



ÉLIPHAS LÉVI

*[Frontispiece]*

# TRANSCENDENTAL MAGIC

Its Doctrine and Ritual

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New York

1972

which is the combination of light with the aggregated potencies of the molecules of the first substance. Hence they are preserved in the astral fluid, and can be evoked and reproduced according to the will of the sage, as we shall see when treating of second sight and the evocation of memories in necromancy or other magical works. We shall return also to the Great Magical Agent in the fourth chapter of the *Ritual*, where we shall complete our indications of the characteristics of the Great Arcanum, and of the means of recovering this tremendous power.<sup>1</sup>

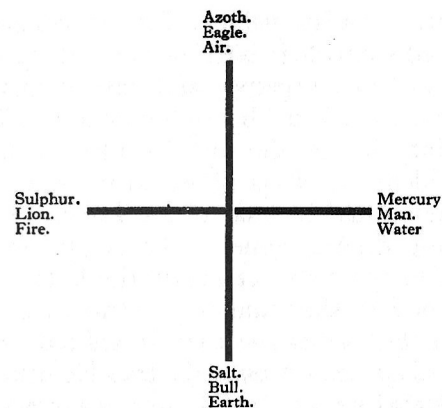
Here let us add a few words on the four magical elements and elementary spirits. The magical elements are: in alchemy, Salt, Sulphur, Mercury and Azoth; in Kabbalah, the Macroprosopus, the Microprosopus and the two Mothers; in hieroglyphics, the Man, Eagle, Lion and Bull; in old physics, according to vulgar names and notions, air, water, earth and fire. But in magical science we know that water is not ordinary water, fire is not simply fire, etc. These expressions conceal a more recondite meaning. Modern science has decomposed the four elements of the ancients and reduced them to a number of so-called simple bodies. That which is simple, however, is the primitive substance properly so-called; there is thus only one material element, which manifests always by the tetrad in its forms. We shall therefore preserve the wise distinction of elementary appearances admitted by the ancients, and shall recognize air, fire, earth and water as the four positive and visible elements of Magic.

The subtle and the gross, the swift and slow solvent, or the instruments of heat and cold, constitute, in occult physics, the two positive and negative principles of the tetrad, and should be thus tabulated:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This undertaking is not fulfilled in the place referred to.

<sup>2</sup> The four living creatures of Ezekiel's vision are referred to elsewhere as follows: (1) The Eagle to air, intelligence, spirit and soul; (2) The man to water, knowledge, life and light; (3) The Lion to fire, force, action and movement; (4) The Bull to earth, toil, resistance and form. "The human face was in the centre, because man is the synthesis of forms and the intelligent centre of creation. The four creatures corresponded to the four letters JOD, HE, VAU, HE, to the four cardinal points, the four elements and to the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms."—*Les Mystères de la Kabbale*, pp. 23 et seq.

## The Tetragram



Thus, air and earth represent the male principle; fire and water are referable to the female principle, since the Philosophical Cross of pantacles, as affirmed already, is a primitive and elementary hieroglyph of the lingam of the gymnosophists. To these four elementary forms correspond the four following philosophical ideas—Spirit, Matter, Motion, Rest. As a fact, all science is comprised in the understanding of these four things, which alchemy has reduced to three—the Absolute, the Fixed and the Volatile—referred by the Kabbalah to the essential idea of God, Who is absolute reason, necessity and liberty, a threefold notion expressed in the occult books of the Hebrews. Under the names<sup>1</sup> of KETHER, CHOKMAH and BINAH for the Divine World; of TIPHERETH, CHESED and GEBURAH in the moral world, and of JESOD, HOD and NETSAH in the physical world, which, together with the moral, is contained in the idea of the Kingdom or MALKUTH, we shall explain in the tenth chapter this theogony as rational as it is sublime.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Sephirotic enumeration which follows is not that of the Tree of Life in Kabbalism, as it reverses the order in the worlds of BRIA and YETZIRAH. Moreover, CHESED, GEBURAH and TIPHERETH are not the moral world in the mind of the Secret Tradition, but are called that of CREATION. NETSAH, HOD and JESOD belong to the scheme of Formation and are certainly not physical. MALKUTH IS THE manifest world.

<sup>2</sup> "There are four major prophets, four evangelists, four great doctors in the Greek and four in the Latin Church, four angles bound to the four corners of the world. . . . Revelation is manifested by four laws—those of Nature, Fear, Grace and Intelligence. Spiritual progress passes through four stages—penitence, faith, hope and charity. The moral virtues are also four in number—Justice, Strength,

Now, created spirits, being called to emancipation by trial, are placed from their birth between these four forces, two positive and two negative, and have it in their power to affirm or deny good, to choose life or death. To discover the fixed point, that is, the moral centre of the Cross, is the first problem which is given them to resolve; their initial conquest must be that of their own liberty. They begin by being drawn, some to the North, others to the South; some to the right, others to the left; and in so far as they are not free, they cannot have the use of reason, nor can they take flesh otherwise than in animal forms. These unemancipated spirits, slaves of the four elements, are those which the Kabbalists call elementary daimons, and they people the elements which correspond to their state of servitude. Sylphs, undines, gnomes and salamanders really exist therefore, some wandering and seeking incarnation, others incarnate and living on this earth. These are vicious and imperfect men.<sup>1</sup> We shall return to this subject in the fifteenth chapter, which treats of enchantments and demons.

That is also an occult tradition by which the ancients were led to admit the existence of four ages in the world, only it was not made known to the vulgar that these ages are successive and are renewed, like the four seasons of the year. Thus, the golden age has passed, and it is yet to come. This, however, belongs to the spirit of prophecy, and we shall speak of it in the ninth chapter, which is concerned with the initiate and the seer.<sup>2</sup> If we now add the idea of unity to the tetrad, we shall have, together and separately, the conceptions of the divine synthesis and analysis, the god of the initiates and that of the profane. Here the doctrine becomes more popular, as it passes from the domain of the abstract: the grand hierophant intervenes.

<sup>1</sup> It has just been remarked that these unemancipated spirits, these slaves of the elements, these beings devoid of free will can be incarnated only as animals.

<sup>2</sup> There is no recurrence to the subject of the golden age at the place specified.

Temperance and Prudence. All these forms of the tetrad are in correspondence one with another and serve as commentary on the hieroglyphical revelation contained in the grand and mysterious *Schema*'—i.e. JOD, HE, VAU, HE.—*Correspondence with Baron Spédalieri*, No. 54.

V 7 E<sup>1</sup>

## THE PENTAGRAM

GEBURAH ECCE

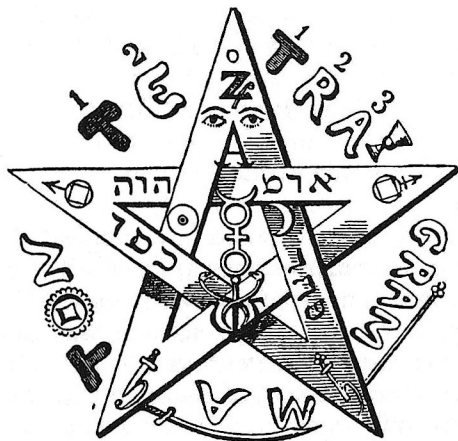
HEREUNTO we have exposed the magical dogma in its more arid and abstruse phases; now the enchantments begin; now we can proclaim wonders and reveal most secret things. The Pentagram signifies the domination of the mind over the elements, and the demons of air, the spirits of fire, the phantoms of water and ghosts of earth are enchained by this sign. Equipped therewith, and suitably disposed, you may behold the infinite through the medium of that faculty which is like the soul's eye, and you will be ministered unto by legions of angels and hosts of fiends.

But here, in the first place, let us establish certain principles. There is no invisible world; there are, however, many degrees of perfection in organs. The body is the coarse and, as it were, the perishable cortex of the soul. The soul can perceive of itself, and independently of the mediation of physical organs—by means of its sensibility and its DIAPHANE—the things, both spiritual and corporeal, which are existent in the universe. Spiritual and corporeal are simply terms which express the degrees of tenuity or density in substance. What is called the imagination within us is only the soul's inherent faculty of assimilating the images and reflections contained in the living light, being the Great Magnetic Agent.<sup>2</sup> Such images and reflections are revelations when science intervenes to reveal us their body or

<sup>1</sup> Five is the number of the soul, which is the queen of the four elements.—*Mystères de la Kabbale*, p. 17. It is also the religious number, combining that of the Deity with that which belongs to woman. See *La Clef des Grands Mystères*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> It is said elsewhere that the Universal Light is comparable to Divine Imagination, and that this world which suffers incessant mutation, though it remains invariable as regards the laws of its configuration, is an immense dream of God.—*La Clef des Grands Mystères*, p. 235.

light. The man of genius differs from the dreamer and the fool in this only, that his creations are analogous to truth,



while those of the fool and the dreamer are lost reflections and bewrayed images. Hence, for the wise man, to imagine is to see, as, for the magician, to speak is to create. It follows that, by means of the imagination, demons and spirits can be beheld really and in truth; but the imagination of the adept is diaphanous, whilst that of the crowd is opaque; the light of truth traverses the one as ordinary light passes through clear glass, and is refracted by the other, as when ordinary light impinges upon a vitreous block, full of *scoriae* and foreign matter. That which most contributes to the errors of the vulgar is the reflection of depraved imaginations one in the other. But in virtue of positive science, the seer knows that what he imagines is true, and the event invariably confirms his vision.<sup>1</sup> We shall state in the *Ritual* after what manner this lucidity can be acquired.

<sup>1</sup> "That Magnetic Light which enables the future to be foreseen reveals also the hidden things of the present. Being universal life, it is the agent of human sensibility, transmitting diseases to some and health to others, according to the fatal influence of contacts or the laws of will. This explains the power of blessings and of spells, so plainly recognized by the great adepts and above all by the marvellous Paracelsus."—*La Clef des Grands Mystères*, pp. 229, 230.

It is by means of this light that static visionaries place themselves in communication with all worlds, as so frequently occurred to Swedenborg, who notwithstanding was imperfectly lucid, seeing that he did not distinguish reflections from rays, and often intermingled chimerical fancies with his most admirable dreams. We say dreams, because dream is the consequence of a natural and periodical ecstasy which we term sleep; to be in ecstasy is to sleep; magnetic somnambulism is a production and direction of ecstasy.<sup>1</sup> The errors which occur therein are occasioned by reflections from the DIAPHANE of waking persons, and, above all, of the magnetizer. Dream is vision produced by the refraction of a ray of truth. Chimerical fantasy is hallucination occasioned by a reflection. The temptation of St Anthony, with its nightmares and its monsters, represents the confusion of reflections with direct rays. So long as the soul struggles it is reasonable; when it yields to this species of invading intoxication it becomes mad. To disentangle the direct ray, and separate it from the reflection—such is the work of the initiate. Here let us state distinctly that this work is being performed continually in the world by some of the flower of mankind; that there is hence a permanent revelation by intuition; and that there is no insuperable barrier which separates souls, because there are no sudden interruptions and no high walls in Nature by which minds can be divided from one another. All is transition and blending, wherefore, assuming the perfectibility, if not infinite at least indefinite, of human faculties, it will be understood that every person can attain to see all, and therefore to know all. There is no void in Nature: all is peopled. There is no true death in Nature: all is alive. "Seest thou that star?" asked Napoleon of Cardinal Fesch. "No, Sire." "I see it," said the Emperor,

<sup>1</sup> "In sleep the soul loses for a time its individual life and plunges in the universal life, which manifests, as we have said, by two contrary currents. . . . Sleep is a bath in the light of life or in the phosphorus of death. He who enters into slumber, carrying just thoughts, bathes in the merits of the just, but he who falls asleep nourishing false thoughts or thoughts of hatred is immersed in the dead sea, where ebbs and flows the infection of the wicked. . . . He who sleeps in impiety shall not awaken in Divine Benediction."—*Le Grand Arcane*, p. 21, citing Isaac de Loria: *DE REVOLUTIONIBUS ANIMARUM* in the *Kabbala Denudata* of Rosenroth. In *La Clef des Grands Mystères*, p. 128, it is said more clearly that we are immersed in the Astral Light by sleep.

not believe in the real presence of roses in his wife's apron under the appearances of bread? She exhibited him loaves undoubtedly, but as she had said that they were roses, and as he believed her incapable of the smallest falsehood; he saw and wished to see roses only. This is the secret of the miracle. Another legend narrates how a saint, whose name has escaped me, finding nothing to eat on a Lenten day or a Friday, commanded the fowl to become a fish, and it became a fish.<sup>1</sup> The parable needs no interpretation, and it recalls a beautiful story of St Spiridion of Tremithonte, the same who evoked the soul of his daughter Irene. One Good Friday a traveller reached the abode of the holy bishop, and as bishops in those days took Christianity in earnest, and were consequently poor, Spiridion, who fasted religiously, had in his house only some salted bacon, which had been made ready for Easter. The stranger was overcome with fatigue and famished with hunger; Spiridion offered him the meat, and himself shared the meal of charity, thus transforming the very flesh which the Jews regard as of all most impure into a feast of penitence, transcending the material law by the spirit of the law itself, and proving himself a true and intelligent disciple of the Man-God, who hath established His elect as the monarchs of Nature in the three worlds.

<sup>1</sup> "All truly strong men are magnetizers, and the Universal Agent obeys their will. It is thus that they work wonders. They inspire faith, draw others after them, and if they say of this or that it is that or this, Nature changes in a sense for the vulgar eye and becomes whatsoever the great man wills."—*La Clef des Grands Mystères*, pp. 223, 224.

## CHAPTER XV

## THE SABBATH OF THE SORCERERS

WE recur once more to that terrible number fifteen, symbolized in the Tarot by a monster throned upon an altar, mitred and horned, having a woman's breasts and the generative organs of a man—a chimera, a malformed sphinx, a synthesis of deformities. Below this figure we read a frank and simple inscription—THE DEVIL. Yes, we confront here that phantom of all terrors, the dragon of all theogonies, the Ahriman of the Persians, the Typhon of the Egyptians, the Python of the Greeks, the old serpent of the Hebrews, the fantastic monster, the nightmare, the Croquemitaine, the gargoyle, the great beast of the Middle Ages, and—worse than all these—the Baphomet of the Templars, the bearded idol of the alchemist, the obscene deity of Mendes, the goat of the Sabbath. The frontispiece to this "Ritual" reproduces the exact figure of the terrible emperor of night, with all his attributes and all his characters.

Let us state now for the edification of the vulgar, for the satisfaction of M. le Comte de Mirville, for the justification of the demonologist Bodin, for the greater glory of the Church, which persecuted Templars, burnt magicians, excommunicated Freemasons, etc.—let us state boldly and precisely that all inferior initiates of the occult science and profaners of the Great Arcanum, not only did in the past but do now, and will ever, adore what is signified by this alarming symbol. Yes, in our profound conviction, the Grand Masters of the Order of the Templars worshipped the Baphomet, and caused it to be worshipped by their initiates; yes, there existed in the past, and there may be still in the present, assemblies which are presided over by this figure, seated on a throne and having a flaming torch

between the horns. But the adorers of this sign do not consider, as do we, that it is a representation of the devil: on the contrary, for them it is that of the god Pan, the god of our modern schools of philosophy, the god of the Alexandrian theurgic school and of our own mystical Neoplatonists, the god of Lamartine and Victor Cousin, the god of Spinoza and Plato, the god of the primitive Gnostic schools; the Christ also of the dissident priesthood. This last qualification, ascribed to the goat of Black Magic, will not astonish students of religious antiquities who are acquainted with the phases of symbolism and doctrine in their various transformations, whether in India, Egypt or Judea.

The bull, the dog and the goat are the three symbolical animals of Hermetic Magic, resuming all the traditions of Egypt and India. The bull represents the Earth or Salt of the Philosophers; the dog is Hermanubis, the Mercury of the sages—otherwise, fluid, air and water; the goat represents fire and is at the same time the symbol of generation. Two goats, one pure and one impure, were consecrated in Judea; the first was sacrificed in expiation for sins; the other, loaded with those sins by imprecation, was set at liberty in the desert—a strange ordinance, but one of deep symbolism, signifying reconciliation by sacrifice and expiation by liberty! Now, all the fathers of the Church, who have concerned themselves with Jewish symbolism, have recognized in the immolated goat the figure of Him Who assumed, as they say, the very form of sin. Hence the Gnostics were not outside symbolical traditions when they assigned this same mystical figure to Christ the Liberator. All the Kabbalah and all Magic, as a fact, are divided between the cultus of the immolated and that of the emissary goat. We must recognize therefore a Magic of the Sanctuary and that of the wilderness, the White and the Black Church, the priesthood of public assemblies and the Sanhedrim of the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup> The goat which is represented in our frontispiece bears upon its forehead the Sign of the Pentagram

<sup>1</sup> "The black intelligence is the divination of the Mysteries of Night, the attribution of reality to the forms of the invisible. It is belief in vague possibility, light in dream. . . . Let us respect the Mysteries of the Shadow but keep our lamps burning."—*Le Grand Arcane*. p. 213. When Lévi says in the text above that the

with one point in the ascendant, which is sufficient to distinguish it as a symbol of the light. Moreover, the sign of occultism is made with both hands, pointing upward to the white moon of CHESED, and downward to the black moon of GEBURAH.<sup>1</sup> This sign expresses the perfect concord between mercy and justice. One of the arms is feminine and the other masculine, as in the androgyne of Khunrath, whose attributes we have combined with those of our goat, since they are one and the same symbol. The torch of intelligence burning between the horns is the magical light of universal equilibrium; it is also the type of the soul exalted above matter, even while cleaving to matter, as the flame cleaves to the torch. The monstrous head of the animal expresses horror of sin, for which the material agent, alone responsible, must alone and for ever bear the penalty, because the soul is impassible in its nature and can suffer only by materializing. The caduceus, which replaces the generative organ, represents eternal life; the scale-covered belly typifies water; the circle above it is the atmosphere, the feathers still higher up signify the volatile; lastly, humanity is depicted by the two breasts and the androgyne arms of this sphinx of the occult sciences. Behold the shadows of the infernal sanctuary dissipated! Behold the sphinx of mediaeval terrors unveiled and cast from his throne! *Quomodo cecidisti, Lucifer!*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Moon of CHESED is really in kabalistic symbolism the waxing moon on the side of Mercy in the Tree of Life, while the waning Moon is referred to the side of Severity. It should be remembered also that the Moon in the *Zohar* is always and only Shekinah.

<sup>2</sup> It is said otherwise in *La Clef des Grands Mystères* that initiates like the Templars were less guilty for having worshipped Baphomet than for having made it possible that this image should be remarked by the profane (*loc. cit.*, p. 219). Lévi goes on to affirm that the monster in question was a pantheistic figure of the Universal Agent and also the bearded demon of alchemists. There is, however, no such demon in the pictorial emblems of Hermetic Philosophy, nor is it true, as he adds, that ancient Hermetic Masonry in its highest Grades referred the achievement of the Great Work to a bearded demon, the reason in this case being that no Hermetic Masonry is older than the second half of the eighteenth century.

Kabbalah and Magic are divided between the cultus of these two victims he means to say that as there is a Black and a White Magic, according to his hypothesis, so also there is a Black Tradition in Israel as there is a great Tradition of the Light, a Kabbalism of sorcery and Grimoires and a Divine Kabbalism, like that imbedded in the *Zohar*.

The dread Baphomet henceforth, like all monstrous idols, enigmas of antique science and its dreams, is only an innocent and even pious hieroglyph. How should man adore the beast, since he exercises a sovereign power over it? Let us affirm, for the honour of humanity, that it has never worshipped dogs and goats any more than lambs or pigeons. In the hieroglyphic orders, why not a goat as much as a lamb? On the sacred stones of Gnostic Christians of the Basilidean sect there are representations of Christ under the diverse figures of kabalistic animals—sometimes a bird, at others a lion, and again a serpent with the head of lion or bull; but in all cases He bears invariably the same attributes of light, even as our goat, which cannot be confounded with fabulous images of Satan, owing to the Sign of the Pentagram.

Let us affirm categorically, to combat the remnants of Manichaeism which are appearing sporadically among Christians, that as a superior personality and power Satan does not exist. He is the personification of all errors, perversities and consequently of all weaknesses. If God may be defined as He Who exists of necessity, may we not define His antagonist and enemy as necessarily he who does not exist at all? The absolute affirmation of good implies an absolute negation of evil: so also in the light, shadow itself is luminous. Thus, erring spirits are good to the extent of their participation in being and in truth. There are no shadows without reflections, no nights without moon, the planet of morning and stars. If hell be just, it is good. No one has ever blasphemed God. The insults and mockeries addressed to His disfigured images attain Him not.<sup>1</sup>

We have named Manichaeism, and it is by this monstrous heresy that we shall explain the aberrations of Black Magic. The misconstrued doctrine of Zoroaster and the magical law of two forces constituting universal equilibrium, have caused some illogical minds to imagine a negative divinity, subordinate but hostile to the active Deity.

<sup>1</sup> Éliphas Lévi remained within the logic of this position when he affirmed subsequently that angels and demons are purely hypothetical or legendary beings and so relegated them to the realm of poetry because they could not belong to science.—*La Science des Esprits*, p. 6.

An impure duad comes thus into being. Men were mad enough to halve God; the Star of Solomon was separated into triangles, and the Manichaens imagined a trinity of night. This evil God, product of sectarian fancies, inspired all manias and all crimes. Sanguinary sacrifices were offered him; monstrous idolatry replaced the true religion; Black Magic traduced the Transcendent and Luminous Magic of true adepts, and horrible conventicles of sorcerers, ghouls and stryges took place in caverns or desert places, for dementia soon changes into frenzy and from human sacrifices to cannibalism there is only one step. The Mysteries of the Sabbath have been described variously, but they figure always in Grimoires and in magical trials. The revelations made on the subject may be classified under three heads: 1. those referring to a fantastic and imaginary Sabbath; 2. those which betray the secrets of certain occult assemblies of veritable adepts; 3. revelations of foolish and criminal gatherings, having for their object the operations of Black Magic. For a large number of unhappy men and women, given over to such mad and abominable practices, the Sabbath was but a prolonged nightmare, where dreams appeared realities and were induced by means of potions, fumigations and narcotic frictions. Baptista Porta, whom we have signalized already as a mystifier, gives in his *Natural Magic*, a pretended recipe for the sorcerers' unguent, by means of which they were transported to the Sabbath. It is a composition of child's fat, aconite boiled with poplar leaves and some other drugs, the whole mixed with soot, which could not contribute to the beauty of the naked sorceresses who repaired to the scene anointed with this pomade. There is another and more serious recipe given by the same author, which we transcribe in Latin to preserve its grimoire character. *Recipe: suim, acorum vulgare, pentaphyllon, verspertillionis sanguinem, solanum somniferum et oleum*, the whole boiled and incorporated to the consistence of an unguent. We infer that compositions containing opiates, the pith of green hemp, *Datura stramonium* or laurel-almond, would enter quite as successfully into such preparations. The fat or blood of night-birds added to