

Let There Be No Difference Made

A commentary on Liber AL Chapter I, verse 22.

by

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July 19, 2008 *e.v.*

Sun in 27° Cancer, Anno IVxvi

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First edition 2008

Privately published

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Let There Be No Difference Made

AL I, 22 CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING lines:

Since I am Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof,
do ye also thus. Bind nothing! Let there be no difference
made among you between any one thing & any other thing;
for thereby there cometh hurt.

‘Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made’ is usually interpreted as an instruction towards some form of experiential non-dualism, usually of a distinctly mystical nature, but this type of non-interpretation is unsatisfactory as it really explains nothing. The aspiring Thelemite must learn to avoid — and to be positively suspicious of — flowery mystical claptrap. As we have stated many times in the past, putting Thelema into vague mystical terms serves mainly to distract the aspiring Thelemite into non-action, by phrasing objectives in terms so vague and non-distinct that there is no way to even begin the task. Indeed, in today’s culture of egalitarianism we are not unjustified in describing this as a deliberate ploy; if the stated objectives are so ill-defined that they cannot even be started, let alone completed, then there can be no question of anybody being further ahead than anybody else, there can be no question of anybody failing (since they don’t even begin) and everybody can safely declare themselves to be masters since there is not only no reliable standard against which levels of knowledge can be measured, but in fact no level of knowledge to measure in the first place. Most modern-day ‘occultists’ consider everybody’s opinion to be ‘just as valid’ as anybody else’s, and this is absolutely true when the subject matter in question is reduced to literally nothing at all. Regular readers will be aware that we have no truck with such silliness here.

We can begin by examining the phrase ‘Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing’. This appears, at first glance, to be somewhat curious; a quick glance around one’s immediate environment will likely reveal trees, windows, dogs, tables, canker sores, hornets, bread baskets, horse blankets, microwave ovens, lead piping and all manner of other objects which seem quite self-evidently to be different from one another. Are we really to suppose that we should treat pillows and red-hot poker as being the same?

We can shed some light on this question quite easily, because we don’t have to look too far back to come across another instance where ‘infinity’ and ‘no difference’ are mentioned in the same verse. AL I, 4 contains the following:

Every number is infinite; there is no difference.

A brief consideration of this will reveal that there are two distinct ways of interpreting ‘no difference’. The first is to assume that ‘no difference’ means *equality*; we might say that there is ‘no difference’ between 9 and 3×3 , for instance. In this sense, the word ‘difference’ figures prominently in elementary arithmetic where it is used to describe subtraction; The ‘difference’ between 7 and 5, for instance, is 2.

In this sense, ‘difference’ implies making a *comparison*, and when that comparison does not result in equality, then there is a difference. In order to do this, the two things being compared must be similar in some way. By remarking that ‘Every number is infinite’, AL I, 4 reveals the second way of interpreting ‘no difference’, which occurs when the two (or more) things in question are *incommensurable*. That is to say, they have no common basis, no common standard of measure, and no standard of comparison, so that they simply cannot be compared, and if they cannot be compared, then no distinction can be drawn and no ‘difference’ can be calculated. The infinite set of positive even integers cannot be said to be ‘greater than’ or ‘less than’ the infinite set of positive odd integers, but it is nonsensical to suggest that they are ‘equal’, either; they just cannot be compared. There are many different types of infinities, all infinite in extent, but not equal to each other.

We can ask ‘what is the difference between 7 and 5?’ but we cannot sensibly ask ‘what is the difference between 7 and melancholy?’ The latter two terms simply do not admit of a comparison. By stating that ‘Every number is infinite’ AL I, 4 asserts that each number — regardless of the fact that numbers may be placed on a scale — is

unique *in and of itself*, and that in this sense comparisons cannot be drawn between them. Another way of understanding this is to reflect that although we can say that 7 is greater than 5, we cannot sensibly say that 7 is ‘better’ than 5, any more than we can say that 7 is ‘greener’ or ‘happier’ than 5.

To understand what is meant by ‘let there be no difference made’ we have to understand why we can draw comparisons between 7 and 5 in one case, but not in the others. The answer is, simply, that the ‘number line’ which we use to order numbers is an artificial and arbitrary construction. There is no *a priori* reason, for instance, why we couldn’t construct the number line with the negative numbers at the right and the positive numbers at the left, in which case 7 would be *less than* 5, not greater. When we construct the number line in the way that we do, we are really just creating a standard of comparison and systematically placing various objects according to that standard, but the standard itself doesn’t exist anywhere ‘out there’. In the same way, although we cannot say that, for instance, ‘space shuttles are better than apples’, we can certainly say that ‘space shuttles are bigger than apples’.

Thus, whenever we ‘let a difference be made’, we are creating an artificial standard of comparison and ranking various objects according to that standard. Sometimes that standard may be more-or-less objective (‘iron is heavier than air’) and sometimes it may not be (‘rock music is better than hip-hop’), but in all cases the ‘difference’ is created by the comparer, by the observer, according to the standard of comparison he is using. The actual objects — in and of themselves — cannot be said to be ‘different’ from each other because without a standard of comparison there is no basis on which to make such a distinction. In exactly the same way, the absence of such a standard means that they cannot be ‘equal’ or ‘the same’, either. Each individual object simply is what it is, and does not in itself admit of comparison.

The injunction to ‘Bind nothing!’ is not, therefore, a licence to indulge in some mystical reverie about ‘all phenomena being merely just reflections of the one’, but to treat each individual ‘thing’ as what it is, in and of itself, without allowing the mind to colour the perception of those things by overlaying its own standards of comparison on top of that perception. We see a similar idea in the tenth clause of the ‘Oath of the Abyss’ where the new Master of the Temple pledges to ‘interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with my soul.’ The most common understanding of this clause — common amongst those who are laughably ill-placed to comment on the matter, that is — is

that this clause requires the Master to carefully consider the import of each and every phenomenon and to discover in all cases what this communication from ‘God’ means for him. In reality, the actual meaning behind this clause is to simply avoid interpreting any phenomenon *in any other way*; that is to say, each phenomenon is accepted for what it is, in and of itself, as ‘a particular dealing of God with [the Master’s] soul’ without any other considerations of significance, relevance or importance being taken into account. Each phenomenon is observed, accepted, and then allowed to go its own way, since the Master may assume — figuratively, of course — that God knows perfectly well what he’s doing without the Master’s assistance in the matter of figuring things out.

One implication of this is that it turns the normal unthinking interpretations of AL I, 3 completely on their heads. Rather than ‘Every man and every woman is a star’ being a message of human equality, it is in fact the polar opposite of that; it is a statement that each individual is so unique that comparisons simply cannot sensibly be drawn, and if comparisons cannot be drawn, then equality cannot be inferred either. In fact, placing importance on ideas of ‘equality’ or ‘equal opportunity’ has to be done in direct contravention of AL I, 3-4 and AL I, 22, since one can only be concerned with ‘equality’ if one ‘makes a difference’ in the first place, which AL I, 22 tells us not to do and AL I, 4 tells us is actually impossible anyway. To complain that inequality is an ‘injustice’ is in no uncertain terms to deny outright one of the core principles of Thelema which appears in the third verse of two hundred and twenty. If ‘Every man and every woman is a star’, and if ‘Every number is infinite; there is no difference’ then it is simply meaningless to claim that anybody is ‘unequal’ — in which case concerns for ‘equality’ are nonsensical — and it is in complete contradiction to the Law of Thelema to attempt to make them ‘equal’. To be concerned for ‘equality’ is to insist that everybody conform to a common standard, which is about as far away from a Thelemic outlook as it is possible to get.

This is likely to be a controversial idea. In today’s social climate, even an intimation that ‘equality’ is not an obvious and absolute moral good is seen to be self-evidently a thoughtcrime. For the most part, this controversy will arise from a simple appalled emotional reaction to the very idea, but this reaction is — as all such reactions are — misplaced. The vast majority of unthinking Thelemites will make a leap of non-logic, and assume that a statement that Thelema is inconsistent with a promotion of equality must be equivalent to a statement that Thelema promotes inequality, but as we have already seen Thelemic

doctrine renders the whole idea of ‘equality’ or ‘inequality’ between people or any other objects meaningless. The statement that ‘Every man and every woman is a star’ asserts that each individual is unique, with their own qualities, characteristics and abilities, and that while we can say that one person is better than another person *at* something, it is simply gibberish to say that one person is just ‘better’ than another, any more than we can say that tables are better than Jupiter. In exactly the same way, Thelema asserts that it is literally meaningless to assert that ‘all men are equal’, just as it would be meaningless to assert that ‘lawnmowers are equal to wallpaper.’

Of course, even through phrases like ‘all men are created equal’ are bandied around with great enthusiasm by egalitarians, they don’t actually figure into egalitarian politics at all (another reason to suspect such phrases to be meaningless), which is concerned with equal *access* to various things, such as education, employment, political office, and the like. The meaningless idea that ‘all people are equal’ turns out to be completely unconnected to the idea that ‘all people should have equal access to’ whatever is under discussion. Indeed, a supposition that all people are *not* equal could just as easily provide the motivation for egalitarian politics, as an attempt to *make* them equal. This demonstrates that the idea that people are ‘equal’ is no justification at all for egalitarian politics, since a policy of providing equal access to whatever is under discussion could quite clearly be consistent with either a supposition that all people are equal or a supposition that they are not, showing that wherever the motivation for providing equal access comes from, it isn’t from any ideas about the so-called inherent ‘equality’ of humankind. Thus, in addition to the fact that AL I, 3 does not assert an idea of human ‘equality’, it is also clear that it wouldn’t support a policy of egalitarianism even if it did assert that, and it certainly doesn’t support such a policy without asserting that.

As we have already stated, *The Book of the Law* makes no comment of any kind on ‘politics’ as that word is commonly understood. As was demonstrated in *The Ethics of Thelema*, Thelema is an individual philosophy which exhorts its followers to attend solely to their own wills, and to leave others to attend to their own. Any form of social ‘interaction’ whatsoever which is necessary for the fulfillment of one’s will is justified under this philosophy, and any other form of social ‘interaction’ — any other action whatsoever, in fact — is prohibited. Any idea that another individual or group of individuals ‘must’ be given a certain level of access to a certain thing, or even any idea that they ‘should’ be given such access, is not only completely incompatible with this philosophy, and in breach of the Law of Thelema,

but also demonstrates that the individual making that judgment is not attending solely to his own will. Of course, any idea that such access ‘must not’ or ‘should not’ be given demonstrates exactly the same thing. It was Aleister Crowley’s belief that if everybody *did* attend solely to their own wills, and paid no heed whatsoever to anyone else’s will, then at least the vast majority of what are currently termed ‘injustices’ would disappear all by themselves, but whether this belief is justified or not, it should be understood that it is a *side-effect* of the Law of Thelema, and not a *motivation* for it, and that any attempts to ‘remedy’ such ‘injustices’ in order to artificially accelerate this process would be in contravention of the Law. As Crowley said in his commentary to AL I, 31:

All this talk about ‘suffering humanity’ is principally driven based on the error of transferring one’s own psychology to one’s neighbour. The Golden Rule is silly... This thesis concerning compassion is of the most palmary importance in the ethics of Thelema. It is necessary that we stop, once and for all, this ignorant meddling with other people’s business. Each individual must be left free to follow his own path.

However, such ruminations on mundane politics are ultimately of little value, other than to highlight to others the errors in their thinking. If *The Book of the Law* ‘doesn’t “do” politics’, but presents this idea nonetheless, there must be some better reason for doing so, and indeed there is; the scope of ‘letting differences be made’ is far wider than simple politics and human interaction.

As we stated initially, the act of making comparisons between things is what is responsible for ‘letting a difference be made’, and the process through which this occurs is the overlaying of additional information upon what is received by the senses. As an elementary example, a smallish circular red light will, in a particular context, be perceived as a stop light. Perception is more complex than simply sensory processing, and it involves interpretation in the light of context. It is not therefore true to say that a smallish circular red light will be perceived, and then interpreted as a stop light — a ‘stop light’ itself will be perceived. Information is overlaid on top of sensory stimuli at a subconscious level which actually changes what is perceived to the extent that we literally do perceive things that are not there in the environment. There is nothing inherent to a red light itself that distinguishes it as a stop light as opposed to any other red light of similar construction, but it will be specifically perceived as a stop light as op-

posed to any other type of light. When we ‘perceive a stop light’, for instance, part of what we are perceiving is sensory, and part of what we are perceiving is imaginary.

It is not difficult to imagine an evolutionary justification for such a process. If, for instance, one had to continually follow a train of thought along the lines of ‘well, it’s kinda large... covered in longish hairs... pretty sharp looking pointy things at the front and a slim-mish dangly thing at the back... moving towards us in a kind of prowling motion... making an odd kind of loud, growling sound... moving faster now OHSHITITSAFUCKINGLION!!’ then it’s likely we wouldn’t have reached the evolutionary stage that we have.

The ability to infer complete pieces of information from incomplete sensory stimuli is valuable to survival. The downside, of course, is that there will be — perhaps frequent — ‘false hits’. A rustle in the bushes will only be a lion one time in many, but the individual who runs away each time will always run away from the lion when it is there. The individual who waits to see whether a lion really is there is in grave danger of being eaten by it.

It is critical to understand that evolution is powered by genes that *survive*, not by individuals that are *happy*. The individual who experiences a fearful response at every sudden sound will probably be a thoroughly nervous, twitchy and unhappy individual, but such responses may help him survive, and if they do they will be passed on to his descendants. It is a common mistake by those who lack understanding that evolution is somehow, by virtue of its way of ‘fitting organisms to their environments’, directing life in general and humanity in particular to some kind of ‘advanced state’ of spiritual bliss and cooperation, and that the purpose of spiritual practice is merely to advance that evolutionary process. This is nonsense. If abject misery, short life spans, constant fear and extreme aggression are conducive to the *survival* of particular genes, then those genes are likely to be selected for continuation. Evolution produces organisms that are optimally fitted to *survive* in their environment, not organisms who are optimally fitted to be *happy* in their environment.

The ‘false hits’ of perceptive inference are examples of evolutionary traits which, while conducive to survival, are not always conducive to ‘happiness’, or ‘satisfaction’, or ‘fulfillment’. The fear response is a prime example. A modern well-adjusted individual may well prefer a life relatively free of fear but with a slightly higher chance of succumbing to harm to a life filled with fear but with a slightly better chance of being longer. Naturally, from an evolutionary perspective we may ask where this desire for a fear-free life has arisen from. The

most likely explanation is that the thinking mind evolved as a tool for survival, since an individual who can solve problems and adapt the environment to his own needs is more likely to survive than an individual who cannot. However, by so adapting that environment (to the point where we are today where we no longer have to worry a great deal about being eaten by lions) he finds himself in an environment that his mind is *not* wholly suited for. In particular, an excess of leisure time and freedom from many of the requirements of survival has allowed the conscious mind to apply itself to tasks which did not figure in its original evolutionary development — in a sense, to tasks it was not ‘designed for’. A mind which has evolved to be constantly alert might, with an excess of leisure time, find its alertness inventing problems to solve which are not there. Once it has evolved, if it cannot just shut itself off when there is no survival task for it to deal with then it has to find other ways to occupy its time, and the search for ‘meaning’ and ‘fulfillment’ may well be one of those ways, regardless of the fact that such a search may be evolutionarily useless. The programmed responses in the mind which originally arose to aid survival may be seen in this new context to be downright undesirable and against the new interests of the organism.

A central problem with ‘spiritual development’, therefore, is that the individual perceives things that are not there as part of his normally functioning (from an evolutionary perspective) faculty of perception in a manner that appears to hinder that development. This could be a valid survival response in an environment where that risk to survival is no longer present in significant quantities, or it could simply be a case of a *process* with a valid evolutionary purpose simply applying itself by extension to other areas which do *not* aid survival. The ‘valid’ process which triggers a fear response following a rustle in the bushes may well be the exact same ‘invalid’ process which triggers paranoid delusions at all manner of innocuous stimuli if it has extended itself from its original remit or has been presented with stimuli for which it did not evolve to respond to.

This is, incidentally, a very satisfying explanation for the Christian concept of ‘original sin’. An organism which has evolved conditioned responses and tendencies which enable it to survive may be thoroughly and fundamentally unsuited to conform to particular types of moral code which are not survival oriented. If one begins with the assumption that these types of moral code are ‘good’, then it is not unreasonable to suggest that those conditioned responses and tendencies that induce the individual away from following that type of code are ‘bad’, or ‘sinful’, and to conclude that mankind is just inherently unable to do

what is 'good'. The error in the concept of 'original sin', of course, is the supposition that those types of moral code are 'good' at all, and the removal of this assumption invalidates the whole idea.

That being said, if we instead postulate the existence of a spiritual 'path' that we just wish to follow — as opposed to it being 'good' in some way — then we are still left with a concept not very dissimilar from that of 'original sin', being that we are compelled to attempt to follow that 'path' in a vehicle that, frankly, was not designed to do so. If we *do* want to follow such a path, then the way to do so is clear; we must modify or at least work against the inclination of our own beings in order to successfully do it, and this is at the root of all ideas of 'spiritual development'.

The Thelemic concept of 'development' is relatively clear cut. There are no 'principles' or 'moral codes' that should be followed in preference to the individual's own inclinations. Each individual is to follow his own will, which is the path that would be followed automatically in the absence of restriction. The exact nature of this will arises as a result of the juxtaposition of his own being with his environment, and so depends entirely on both *where* he is and *what* he is, the latter indeed ultimately being a product of evolution. However, the philosophy of Thelema postulates that the 'self' — being the individual who has the will — is *not* the same thing as either his body or his mind, but that he is forced to manifest his will *through* that body and mind. Therefore, the Thelemite attempting to follow his will desires to perform no action that *he* is evolutionary 'unsuited' to, but he does find himself saddled with a body and mind that does not share the objectives of the self, and that frequently interferes with his ability to perform his will. The task facing the Thelemite, therefore, is essentially one of preventing his body and most especially his mind from interfering with the performance of his will.

In this manner we can see how an evolutionarily developed response can frustrate the performance of will, and we can square the circle of reconciling the idea that each individual should 'do what is natural to him' with the idea that he needs to exert control over his body and his mind which have also 'arisen naturally', without having to invoke any kind of moral, supernatural or 'transcendental' factors in order to do it. In short, the individual wants to do what is natural to him, and the mind wants to do what is natural to it, and these two things are often not the same. Unlike the Christian doctrine of original sin which requires an external 'saviour', Thelema postulates that once the individual has won control over his own mind (or at least has succeeded it preventing it from controlling him) then the performance of his will

follows naturally without requiring the intervention of a third party. Under the Christian doctrine it is the very nature of the self which is 'sinful' and therefore worthless because preference is given to an arbitrary moral code, but under the Thelemic doctrine there is no such implication because the self is the source of will, and the self merely has to assert its authority over those things that would frustrate it in order to achieve success.

One of the most significant of these 'frustrating things' is, as we have described, the tendency of the mind to perceive things that are not there. The ways in which it does this are legion. We have already described the fear response, but the most obvious one is a belief in morality, a belief that certain things are 'better' than others and therefore 'should' be done in preference to them. Research into subjects such as the 'Prisoners' Dilemma' has shown how cooperation can be beneficial to all parties to a transaction, and when something is beneficial to survival it doesn't take much imagination to see how organisms with a predisposition to cooperate could have evolved. This research has shown how 'breaking the confidence', although beneficial to the individual miscreant in the short term, can lead to retaliation and lack of trust amongst others with whom the individual interacts, to the detriment of the community and the chances of survival for the gene pool. Organisms who are genetically predisposed to cooperate are more likely to successfully reproduce and continue their genes even if this genetic predisposition renders each individual worse off than if they did not possess such a predisposition, because — although there is debate about the relative significance of various selection units — *genes* rather than *individuals* are the unit upon which natural selection operates in this example.

Thus we can imagine how organisms would arise who are predisposed to favour cooperation and to shun selfishness, and we can understand how this can be favourable to the survival of the genes even if it seems counterproductive to the well-being of the individuals themselves. It simply doesn't matter how well off an individual makes himself; if his behaviour is not conducive to the survival and transmission of his genes then his characteristics will not pass themselves on in any quantity.

This 'predisposition to morality' can, once evolved, then extend itself to other areas which are *not* evolutionarily optimal, and in a society where individuals are shielded somewhat from the pressures of natural selection this extension can result in forms which are positively counterproductive to individuals *and* genes. In AL II, 21 it is said that 'Compassion is the vice of kings'. People who are struggling for

their own survival and the survival of their close communities simply do not have the luxury of extending their moral predispositions to, for example, other tribes, and certainly not to humanity as a whole. When it comes to a choice between your family unit starving, and another family unit starving, ‘universal fairness’ and ‘social justice’ and going to be the first concepts left by the wayside. Kings, on the other hand, are shielded from such pressures, and they can afford the luxury of turning their thoughts to such concepts whilst their subjects can merely appeal for handouts. Thus a predisposition to morality can, when taken out of a context in which survival is paramount, extend itself to wider circles where there is no ‘evolutionary remit’ for it and become a perversion. A tendency which once helped to ensure survival of oneself and one’s close relatives now, unchecked, inclines one to think such gibberish as ‘blasphemy is morally wrong’. Even those tendencies which do have a survival purpose themselves become inappropriate once those survival pressures have been removed. As a result, where a failure to cooperate resulting in short term individual benefit could once have resulted in the extinction of the immediate gene pool, a ‘moral’ and ‘civilised’ society which seeks to keep everybody alive at all costs results in that short term individual benefit arising from a failure to cooperate having almost no negative consequences at all, transforming it in many cases into the most optimal course of action available.

Social policy aside, it should be clear how such preprogrammed tendencies result in the mind overlaying information from its own imagination on top of phenomena that are real. In the well-adjusted individual, the very best that can be said for a sense of morality is that it is completely unnecessary. One may rationalise that a belief that ‘murder is wrong’, for instance, will help protect everyone from being murdered, but even if this were so, the knowledge that prohibiting murder would achieve this end should be obvious rendering the labeling of the act as ‘wrong’ completely superfluous. Similarly, we could argue that the fear generated from the ‘flight response’ is now unnecessary. If we know that a rustle in the bushes could be a lion, then we could simply *choose* to run away from rustling bushes, and achieve precisely the same benefits as the preprogrammed response gives us, but without the fear, and if we *don’t* care about possibly being eaten by lions then we can just choose not to run.

Crowley’s idea was that by eliminating such tendencies to overlay information upon phenomena, the phenomena themselves could be perceived for what they actually are, and then this accurate information could be processed by the brain and an optimal response

generated. He said in his *Confessions* that:

I was able to observe what went on as few people can, for the average man's senses are deceived by his emotions. He gets things out of proportion and he exaggerates them even when he is able to appreciate them at all. I made up my mind that it should be an essential part of my system of initiation to force my pupils to be familiar with just those things which excite or upset them, until they have acquired the power of perceiving them accurately without interference from the emotions.

The tendencies which we have been describing (although Crowley did not and never would have couched them in the terms that we do) prevent individuals from 'perceiving [things] accurately without interference from the emotions'. 'Emotions', used here, is a reasonable substitute for the tendencies we have been describing, since with the exception of physical reactions, it is through the 'emotions' that these evolutionary pressures make themselves felt. As Crowley says, the average man's mind is 'deceived by his emotions' because it adds layers of meaning onto stimuli that are not in reality there, and this prevents him from perceiving accurately.

This observation brings us back full circle to the beginning of this essay. To 'perceive [things] accurately without interference from the emotions' is to perceive things as they actually are, in and of themselves, and failure to do this arises from 'letting a difference be made', from insisting on interpreting phenomena according to a standard of comparison ('good' or 'bad' in the case of morality, 'danger' or 'not danger' in the case of the rustling bushes). By perceiving things as they are, in and of themselves, and by refraining from colouring those perceptions with evaluative judgments made on the basis of a standard of comparison, we can perceive accurately and make optimal decisions based on objective information. Failure to 'let there be no difference made' results in sub optimal decisions being made on the basis of faulty information, and 'thereby there cometh hurt'. When we 'let a difference be made' we are, as we said at the beginning, only partly perceiving reality; the rest of the perception arises in the imagination. Some of what we perceive originates with the thing itself, but the rest of that perception arises from the comparisons we make — from the 'differences' we calculate — between it and other things we are perceiving or have perceived in the past.

Naturally, it is completely impossible to achieve anything remotely approaching complete success in this matter. On a very basic and

fundamental level, we might say that we ‘objectively’ perceive a table, free from any imaginary perceptive influence, but this just isn’t true. What we see is not a table at all, but a collection of billions of sub-atomic particles and a vast amount of space. In this sense, it is physically impossible for us to perceive what is ‘actually there’, and instead perceive a representation of what is there, not only indirectly through the perceptive faculty, but indirectly in the sense that we never ‘see’ the object at all, only the light reflected from it.

Furthermore, it’s a good thing that we do perceive in this way. The brain does not have infinite processing power, and if we did perceive things on such a fundamental level the information overload would be such that we would never have good information for making decisions. ‘Information’ is, after all, only a representation of data, and not data itself.

However, it must be stressed time and time again that the inability to complete a task to perfection is no reason whatsoever for not attempting it all. Even if we can’t — and wouldn’t want to — ‘correct’ perception to the point of ‘seeing’ sub-atomic particles, we can still *improve* our ability to ‘perceive accurately’ by correcting some of the grosser errors, and this is really what the process of ‘love under will’ is concerned with. Leaving aside the question of information overload for a moment, even if perceiving on a sub-atomic level is impossible, perceiving a lion as a lion is still more accurate than perceiving a lion as a ‘WAAAAAAAAABADBADBADCREATURERUNRUNRUN!!!!’ especially if said lion is inside a cage. ‘Discovering the will’ should not be viewed as a ‘succeed or fail’ endeavour, but as a progressive process of getting closer and closer to it, aiming not for a degree of perfection but a stage where the remaining distance to be traveled is so relatively small and insignificant that it makes no practical difference to our day-to-day wellbeing.

As we have said, common garden morality is the most obvious useless impediment to accurate perception but there are plenty of others. What are termed ‘value judgments’ in general often fall into this category. The thought that ‘I don’t like sprouts’ is generally not problematic, but the idea that ‘I should eat lots of vegetables because it’s healthy’ often is. We don’t have to postulate a medical conspiracy and suppose that eating lots of vegetables really isn’t conducive to health after all, but a lot of things are taken for granted in such a statement. In the first place, the question *how much* more healthy remains unexamined by such a statement. If it’s only 0.001% more healthy, then many people will probably happily take the cake and to hell with the vegetables. More subtly, the question of whether one would even

want to live more healthily remains unexamined by such a statement, at least for the cost implied. While this might sound like an obvious statement — ‘of *course* people want to be healthy!’ — anybody thinking that it is has just demonstrated our point nicely. Nobody wants to be run over by a bus, either, but whilst you can reduce the risk of being run over by a bus to something very close to zero by never, ever leaving the house, not many people actually do this, not even the very wealthy who can easily afford to do so. The reason people don’t, of course, is that risk cannot be eliminated, and is a price to be paid for all the other things we want to do. Just eating more vegetables may seem like a small cost for a potential increase in lifespan, but if you are the kind of person who just can’t be bothered to put much thought into what you eat then the idea of carefully tracking one’s nutritional intake every week might seem little better than torture. But importantly, even if one does decide to forego the vegetables, the remaining idea that ‘eating healthily is good’ can lead to feelings of guilt and fear. If one decides one is not going to eat more healthily, then one might as well say to hell with guilt and fear, and if one dies a few years before one otherwise would, then so be it; one is going to die anyway. And, of course, if one exerts a lot of effort eating healthily when one wouldn’t have bothered if one had taken the time to think about it, then a lot of wasted time and heartache could have been avoided.

Of course, little significance should be read into this specific example, but it should illustrate how much lies under the surface of unexamined value judgments, how much they distort the underlying reality, and ultimately how completely useless they are. If one wants to eat healthily, then eat healthily; if one doesn’t, then don’t. At best, a value judgment like this can only reinforce a decision that would have been taken anyway, and it is more likely to divert decisions away from what otherwise would have been taken. Far better would be to just understand the claimed benefits of eating vegetables, as well as the limitations of the investigative processes that gave rise to such claims, and take an informed decision, leaving the value judgments at home. This is taking a step closer to ‘perceiving accurately’, and a practical example of not ‘letting a difference be made’ between eating lots of vegetables and not eating lots of vegetables.

We can also now see where the ‘hurt’ that ‘thereby cometh’ from ‘letting a difference be made’ originates. If we accept that decisions should be made on the basis of information, with at least a pretense of objectivity, then it is clear that basing decisions partly on value judgments can never make those decisions better, and will far more frequently make them worse. An even more pernicious type of ‘hurt’

arises from those value judgments which have no earthly connections to any decisions at all. The type of person who feels great sorrow at the suffering of starving Africans, or at the shocking ‘injustice’ of tribeschildren in the Brazilian rainforests not having access to a formal American-style education but has no intention at all of doing anything about either is simply being foolish. The person who manages to convince himself that he *should* be trying to do something about it but really doesn’t want to is being even more foolish. Both religions and society in general are extremely successful at filling people’s heads with all sorts of notions of what ‘should’ be done which go largely unquestioned by the people themselves. These can be traditional moral judgments (‘one should be concerned about starving children in Africa’) or of a broader type of value judgment (‘one should work hard and find fulfillment in employment’, ‘one should strive to be as healthy as possible’, ‘one should not let children watch violent movies because it’s harmful to them’ or ‘one should be concerned about environmental issues’). All these notions, accepted willingly and uncritically, induce the individual to let all kinds of differences be made between things on the basis of some arbitrary standard, and prevent him from perceiving them accurately and making his own choices on the basis of his own will.

If there is one thing even more pernicious than value judgments imposed by religions and by society, it is value judgments internalised by the individual that he believes to be his own. ‘I don’t think adultery is wrong because I’ve been brainwashed into thinking it by society,’ such an individual might argue, ‘I’ve thought about it and the judgment is my own.’ *No.* All value judgments have this distorting effect, regardless of their source, and ‘one’s own’ judgments are far more likely to be deleterious than those imposed by society if for no other reason that the individual is far less likely to examine them, believing that they are his own and that the matter is therefore settled. If one really is to ‘let there be no difference made’ then one must excise *all* such judgments from one’s perceptive faculty, not just the ones that are believed to have been imposed from the outside. It is the judgments themselves that have the distorting effect, and the place from whence they originated is completely irrelevant.

The individual who takes value judgments into account when making decisions will not be acting in accordance with his will, but in accordance with the arbitrary preferences of his mind, which is a long, long way from being the same thing. The mind is a powerful filter, and if the will of the self is ever to manifest the mind must be prevented from interfering with it. By ‘letting a difference be made’ — by draw-

ing a comparison between two or more phenomena and expressing a preference for one over the others — the mind skews the extensions of the self into directions in which it would not otherwise have extended, distorting the will and rendering it unrecognisable. In many cases, the clamouring value judgments which fill the mind will obscure the will of the self almost entirely, the result being that the individual is ‘no more than the unhappiest and blindest of animals. He is conscious of his own incomprehensible calamity, and clumsily incapable of repairing it.’¹

As we draw close to the end of this essay, it is necessary to deal with one rather idiotic objection. ‘Let’s see you,’ one may hear, ‘do this “making no difference” deal when your leg is being chewed up in an accident involving some large farming equipment. Let’s see you talk about there being no “hurt” then!’ This is easily dismissed by remarking that ‘for thereby there cometh hurt’ most definitely does not say ‘for thereby there cometh *all* hurt.’ The fact that ‘hurt’ comes from ‘letting a difference be made’ in no way implies that that is the *only* place hurt can come from. It is true that *The Book of the Law* says that ‘all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done’ and this is absolutely correct; the aforementioned pain in one’s leg will indeed pass and be done, at death if at no other time. It nowhere says that there aren’t any shadows at all. Occasionally some imbecile will advance a story similar to that of a concentration camp survivor who was super-magically able to heal knife-wounds within minutes by the powers of sentimental love, but these accounts may obviously be safely dismissed as the spurious and ridiculous claptrap that they are.

The ‘hurt’ referred to in Al I, 22 is manifested as sorrow, regret, guilt, shame, and all the rest. All of this type of ‘hurt’ comes from a common source: the mind is taking what is real and unfavourably comparing it with an imaginary ideal. If one stops comparing reality with an imaginary ideal — in other words, if one refrains from ‘letting a difference be made’ — then there can be no unfavourable comparison, and if there is no unfavourable comparison then there is nothing to feel sorry, regretful, guilty or shameful about. If things are accepted for what they are, in and of themselves, then they can be enjoyed as such. ‘Imperfection’ in all things only arises once somebody starts comparing them to other things and wishing they were different. The acceptance of impressions as they are in no way suggests that the Thelemite should be passive, because things are changed by changing them, not by wishing they were different and pining about it. The

¹ *One Star in Sight*

fact that one wishes to cause a specific change does not mean that the Thelemite cannot accept or appreciate things as they are right now any more than it means he cannot accept or appreciate them for what they will be once he's changed them.

As Crowley said in *Little Essays Toward Truth*:

For until we become innocent, we are certain to try to judge our Will by some Canon of what seems 'right' or 'wrong'; in other words, we are apt to criticise our Will from the outside, whereas True Will should spring, a fountain of Light, from within, and flow unchecked, seething with Love, into the Ocean of Life. This is the true idea of Silence; it is our Will which issues, perfectly elastic, sublimely Protean, to fill every interstice of the Universe of Manifestation which it meets in its course.

The 'Silence' of which he speaks is the calming of the mind, the cessation of its insistence upon subjecting phenomena to evaluative judgments. It is these evaluative filters which stop the will from coming out, and it is these evaluative filters which prevent accurate perceptions from making their way inwards to the will. By refraining from 'letting a difference be made', by constraining his mind into acting as an impartial observer instead of as judge, jury and executioner, the aspiring Thelemite can loosen the chains of his own bondage and rend the veils which surround his will.

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