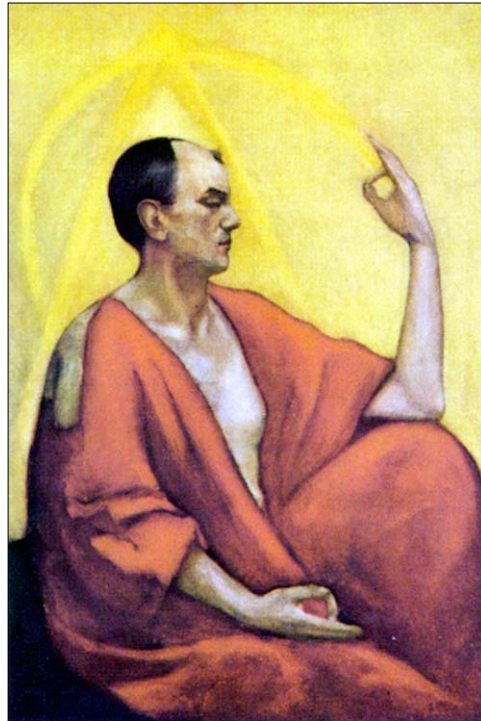


**There Is No God Where I Am:  
Liber AL, The Self and Emptiness**

*Sven Davisson*

*I pay homage to the gurus, the divine friends,  
Mahatma Guru Shri Paramahansa Shivaji and  
Onirisha Bhagavan Babaji*

Whether East or West, the religious modus of the Old Aeon has been marked by a search for absolute interiority. This operative assumption has been that an essence of self exists within and that it is something to be sought out and cared for. This process is most marked in the doctrines of the Christian West, partaking as they do of the inheritance of their Greco-Roman forebears. The entire discursive and liturgical power of the church has been directed to this end. This is a phenomenology born of the Aeon of Osiris (c. 1-1904c.e.) and initially articulated in the writings of Soranus, Rufus of Ephesus, Plutarch, Seneca and other physicians and philosophers of the first two centuries. The early Christians borrowed heavily from this “insistence on the attention that should be brought to bear on oneself.” (Foucault 1988, pp. 39-41) Throughout the course of the Osirian Aeon, this self-analytic imperative evolved through the Catholic confessional and protestant witnessing of the declaration of sinful acts to the modern focus on the secular confessions of psychiatry and self-referential identity discourse. The West has limited itself to the knowledge of the subjective “I.”



Portrait by Leon Engers Kennedy, oil on canvas,  
c. 1917-18 (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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The Eastern conceptions of the soul developed along somewhat similar lines, though the fragmentary nature of Eastern practice (lacking Pope or Patriarch) allowed for marked divergence as well. The focus on absolute interiority was not as disproportionately pronounced as it was in the West. The Hindus posited a self as a fragment that resided in the body along side a Supersoul, which was nothing less than the face of the Godhead. This fragment, being part of the divine, was not changeable. The Buddhist sought through meditation to dissolve the self—more appropriately the reification of self—by the full and experiential realization of emptiness. In contrast to the Hindu belief, the Buddhists held that the soul, or self, is constantly undergoing change and is, therefore, ultimately empty of inherent existence.

The new modus of the Aeon of Horus and Set is developing along lines distinctly contrary to those of the previous aeon. In *Liber AL vel Legis: the Book of the Law* (AL), Lord Aiwass teaches that the seeker is no longer to be concerned with the soul as object. In the New Aeon, the Path moves in the opposite direction. Expansion versus contraction. The point moves outward reaching toward the circumference, instead of the worldly projection turning inwards seeking the essence of self. It is the core that manifests the world, rather than the world seeking the core. Lord Aiwass introduces a cosmology based on the counter relation of two principles, Nuit and Hadit. Nuit is the iconographic expression of infinite expansion. Hieroglyphically she is the lady of the stars whose arched body forms the night sky. Hadit, on the other hand, is the dimensionless point, unextended, the stars within her body. AL II:2 Nuit is the circumference while Hadit is the center of the circle. AL II:3

Questions of subjectivity and self have arisen as the driving questions in the dialogue of modernism and postmodernism. Is everything relative to the subjectivity of the perceiver? Does subjectivity exist? If so, is subjectivity relative, empty or absolute? What is the relation between self and other? Does such a relation even exist and if so what are its constituent parts? This philosophical (and political) dialogue has been paralleled by the increasing personalization of the spiritual quest. As the Golgotha of institutionalized religion has slowly eroded, the rise of subjective relativist spiritual agendas has grown—either in small to medium groups, the so-called “New Religious Movements,” or on a completely personal individuated level. More often than not this has resembled the postmodernist artistic aesthetic, creating a heterogenous amalgam of appropriated imagery, icons and philosophical precepts. The trend has been to center these historical and/or cultural fragments around a drive for rooting out the root of one’s essence—whether termed Being, self or inner child.

In direct contrast to this flood of disparate self-searching philosophies are the words of Nuit, Hadit and Ra-Hoor-Khuit, spoken through their minister Lord Aiwass. In



this tripartite image, reflected in the three chapter division of *Liber AL*, is encoded a model for the correct view of exteriority, interiority and subjectivity. Building from the analogy of the sphere utilized in *Liber AL II:3*, Nuit, as the circumference, is the limit of personal expansion; Hadit is the central, originating point; and Ra-Hoor-Khuit is the synergy arisen from the correct, direct experiential (as opposed to inferential) apprehension of these two. Hadit is “everywhere the centre” and Nuit “the circumference, is nowhere found.” We are each the center of our own universe. (cf. the Khabs and the Khu of *AL I:8*) Ra-Hoor-Khuit is the projection of personality that the interrelation of Nuit and Hadit gives rise to. The ability to move forward, create and develop is the “reward of Ra-Hoor-Khuit.” *AL III:1* This process is *not* a unification of the one into the all but rather a dynamic play of expansion and contraction which results in the agency of the individual. “There is division hither homeward; there is a word not known.” *AL III:2* To functionally exist within the world means that the complete dissolution referred to in chapter one is not a place of permanent abiding—but may, rather, be more an attainment of an accessible realization or meditative nexus point.

In chapter two, Hadit states “I am alone and there is no god where I am.” *AL II:23* At the center is only Hadit, the dimensionless point. “Unextended,” he is therefore empty of inherent existence as it would be defined by traditional phenomenology. Hadit describes himself as “alone” without reference to “god” or an essential element of self or spirit. If one were to say Hadit exists at all, it is not in a way that can be characterized as existing “as such” within the dimension that we are able to comprehend. Since Hadit is not perceivable and nothing else resides with him to be perceived, it follows that the quest for meaning at the core of self cannot result in realization. Hadit is the projective point from which we originate and not the end goal of our quest. Those who seek him, utilizing his image as focus, will discover nothing for he is, in actuality, “the worshipper.” *AL II:8* Hadit is the originating point, the impetus to begin the spiritual quest and the strength to carry on against the dark night. It is he that goes. *AL II:7* The flaw of modernist subjectivity is that it mistakes the doer for the object of interrogation. Modern humanism is blind to the irony of the seeker seeking oneself. Or in the words of the enlightened master Osho, “The worshipper is the worshipped.” (Rajneesh 1988, p. 23)

“You don’t have to worship anyone else. Your innermost being is the highest and the most precious, the most existential and conscious point. There is nothing higher than it. You need no worship, you can only meditate.” (Rajneesh 1988, p. 23)

It is not, necessarily, that the self does not exist. It is rather that one is incapable of perceiving the nature of the soul and it is thus an inappropriate focus of spiritual concern. The self cannot be known by the false ego or intellect. The intellect can only recognize the nature of the self, but this is still a veil. “The khabs is in the khu, not the



khu in the khabs.” AL I:8 Khu is the innermost veil that obscures the right perception of the khabs, inner light or flame. Of this Crowley writes, “It is the ‘veils’ that obstruct the relation between Nuit and Hadit.” He further admonishes us “not to worship the khu, to fall in love with our magical image. To do this—and we have all done it—is to forget our truth.”(Crowley 1986, p. 83) The self, khabs, is not the correct object of the path, since the seeker can never perceive it with any clarity. The khabs always remains obscured by the khu. The core, self, can only be correctly perceived in the “highest trances.”(Crowley 1986, p. 156)

The relation of Hadit and Nuit is also figured in terms of the dualism of the knower and the known—the one who has the ability to realize and the object of that realization. Hadit, symbolic of the seeker on the path, is in the position of reaching toward Nuit, the “limit” to be strived for. In verse II:4 Hadit, speaking of Nuit, says “Yet she shall be known & I never.” Hadit is the active principle, the “goer.” Crowley writes of this relation, “Hadit possesses the power to know, Nuit that of being known.”(Crowley 1986, p. 158) Exteriority (Nuit, the universe) and interiority (Hadit, the soul) is thus a mutually reciprocating relation where “the soul interprets the universe; and the universe veils the soul.”(Crowley 1986, p. 155)

Crowley uses the philosophy of *Liber AL* to postulate that singular perfect emanations, “stars,” self-limit in order to achieve Wisdom through lived experience. He uses the example of a carbon atom which goes through diverse connections, combining with oxygen to make CO<sub>2</sub> and then being subdivided back into pure carbon. In this analogy, the atomic element goes through processes but does not change in its ultimate constitution. The soul works in a similar fashion, undergoing change but carrying forward that change not in its ultimate constitutional make-up but in the form of memory and historicity. Crowley elaborates that Nuit is the “object of knowledge” while Hadit is “merely that part of Her which She formulates in order that she may be known.”(Crowley 1986) The perfect creates the myth of duality in order to gain Wisdom. “For I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union.” AL I:29

To borrow from the post-structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault, *Liber AL* proposes the development of what he termed an *askesis*, a productive ascetic discipline of creative expansion—ultimately resulting in a dissolution in the body of Nuit. “the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all.” AL I:30 Foucault describes *askesis* as “something else: it’s the work that one performs on oneself in order to transform oneself or make the *self* appear that happily one never attains.”(Foucault 1989, p. 206) This expansive notion of spirituality, the seeking to expand the very conception of self, as opposed to rooting out its ‘source’ echoes Crowley’s theories. “The development of the Adept is by expansion—out of Nuit—in all directions equally.”(Crowley 1986, p. 89)



Hadit is a force which strives to be something greater, ever reaching toward a goal which appropriately remains just out of reach. Again the focus is external and not internal. The notion of the self is relational and not essential. “It is therefore wrong to worship Hadit; one is to be Hadit, and worship [Nuit].”(Crowley 1986, p. 166) The path is to seek toward the Orisha, to be enveloped in something greater than one’s self. “Consciousness loses its sense of separateness by dissolution in [Nuit]”(Crowley 1986, p. 155)

It is up to us to create who we are—not to discover it. In an interview, Foucault stated it succinctly, “The relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation.”(Foucault, et al. 1984) He further proposed that “to be modern is not to accept oneself as one is in the flux of the passing moments” but, rather, as the result “of a complex and difficult elaboration.”(Miller 1993, p. 333) In his construction of a positive, productive spiritual quest rooted in exteriority, Foucault gives agency back to the individual. “Where religions once demanded the sacrifice of human bodies, knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves.”(Miller 1993, p. 346) Spirituality is now a choice, and not a de facto confluence of heredity, culture and (familial) heritage.

Crowley believed, “One should plunge passionately into every possible experience.” (Crowley 1986, p. 166) His 12<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> theorems in *Magick In Theory and Practice* state that limits are self-imposed and merely represent the ability of the practitioner to measure and cognize the distance between self and a perceived boundary. For both Crowley and Foucault, the goal does not stop at the reaching of the boundary but actually moving past it through heightened experiences. Foucault terms these instances “limit experiences” a moment which pushes us beyond what we thought ourselves capable of perceiving, thus changing even the most basic conception of who we are. Experience keeps us fresh. The direct access that we have to the glories of the Orisha and Devas gives us an ongoing evolutionary play of expanding realities. We learn and grow through this contact and not, conversely, through internalized self-analysis. We meditate and rest in the quietude of emptiness; we experience the Divine and become more than what we thought we were.

“Nobody in the whole history of consciousness has been able to say why he is. All that one can do is shrug your shoulders: I am, there is no question of why.” (Rajneesh 1988, p. 25) “If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does naught.” AL II:30 Shrug your shoulders and go on.

We do not pray. Our worship is contact with something greater than our selves and, through this contact, we are expanded. We can only ever begin to know ourselves by contact with the Divine—the Orishas, Devas and Divine Emanations.



The gods once again walk the earth as men—or the men once again walk the earth as gods. It is up to us to write our own mythology. Brion's clarion call echoes through Space: *We are Here To Go!*

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