

On Duty

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A note on the chief rules of practical conduct to be observed by those who accept the Law of Thelema.

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." AL I:40

"There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt." AL III:60

"[...] thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect." AL I:42-44

"Love is the law, love under will." AL I:57

"Every man and every woman is a star." AL I:3

A. YOUR DUTY TO YOURSELF

1. Find yourself to be the centre of your own Universe.

"I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star." AL II:6

2. Explore the Nature and Powers of your own Being.

This includes everything which is, or can be, for you: and you must accept everything exactly as it is in itself, as one of the factors which go to make up your True Self. This True Self thus ultimately includes all things soever; its discovery is Initiation (the travelling inwards) and as its Nature is to move continually, it must be understood not as static, but as dynamic, not as a Noun but as a Verb.

3. Develop in due harmony and proportion every faculty which you possess.

"Wisdom says: be strong!" AL II:70

"But exceed! exceed!" AL II:71

"Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this." AL II:22

4. Contemplate your own Nature.

Consider every element thereof both separately and in relation to all the rest as to judge accurately the true purpose of the totality of your Being.

5. Find the formula of this purpose, or "True Will", in an expression as simple as possible.

Learn to understand clearly how best to manipulate the energies which you control to obtain the results most favourable to it from its relations with the part of the Universe which you do not yet control.

6. Extend the dominion of your consciousness, and its control of all forces alien to it, to the utmost.

Do this by the ever stronger and more skilful application of your faculties to the finer, clearer, fuller, and more accurate perception, the better understanding, and the more wisely ordered government, of that external Universe.

7. Never permit the thought or will of any other Being to interfere with your own.

Be constantly vigilant to resent, and on the alert to resist, with unvanquishable ardour and vehemence of passion unquenchable, every attempt of any other Being to influence you otherwise than by contributing new facts to your experience of the Universe, or by assisting you to reach a higher synthesis of Truth by the mode of passionate fusion.

8. Do not repress or restrict any true instinct of your Nature; but devote all in perfection to the sole service of your one True Will.

"Be goodly therefore..." AL I:51

"The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse. Accursed! Accursed be it to the aeons! Hell." AL I:41

"So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect." AL I:42-44

"Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy." AL I:61 <> "Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains." AL II:9

"But ye, o my people, rise up & awake! Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy & beauty! [...] A feast for fire and a feast for water; a feast for life and a greater feast for death! A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my rapture! A feast every night unto Nu, and the pleasure

of uttermost delight! Aye! feast! rejoice! there is no dread hereafter. There is the dissolution, and eternal ecstasy in the kisses of Nu." AL II:34-36...41-44

"Now rejoice! now come in our splendour & rapture! Come in our passionate peace, & write sweet words for the Kings!" AL II:64

"Thrill with the joy of life & death! Ah! thy death shall be lovely: whoso seeth it shall be glad. Thy death shall be the seal of the promise of our agelong love. Come! lift up thine heart & rejoice!" AL II:66

"Is a God to live in a dog? No! but the highest are of us. They shall rejoice, our chosen: who sorroweth is not of us. Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us." AL II:19-20

B. YOUR DUTY TO OTHER INDIVIDUAL MEN AND WOMEN

1. Unite yourself passionately with every other form of consciousness,

Thus destroying the sense of separateness from the Whole, and creating a new baseline in the Universe from which to measure it.

"Love is the law, love under will." AL I:57

"Come forth, o children, under the stars, & take your fill of love!" AL I:12

2. "As brothers fight ye!" AL III:59

"If he be a King, thou canst not hurt him." AL II:59

To bring out saliently the differences between two points-of-view is useful to both in measuring the position of each in the whole. Combat stimulates the virile or creative energy; and, like love, of which it is one form, excites the mind to an orgasm which enables it to transcend its rational dullness.

3. Abstain from all interferences with other wills.

"Beware lest any force another, King against King" AL II:24

The love and war in the previous injunctions are of the nature of sport, where one respects, and learns from the opponent, but never interferes with him, outside the actual game. To seek to dominate or influence another is to seek to deform or destroy him; and he is a necessary part of one's own Universe, that is, of one's self.

4. Seek, if you so will, to enlighten another when need arises.

This may be done, always with the strict respect for the attitude of the good sportsman, when he is in distress through failure to understand himself clearly, especially when he specifically demands help; for his darkness may hinder one's perception of his perfection. (Yet also his darkness may serve as a warning, or excite one's interest.) It is also lawful when his ignorance has lead him to interfere with one's will. All interference is in any case dangerous, and demands the exercise of extreme skill and good judgement, fortified by experience. To influence another is to leave one's citadel unguarded; and the attempt commonly ends in losing one's own self-supremacy.

5. Worship all!

"Every man and every woman is a star." AL I:3

"Mercy let be off; damn them who pity!" AL III:18

"We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world. Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: if the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake." AL II:21

Each being is, exactly as you are, the sole centre of a Universe in no wise identical with, or even assimilable to, your own. The impersonal Universe of "Nature" is only an abstraction, approximately true, of the factors which it is convenient to regard as common to all. The Universe of another is therefore necessarily unknown to, and unknowable by, you; but it induces currents of energy in yours by determining in part your reactions. Use men and women, therefore, with the absolute respect due to inviolable standards of measurement; verify your own observations by comparison with similar judgements made by them; and, studying the methods which determine their failure or success, acquire for yourself the wit and skill required to cope with your own problems.

Pity, sympathy and like emotions are fundamentally insults to the Godhead of the person exciting them, and therefore also to your own. The distress of another may be relieved; but always with the positive and noble idea of making manifest the perfection of the Universe. Pity is the source of every mean, ignoble, cowardly vice; and the essential blasphemy against Truth.

"To Me do ye reverence! to me come ye through tribulation of ordeal, which is bliss." AL III:62

C. YOUR DUTY TO MANKIND

1. Establish the Law of Thelema as the sole basis of conduct.

The general welfare of the race being necessary in many respects to your own, that well-being, like your own, principally a function of the intelligent and wise observance of the Law of Thelema, it is of the very first importance to you that every individual should accept frankly that Law, and strictly govern himself in full accordance therewith.

You may regard the establishment of the Law of Thelema as an essential element of your True Will, since, whatever the ultimate nature of that Will, the evident condition of putting it into execution is freedom from external interference.

Governments too often exhibit the most deplorable stupidity, however enlightened may be the men who compose and constitute them, or the people whose destinies they direct. It is therefore incumbent on every man and woman to take the proper steps to cause the revisions of all existing statutes on the basis of the Law of Thelema. This Law being a Law of Liberty, the aim of the legislature must be to secure the amplest freedom for each individual in the state, eschewing the presumptuous assumption that any given positive ideal is worthy to be obtained.

"The word of Sin is Restriction." AL I:41

The essence of crime is that it restricts the freedom of the individual outraged. (Thus, murder restricts his right to live; robbery, his right to enjoy the fruits of his labour; coining, his right to the guarantee of the state that he shall barter in security; etc.) It is then the common duty to prevent crime by segregating the criminal, and by the threat of reprisals; also, to teach the criminal that his acts, being analysed, are contrary to his own True Will. (This may often be accomplished by taking from him the right which he has denied to others; as by outlawing the thief, so that he feels constant anxiety for the safety of his own possessions, removed from the ward of the State.) The rule is quite simple. He who violated any right declares magically that it does not exist; therefore it no longer does so, for him.

Crime being a direct spiritual violation of the Law of Thelema, it should not be tolerated in the community. Those who possess the instinct should be segregated in a settlement to build up a state of their own, so to learn the necessity of themselves imposing and maintaining rules of justice. All artificial crimes should be abolished. When fantastic restrictions disappear, the greater freedom of the individual will itself teach him to avoid acts which really restrict natural rights. Thus real crime will diminish automatically.

The administration of the Law should be simplified by training men of uprightness and discretion whose will is to fulfil this function in the community to decide all complaints by the abstract principle of the Law of Thelema, and to award judgement on the basis of the actual restriction caused by the offence.

The ultimate aim is thus to reintegrate Conscience, on true scientific principles, as the warden of conduct, the monitor of the people, and the guarantee of their governors.

D. YOUR DUTY TO ALL OTHER BEINGS AND THINGS

1. Apply the Law of Thelema to all problems of fitness, use, and development.

It is a violation of the Law of Thelema to abuse the natural qualities of any animal or object by diverting it from its proper function, as determined by consideration of its history and structure. Thus, to train children to perform mental operations, or to practice tasks, for which they are unfitted, is a crime against nature. Similarly, to build houses of rotten material, to adulterate food, to destroy forests, etc., etc., is to offend.

The Law of Thelema is to be applied unflinchingly to decide every question of conduct. The inherent fitness of any thing for any proposed use should be the sole criterion.

Apparent, and sometimes even real, conflict between interests will frequently arise. Such cases are to be decided by the general value of the contending parties in the scale of Nature. Thus, a tree has a right to its life; but a man being more than a tree, he may cut it down for fuel or shelter when need arises. Even so, let him remember that the Law never fails to avenge infraction: as when wanton deforestation has ruined a climate or a soil, or as when the importation of rabbits for a cheap supply of food has created a plague.

Observe that the violation of the Law of Thelema produces cumulative ills. The drain of the agricultural population to big cities, due chiefly to persuading them to abandon their natural ideals, has not only made the country less tolerable to the peasant, but debauched the town. And the error tends to increase in geometrical progression, until a remedy has become almost inconceivable and the whole structure of society is threatened with ruin.

The wise application based on observation and experience of the Law of Thelema is to work in conscious harmony with Evolution. Experiments in creation, involving variation from existing types, are lawful and necessary. Their value is to be judged by their fertility as bearing witness to their harmony with the course of nature towards perfection.