyers encircles Him and triumphs already in His certain destruction. A cry is heard: is not that He who is shattered on the rocks of the abyss? They whiten and look at one another; but He, calm and smiling with pity, passes through the midst of them and disappears. Behold another mountain which they have just dyed with His blood! Behold a Cross, a sepulchre and soldiers guarding His tomb! Madmen! The tomb is empty, and He whom they regard as dead is walking peaceably between two travellers on the road to Emmaus. Where is He? Whither does He go? Warn the masters of the world! Tell the Caesars that their power is threatened! By whom? By a pauper who has no stone on which to lay His head, by a Man of the People condemned



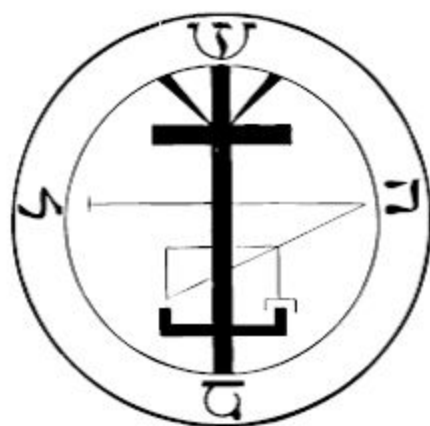
to the death of slaves. What insult or what madness! It matters not. The Caesars marshal all their power; sanguinary edicts proscribe the fugitive; everywhere scaffolds rise up; amphitheaters open, crowded with lions and gladiators; pyres are lighted; torrents of blood flow; and the Caesars, believing themselves victorious, dare add another name to those they rehearse on their trophies. Then they die, and their own apotheosis dishonours the gods whom they defended. The hatred of the world confounds Jupiter and Nero in a common contempt. Temples transformed into tombs are cast down over proscribed ashes, and above the debris of idols, above ruins of empires, He only, He whom the Caesars indicted, whom so many satellites pursued, whom so many executioners tortured, He only lives, alone reigns, alone triumphs!

Notwithstanding, His own disciples speedily misuse His name; pride enters the sanctuary; those who should proclaim His resurrection seek to immortalize His death, that they may feed, like ravens, on His ever-renewing flesh. In place of imitating Him in His sacrifice and shedding their blood for their children in the faith, they chain Him in the Vatican, as upon another Caucasus, and become the vultures of this divine Prometheus. But what signifies their evil dream? They can only imprison His image; He Himself is free and erect, proceeding from exile to exile and from conquest to conquest. It is possible to bind a man but not to make captive the Word of God; speech is free, and nothing can repress it. This living speech is the condemnation of the wicked, and hence they seek to destroy it; but it is they only who die, and the Word of Truth remains to judge their memory! Orpheus may have been rent by bacchantes; Socrates may have quaffed the poisoned cup; Jesus and His apostles have perished in the utmost tortures; John Hus, Jerome of Prague, and innumerable others, have been burned; St. Bartholomew and the massacres of September

may have had in turn their victims; Cossacks, knouts and Siberian deserts are still at the disposal of the Russian Emperor; but the spirit of Orpheus, of Socrates, of Jesus and of all martyrs will live for ever in the midst their dead persecutors, will stand erect amidst decaying institutions and collapsing empires. It is this Divine Spirit, the Spirit of the only Son of God, which St. John represents in his Apocalypse, standing between golden candlesticks, because He is the centre of all lights; having seven stars in His hand, like the seed of a new heaven; and sending down speech upon the earth under the symbol of a two-edged sword. When the wise in their discouragement sleep through the night of doubt, the Spirit of Christ is erect and vigilant. When the nations, weary of the labour which emancipates them, lie down and dream over their chains, the Spirit of Christ is erect and protesting. When the blind partisans of sterilized religions cast themselves in the dust of old temples, the Spirit of Christ is erect and praying. When the strong become weak, when virtues are corrupted, when all things bend and sink down in search of a shameful pasture, the Spirit of Christ is erect, gazing up to heaven and awaiting the hour of His Father.

Christ signifies priest and king by excellence. The Christ-initiator of modern times came to form new priests and new kings by science and, above all, by charity. The ancient Magi were priests and kings, and the Saviour's advent was proclaimed to them by a star. This star was the magical Pentagram, having a sacred letter at each point. It is the symbol of intelligence which rules by unity of force over the four elementary potencies; it is the Pentagram of the Magi, the Blazing Star of the Children of Hiram, the prototype of equilibrated light. Towards each of its points a beam of light ascends, and from each a beam goes forth; it represents the Grand and Supreme Athanor of Nature, which is the body of man. The magnetic influence issues in

two rays from the head, from either hand and either foot. The positive ray is balanced by the negative. The head corresponds with the two feet, each hand with a hand and foot, each of the two feet with the head and one hand. This ruling sign of equilibrated light represents the spirit of order and harmony; it is the sign of the omnipotence of the Magus, and hence, when broken or incorrectly drawn, it represents astral intoxication, abnormal and ill-regulated projections of Astral Light and therefore bewitchments, perversity, madness—all that, in a word, which the Magi term the Signature of Lucifer. There is another signature which also symbolizes the Mysteries of Light, namely, the Sign of Solomon, whose talismans bear on one side the impression of his seal which we have given in our “Doctrine,” and on the other the following signature which is



the hieroglyphic theory of the composition of magnets and represents the circulatory law of the lightning.

Rebellious spirits are enchained by the exhibition of the five-pointed Blazing Star or the Seal of Solomon, because each gives them proof of their folly and threatens them with a sovereign power capable of tormenting them by

their recall to order. Nothing tortures the wicked so much as goodness. Nothing is more odious to madness than reason. But if an ignorant operator should make use of these signs without knowing them, he is like a blind man who discourses of light to the blind, an ass who would teach children to read.

“If the blind lead the blind,” said the Great and Divine Hierophant, “both fall into the pot.”

And now a final word to recapitulate this entire introduction. If you be blind like Samson when you cast down the pillars of the temple, its ruins will crush you. To command Nature we must be above Nature, by resistance of her attractions. If your mind be perfectly free from all prejudice, superstition and incredulity, you will rule spirits. If you do not obey blind forces, they will obey you. If you be wise like Solomon, you will perform the works of Solomon; if you be holy like Christ, you will accomplish the works of Christ. To direct the currents of the inconstant light, we must be established in the constant light. To command the elements, we must have overcome their hurricanes, their lightnings, their abysses, their tempests. In order to DARE we must KNOW; in order to WILL, we must DARE; we must WILL to possess empire and to reign we must BE SILENT.

## **CHAPTER I - PREPARATIONS**

EVERY intention which does not assert itself by deeds is a vain intention, and the speech which expresses it is idle speech. It is action which proves life and establishes will. Hence it is said in the sacred and symbolical books that men will be judged, not according to their thoughts and their ideas, but according to their works. We must do in order to be.

We have, therefore, to treat in this place of the grand and terrific question of magical works; we are concerned no longer with theories and abstractions; we approach realities, and we are about to place the wand of miracles in the hands of the adept, saying to him at the same time: "Be not satisfied with what we tell you: act for yourself." We have to deal here with works of relative omnipotence, with the means of laying hold upon the greatest secrets of Nature and compelling them into the service of an enlightened and inflexible will.

Most known Magical Rituals are either mystifications or enigmas, and we are about to rend for the first time, after so many centuries, the veil of the occult sanctuary. To reveal the holiness of mysteries is to provide a remedy for their profanation. Such is the thought which sustains our courage and enables us to face all the perils of this enterprise, possibly the most dangerous which it has been permitted the human mind to conceive and carry out.

Magical operations are the exercise of a natural power, but one superior to the ordinary forces of Nature. They are the result of a science and a practice which exalt human will beyond its normal limits. The supernatural is only the natural in an extraordinary grade, or it is the exalted natural; a miracle is a phenomenon which impresses the multitude because it is unexpected; the astonishing is that which astonishes; miracles are effects which surprise those who are ignorant of their causes, or assign them causes which are not in proportion to effects. Miracles exist only for the ignorant, but as there is scarcely any absolute science among men, the supernatural can still obtain, and does so indeed for the whole world. Let us set out by saying that we believe in all miracles because we are convinced and certain, even from our own experience, of their entire possibility. There are some which we do not explain, though

we regard them as no less explicable. From the greater to the lesser, from the lesser to the greater, the consequences are related identically and the proportions progressively rigorous. But in order to work miracles we must be outside the normal conditions of humanity; we must be either abstracted by wisdom or exalted by madness, either superior to all passions or outside them through ecstasy or frenzy. Such is the first and most indispensable preparation of the operator. Hence, by a providential or fatal law, the magician can only exercise omnipotence in inverse proportion to his material interest; the alchemist makes so much the more gold as he is the more resigned to privations, and the more esteems that poverty which protects the secrets of the magnum opus. Only the adept whose heart is passionless will dispose of the love and hate of those whom he would make instruments of his science. The myth of Genesis is eternally true, and God permits the tree of knowledge to be approached only by those men who are sufficiently strong and self-denying not to covet its fruits: Ye therefore who seek in science a means to satisfy your passions, pause in this fatal way: you will find nothing but madness or death. This is the meaning of the vulgar tradition that the devil ends sooner or later by strangling sorcerers. The Magus must be impassible, sober and chaste, disinterested, impenetrable and inaccessible to any kind of prejudice or terror. He must be without bodily defects and proof against all contradictions and all difficulties. The first and most important of magical operations is the attainment of this rare pre-eminence.

We have said that impassioned ecstasy may produce the same results as absolute superiority, and this is true as to the issue but not as to the direction of magical operations. Passion projects the Astral Light forcibly and impresses unforeseen movements on the Universal Agent, but it cannot curb with the facility that it impels, and then its