

WHAT WAS ALEISTER CROWLEY?

**An Inquiry into the Nature of the Office of Magus,
specifically in the Matter of To Mega Therion.**



Thomas Voxfire

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By Thomas Voxfire

In the upper left-hand corner of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" album (see Figure 1), second in from the left of the top row of the group the Beatles proclaimed "people we like," is the image of Aleister Crowley. Crowley, one of the most notorious men in 20th Century England, was heralded by the popular press of his time as the "wickedest man in the world." He was also a poet, mystic, mountaineer, magician, raconteur, social critic, libertine, drug user, founder of religious orders and a great many other things as well. Many books have been written (including a number by himself) about who Aleister Crowley was and what he did. The "who" of Mr. Crowley has been dealt with in great detail; what is of greater relevance and importance in this instance is to discuss "what" he was.



Figure 1. The Beatles

Why "what" rather than "who?" What implies a thing rather than a person. What sort of thing was he? Crowley was, of course, a human being, like all the rest of us. The "what" concerns his office: Crowley was a Magus; a messenger of the Most High, which makes him the equal of Moses, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Mohammed, Krishna and Jesus of Nazareth. More than that, he was an Aeon Magus, one who presides at an Equinox of the Gods when the god or goddess who rules this plane yields the throne of Earth to the next god or goddess in succession.

At this Great Equinox, which took place in 1904 in Cairo, Egypt, Crowley was witness to the rite of passage in which Osiris, the Egyptian Lord of the Dead, yielded his place to Horus, the Sun God and Crowned and Conquering Child. The Father passed his earthly kingdom to his Son. The last time an Aeon had occurred was in Thebes in about 500 BC, when the Priest of the Princes, Ankh-af-na-Khonsu, a member of the royal house, was instrumental in the succession of the mother-goddess Isis to her spouse Osiris.¹ During the Equinox of the Gods in 1904, Crowley was dictated Liber Al vel Legis², or Book of the Law by a "praeterhuman intelligence" who

¹ Dealt with in "Across the Gulf", The Equinox, Volume I, Number VII, pages 293-347.

² Liber Al vel Legis, Liber CCXX, AA Publication in Class A.

claimed to be a spokesman of the powers ruling this earth. This book established a new formula and laid down the law of the current Aeon. This law is Thelema, the Greek word for will. The book's effect can be seen everywhere in the world by those willing to turn an open, inquiring mind toward it.

TIME OUT: Does this sound somewhat different from the way we normally look at things? Tolkienesque? Down right weird? Do we believe this kind of thing anymore? The answer is no. We may believe that Jesus or Buddha or Moses was a messenger from the divine force a long time ago, but today, in the modern world, certainly, this does not happen. We are way too smart, too cool, too caught up in the economy, technological tools and toys, mapping the genome and the like to put any credence in this antiquated mumbo-jumbo.

More's the pity! By not understanding, or even trying to understand, how things truly work in the world; that is to say, how the spiritual affects the material and vice versa, we are put squarely behind Ye Olde Metaphysical Eight-Ball. The High Gods of Khem (commonly referred to as ancient Egypt): Nuit, Hadit, Ra Hoor Khuit & Hoor Paar Krat have ruled the earth (and the universe, for that matter) since the beginning and will continue to oversee the totality of all existence until It dissolves back into the Void from whence It sprang at the utterance of the creative word, spoken of by Science as the "Big Bang."

Born in 1875, for the first twenty nine years of his life, Crowley had traveled the globe, studying mysticism and magick, writing poetry, joining mystical orders, climbing mountains, hunting big game and a great many other pursuits. Early in 1904, he found himself in Cairo, Egypt with his recent bride, Rose Kelly (see Figure 2). One day in March, Rose, who Crowley describes as "an empty-headed woman of society," who had no interest whatsoever in spiritual matters, began telling him that the gods were waiting for him and he was supposed to invoke Horus (Ra Hoor Khuit), the Egyptian Sun God.³ Amusedly skeptical, Crowley put her through a series of tests, all of which she passed. Astounded and somewhat irritated, he did as he was bid.



Figure 2. Rose Kelly and Aleister Crowley

³ "The Invocation of Horus..." The Equinox of the Gods, Equinox Vol. III, No. III pages 77-84



Figure 3: Nuit, Hadit and Ra Hoor Khuit.

One of the tests that Crowley gave his wife was to show him an image of Horus. They went to the Egyptian museum in Cairo and, to Crowley's amusement, Rose passed by a number of the hawk-headed god's image, and led him to this stele. (See figure 4)



Figure 4: The Stele of Revealing

Again, Crowley was astounded: the stele was labeled by the museum as Stele 666, the Biblical “number of a man” that Crowley had chosen for himself many years ago. Also, the stele had been constructed by Ankh-af-na-Khonsu, the Magus who had initiated the Aeon of Osiris several thousand years previous, and yet here the stele portrayed him paying homage to Ra Hoor Khuit, Osiris's son and successor.

One of the instructions was to enter a specially-prepared room in his hotel suite on Noon of three successive days, April 8, 9 & 10 and take dictation. He did so and a “praeterhuman” entity who called himself Aiwaz dictated a message from the High Gods: on the first day, the sky-goddess Nuit spoke through Aiwaz, on the second, the winged globe Hadit, and on the third, the hawk-headed Ra Hoor Khuit. (See figure 3.) All of this is told in the Equinox of the Gods.⁴ This is similar to Moses receiving the Ten Commandments from the Lord of Hosts.

This time, however, the dictation was considerably more extensive than just simple commands. The Book of the Law, although comparatively much shorter than such texts the Bible or the Bhagavad-Gita, contains, among other things: descriptions of the nature of the high gods

⁴ The Equinox of the Gods, Equinox Vol. III, No. III

of creation, the Advent of the new Aeon and the law of Thelema, instructions to Crowley as to how to teach the law to mankind, prophecies, Qabalistic mysteries, the true nature of human existence and how Ra Hoor Khuit was going to deal with homo sapiens in order to establish his reign and a great many other topics as well.

TIME OUT: Wait a second! Gods? Visitations? Divine dictation? The number of the Anti-Christ from the Apocalypse? What are we talking about here? Did Crowley have some sort of “burning bush” experience? The Ten Commandments again? Teach mankind a new law? What about the old ways, what’s going to happen to them? What about Jesus, Buddha and Wednesday night Bingo? And are we sure that Crowley didn’t just write the book himself and then palm it off as if it were Holy Writ?

Nowhere in his writings, did Crowley claim to have written the Book of the Law, only that he was the scribe; he took dictation. Also, at first, Crowley did not accept the Book of the Law, and effectively hid it from himself it for five years. But the Gods kept the pressure on him to accept his duty as their Chosen One and deliver the message of the Liber Al vel Legis to mankind. According to Crowley, they were both relentless and inexorable.

- **Nuit:** “Help me, o warrior Lord of Thebes, in my unveiling before the Children of men. Be thou Hadit, my secret centre, my heart and my tongue”⁵
- **Nuit:** “Obey my prophet! follow out the ordeals of my knowledge! seek me only! Then the joys of my love will redeem ye from all pain.”⁶
- **Hadit:** “Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet! Then shall this Knowledge go aright.”⁷
- **Hadit:** “Lift up thyself! for there is none like thee among men or among Gods! Lift up thyself, o my prophet, thy stature shall surpass the stars.”⁸
- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “Get the stéle of revealing itself...I will make easy to you the abstruccion from the ill-ordered house in the Victorious City...Thou shalt have danger & trouble. Ra-Hoor-Khu is with thee.”⁹
- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “The ordeals thou shalt oversee thyself, save only the blind ones Refuse none, but thou shalt know & destroy the traitors. I am Ra-Hoor-Khuit; and I am powerful to protect my servant.”¹⁰

These are but a few of the references in the Book of the Law to Crowley as the Chosen One.

At first, Crowley was quite skeptical about it and, in a number of instances, very much opposed to what the Book of the Law told him to do, but in the end, he had no choice but to obey:

- **Hadit:** “ O prophet, thou hast ill will to learn this writing. I see thee hate the hand & the pen, but I am stronger. Because of me in Thee which thou knewest not.”¹¹

How did Aiwaz convince the disbelieving Crowley that he knew of what he spoke? In Crowley’s words, “How could he prove that he was in fact a being of a kind superior to any of

⁵ Liber Al – I: 5, 6

⁶ Liber Al – I: 32

⁷ Liber Al – II: 5

⁸ Liber Al- II: 78

⁹ Liber Al – III, 10, 11

¹⁰ Liber Al – III: 42

¹¹ Liber Al – II: 10-12

the human race, and so entitled to speak with authority? Evidently he must show KNOWLEDGE and POWER such as no man has ever been known to possess. He showed his KNOWLEDGE chiefly by the use of cipher or cryptogram in certain passages to set forth recondite facts, including some events which had yet to take place...”¹²

- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “I am the warrior Lord of the Forties: the Eighties cower before and are abased.”¹³

At the time of the writing and subsequent, Crowley took the 40’s and the 80’s to be Qabalistic references and it was not until the unfolding of World War II that he saw that Ra Hoor Khuit, in his office as “a god of War and Vengeance,”¹⁴ was predicting the coming of Hitler, Mussolini, Tojo and Hirohito on the one hand and Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin on the other in the 1940’s.

Crowley died in 1947, and did not live to see the Eighties. If this reference is to the 1980’s, of what does Ra Hoor Khuit speak? Before being the god of war, He is, first and foremost, the hawk-headed Sun God, Ra. The 1980’s was when the concept of Global Warming became to be popularly known. Rather than in his office as the lord of human conflict, He operates as the sun itself, the primary force affecting the temperature of this planet. Granted, it is mankind’s inability to control population and its resultant pollution that is responsible for Global Warming, but it is the sun that is its primary cause. The Book of the Law placed great power in the hands of men and women, which can be used for mankind’s advancement or its destruction.

As an interesting side-note, the Book of the Law presents what Crowley calls the $0 = 2$ equation:

- **Nuit:** “None, breathed the light, faint & faery, of the stars and two.”¹⁵

In 1902, just prior to the advent of the Book of the Law, Einstein first propounded the Theory of Relativity, which in time included the most famous equation of the 20th Century, $E = mc^2$, a more mundane iteration of $0 = 2$, which was the theoretical basis for nuclear weapons, especially the charming hydrogen bomb. Again, to repeat, the Book of the Law placed great power in the hands of men and women, which can be used for mankind’s advancement or its destruction.

REALITY CHECK: Are we saying that the High Gods gave mankind the ability to wipe itself out? Isn’t this rather extreme? Our god, who is kind and loving and wants only the best for his children, would do no such thing! “Our Father, who art in heaven” would not treat his children this way.

The “gaseous vertebrate” of Christianity and Judaism would probably not do this, true, but remember, He did command Abraham to slay his own son. But, instead, consider the analogy of the sun as god of the solar system. The sun, according to astronomers, is the cause of the existence of the planets, asteroids, moons, etc. The sun’s gravity holds all the planets in their orbits. The light and heat of the sun allows life to occur and thrive. And the sun cares not one whit how the energy is used. The sun has no concept of good and evil. 65 million years ago, a very big chunk of something fell out of the sky and wiped out the dinosaurs. If it happens again and wipes out homo sapiens, c’est la vie. If mankind decides to unleash a full-scale nuclear war on itself, so be it. The sun is not going to get terribly upset; it will just keep on shining. Hopefully, the sky will not fall again and mankind will learn to live with itself, and will not

¹² Liber Al – Introduction: I: THE BOOK

¹³ Liber Al – III: 46

¹⁴ Liber Al – III: 3

¹⁵ Liber Al – I: 29

allow the clash of religions, ethnicities, economics, politics and so on to bring it to commit planetary-wide suicide. Time will tell.

The Book of the Law, living up to its name, gave a new law to mankind, the law of **Θελημα**, or Thelema, the Greek word for will, as in willpower:

- **Nuit:** “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.”¹⁶
- **Nuit:** “Love is the law, love under will.”¹⁷
- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”¹⁸

This does not mean “do whatever you want,” but rather “do what you don’t want.” If a man or woman is going to become truly divine, they must grow beyond themselves. There is no god but man. But to be a god, one must experience all things; the totality of existence. If you stay the same, doing only what you like and shunning what you don’t like, you’re not going to amount to much in the long run.

How does a person become greater than he or she already is? Crowley posited two paths: the inward, yoga or mysticism and the outward, ceremonial magic or the occult which will lead the aspirant to come to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel which will then lead him or her to do their True Will.

- **Nuit:** “Now ye shall know that the chosen priest & apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest the Beast; and in his woman called the Scarlet Woman is all power given. They shall gather my children into their fold: they shall bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men.”¹⁹
- **Nuit:** “Obey my prophet! follow out the ordeals of my knowledge! seek me only! Then the joys of my love will redeem ye from all pain. This is so: I swear it by the vault of my body; by my sacred heart and tongue; by all I can give, by all I desire of ye all.”²⁰
- **Nuit:** “Also the mantras and spells; the obeah and the wanga; the work of the wand and the work of the sword; these he shall learn and teach. He must teach; but he may make severe the ordeals.”²¹

This is what Crowley spent the remainder of his life doing: instructing men and women how to find the True Will, the divine path that they set for themselves when the Universe was first manifested as the Creative Word was uttered causing the Big Bang to occur.

REALITY CHECK: Okay, all fine and good, but what of it? Has this book and this law had any real effect on mankind? If it is really all that powerful, there must have been some major changes in how things work in the world. Where are they?

Consider of this:

WAR: In the third line of the third chapter, are the words:

- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “Now let it be first understood that I am a god of War and of Vengeance. I shall deal hardly with them.”

No sooner had Horus assumed the throne of the earth, than He plunged mankind into the two greatest wars it had ever seen: World Wars One and Two, the second of which was

¹⁶ Liber Al – I: 40

¹⁷ Liber Al – I: 57

¹⁸ Liber Al – III: 60

¹⁹ Liber Al – I: 15

²⁰ Liber Al – I: 32

²¹ Liber Al – I: 37, 38

terminated with nuclear weapons, the most awesome and destructive machines that homo sapiens has so far created. Since then, the ensuing Cold War saw the production of even mightier engines of destruction, the ICBM and the hydrogen bomb, not to mention biological and chemical weapons.

The use of the adverb “hardly” in this line is unusual. Normally, the word means “little or not at all,” here it used, in one of its British connotations, to mean “harshly or severely.”

Since the Cold War, the spread of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism has rekindled the spirit of the Crusades, and kills everyone in its vicinity, civilian and soldier alike. As Crowley puts it: “War no longer kills soldiers, it kills all indiscriminately.”²² Mankind has always had war, it is nothing new, but since 1904 it has taken on a particularly virulent and catastrophic nature. And it will continue to do so, until mankind as a whole accepts and lives by the law of Thelema.

DRUGS: Recreational drugs have always been with us, and in many cultures have been used for spiritual purposes. But the do-gooders and what Crowley calls the “Meddlesome Matties,” who are not content unless they are telling other people how to live their lives, have, one by one, with the exception of alcohol (they did try in America with Prohibition) made them illegal and have unleashed the S.W.A.T team infested War on Drugs on the world to the detriment of anyone affected by it. Of course, this has nothing to do with the fact that by declaring them contraband has made these substances worth a tremendous amount of money to unscrupulous people everywhere, and not just Colombian drug lords, drug cartels and street pushers, but crooked cops, lawyers, judges, politicians etc. etc, all of whom reap fantastic profits from the illicit trade of drugs.²³

- **Hadit:** “I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight and bright glory, and stir the hearts of men with drunkenness. To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all. It is a lie, this folly against self. The exposure of innocence is a lie. Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.

The use of drugs has been ordained by the gods and the puny machinations of the human legal system is going to have little or no effect on it, but it does have the effect of unleashing unbridled criminal elements on the public, which puts the public very much in harm’s way. Prohibition did not work with alcohol, it didn’t work in the Garden of Eden and it is not working with drugs. A better way to deal with drug use must be found, such as accepting it as just another facet of life.

SEX: Love and sex, whether for reproduction or pleasure or both, has been for far too long repressed and held as decadent by the Osirian religions, especially Islam and Christianity.

- **Hadit:** “There is a veil: that veil is black. It is the veil of the modest woman; it is the veil of sorrow, & the pall of death: this is none of me. Tear down that lying spectre of the centuries: veil not your vices in virtuous words: these vices are my service; ye do well, & I will reward you here and hereafter.”²⁴
- **Nuit:** “Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me.”²⁵

²² Liber Al – Introduction – The Next Step

²³ Liber Al – II, 22

²⁴ Liber Al – II: 57

²⁵ Liber Al – I: 51

- **Crowley:** “There shall be no Property in Human Flesh. Every Man and every Woman hath Right Indefeasable to give the Body for the Enjoyment of any other.”²⁶

Witness the Sexual Revolution, the ever-increasing graphic depiction of the sex act in the cinema and on prime-time television, the incredible popularity of pornography and so on much to the teeth-gnashing chagrin of the emasculate religious wretches who penetrate the anuses of pre-pubescent children with their rampant members and then preach piety in the pulpit. Or the gnarled bitch-witches who decry the depiction of the act of love in the name of “family values,” seemingly ignorant of the fact that if parents didn’t fuck, there would be no families.

THE VIRGIN MARY AND THE SCARLET WOMAN: The time of the Immaculate Virgin is done, her office has been taken by the Lady in Red and the Great Whore of the Stars.

- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “Let Mary inviolate be torn upon wheels: for her sake let all chaste women be utterly despised among you! Also for beauty's sake and love's!”²⁷
- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “Let the Scarlet Woman ...raise herself in pride! Let her follow me in my way! Let her work the work of wickedness! Let her kill her heart! Let her be loud and adulterous! Let her be covered with jewels, and rich garments, and let her be shameless before all men!”

Witness the popularity of sexy rock queens, porn stars and movie stars, the scantily-clad Amazons of the comic books and video games. The time of the Inviolable Virgin is done.

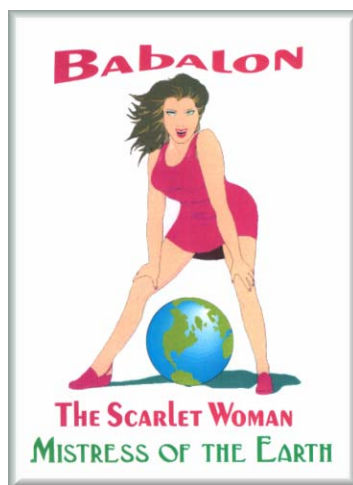


Figure 5 – Babalon, mistress of the earth.²⁸

THE AEON OF HORUS, THE CROWNED AND CONQUERING CHILD: In 1904, at the Equinox of the Gods, Horus (the Greek form) or Ra Hoor Khuit (the Egyptian form), the Child of Isis and Osiris assumed the throne of the earth:

²⁶ Liber Aleph: 34 – De Libertate Corporis

²⁷ Liber Al: III, 55, 56

²⁸ Thomas Voxfire



Figure 6 – The Tarot trump, The Aeon²⁹

Crowley:

- He rules the present period of 2000 years, beginning in 1904. Everywhere his government is taking root. Observe for yourselves the decay of the sense of sin, the growth of innocence and irresponsibility, the strange modifications of the reproductive instinct with a tendency to become bi-sexual or epicene, the childlike confidence in progress combined with nightmare fear of catastrophe, against which we are yet half unwilling to take precautions.
 - Consider the outcrop of dictatorships, only possible when moral growth is in its earliest stages, and the prevalence of infantile cults like Communism, Fascism, Pacifism, Health Crazes, Occultism in nearly all its forms, religions sentimentalized to the point of practical extinction.
 - Consider the popularity of the cinema, the wireless, the football pools and guessing competitions, all devices for soothing fractious infants, no seed of purpose in them.
 - Consider sport, the babyish enthusiasms which it excites, whole nations disturbed by disputes between boys.
 - Consider war, the atrocities which occur daily and leave us unmoved and hardly worried. We are children.
 - How this new Aeon of Horus will develop, how the Child will grow up, these are for us to determine, growing up ourselves in the way of the Law of Thelema under the enlightened guidance of the Master Therion.³⁰

The Master Therion (To Mega Therion – Greek for the Great Beast) was the name Crowley took when he was initiated into the Office of Magus.

TIME OUT: There's been war as long as there has been man. Drugs, sex, and obscenity are nothing new. Are we really to believe that some child god is changing the face of mankind? It's the same as it's always been; it's nothing new!

In one limited sense, this is true – “changing ever, yet ever the same”³¹ – but, in a far greater sense, the Book of the Law and the Law of Thelema have brought about a spiritual

²⁹ Thoth Tarot Cards by Aleister Crowley and Lady Freida Harris

³⁰ Liber Al: Introduction – The New Aeon

³¹ Invocation of Thoth – Liber Israfel, The Equinox, Vol. I, No. VII pgs. 23-27

revolution that has touched all the Children of Earth. How mankind deals with this revolution will determine its fate for the next few centuries or possibly longer. Time will tell.

Crowley was vilified by the popular press and English society he operated in with a hostile intensity that borders on the incredible. “The wickedest man in the world” would be an accolade better laid on Adolph Hitler and his ilk. What did Crowley do that was really all that terrible? He took lots of drugs, slept around a lot, took pot-shots at English society, wrote a few pornographic books, founded several magical orders, and proclaimed a new spiritual law for all men and women.

Quite frankly, this pissed many people off, so they went after him. But it is nothing new for Magi: Moses was exiled from Egypt, Jesus was scourged and crucified by the Romans at the behest of Herod, Mohammed fled Mecca, because his life was threatened by the rich merchants and their mercenaries. The bottom line is Crowley had no choice. He was given an Office and he had to fulfill it, to the best of his rather formidable abilities. As he stated, he had to accept the curse of his grade.

What will be the effect of the Book of the Law upon current modes of worship. The third chapter states quite clearly:

- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men. Curse them! Curse them! Curse them! With my Hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross. I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed & blind him. With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din. Bahlasti! Ompehda! I spit on your crapulous creeds.”³²

And the ultimate effect on men and women of accepting the Book of the Law and the law of Thelema and living in accord there with, as it is written:

- **Nuit:** Come forth, o Children, under the stars, & take your fill of love. I am above you and in you. My ecstasy is in yours. My joy is to see your joy.”³³
- **Nuit:** “I give unimaginable joys on earth: certainty, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest, ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.”³⁴
- **Hadit:** “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.”³⁵
- **Hadit:** “Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star and the Snake.”³⁶
- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “Nu is your refuge as Hadit your light; and I am the strength, force, vigour of your arms.”³⁷
- **Ra Hoor Khuit:** “Success is your proof, courage is your armour; go on, go on, in my strength; & ye shall turn not back for any!”³⁸

So what was Aleister Crowley? Put simply, he was a Magus with a Mission: to lead men and women to accept the Law of Thelema, to find their True Wills and achieve conscious godhead; to make them gods and goddesses. Nor shall his Mission fail.

So let it be written! So let it be done! So mote it be!

³² Liber Al: III, 49 - 54

³³ Liber Al: I, 12,13

³⁴ Liber Al: I, 58

³⁵ Liber Al: II, 9

³⁶ Liber Al: II, 21

³⁷ Liber Al: III, 17

³⁸ Liber Al: III, 46

Works Cited

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3. The Equinox of the Gods – Equinox Volume III, Number III
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5. Thoth Tarot Cards – Aleister Crowley and Lady Frieda Harris

For Further Reading All by Aleister Crowley

Book 4, Parts 1 & 2

The Book of Lies

Eight Lectures on Yoga

Magick in Theory and Practice

Magick Without Tears

(All the volumes cited here and above are available on Amazon.com and many other booksellers.)

On the Internet

Wikipedia.com has extensive information on Crowley, The Book of the Law and the Law of Thelema

Or simply Google “Aleister Crowley” and find the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly about him, his works and his mission.