



## WHAT IS THELEMA?

### ETYMOLOGY

Thelema ("They-LEE-mah" or "They-LEH-mah") is a Greek word meaning "will" or "intention".

### BACKGROUND

It is also the name of a spiritual philosophy mentioned in Francois Rabelais's 1532 *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

Thelema was further developed by Aleister Crowley, a poet, author, mountaineer, magician, and mystic who in 1904 channeled a three chapter book called "*The Book of the Law*", declaring, "The word of the law is Thelema".

### MAIN PRINCIPLE

Each person has the right to fulfill themselves through whatever beliefs and actions are best suited to them (so long as they do not interfere with the will of others), and only they themselves are qualified to determine what these are.

The main task of an individual setting out on the path of Thelema is to first discover his or her True Will.

The essential nature of the Law of Thelema is that of Love. Each individual unites with his or her True Self in Love.

## WHO WAS ALEISTER CROWLEY?



(1875-1947)

Edward Alexander (Aleister) Crowley [rhymes with "holy"] was born October 12, 1875 in Leamington Spa, England.

He had a Christian upbringing, attended Trinity College at Cambridge University. He later became a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn which taught **hermetic subjects** (magick, qabalah, alchemy, tarot, astrology, alchemy).

In 1900 the order was shattered by schism, and Crowley left England to travel extensively throughout the East where he learned and practiced the mental and physical disciplines of **yoga**.

## WHAT IS THE STELE OF REVEALING?

In 1903, Crowley and wife **Rose Kelly**, went to Egypt on their honeymoon. They returned to Cairo in early 1904, when Rose began entering trance states and insisting to her husband that the god Horus was trying to contact him. As a test, Crowley took Rose to the **Boulak Museum** and asked her to point out Horus to him. She passed several well-known images of the god and led Aleister straight to a painted wooden **funerary stele** from the 26th dynasty, depicting Horus receiving a sacrifice from the deceased, a priest named **Ankh-f-n-khonsu**.



Aleister began to listen to Rose, and at her direction, on three successive days beginning April 8, 1904, he entered his chamber at noon and wrote down what he heard dictated from a shadowy presence behind him. The result was the three chapters of verse known as Liber AL vel Legis, or The Book of the Law.

## WHAT IS THE LEGACY OF THELEMA?

England 1906: Crowley created with **George Cecil Jones** a magical order to continue where the Golden Dawn had left off. The **A.'. A.'. (Astrum Argentium or Silver Star)** became the primary vehicle for the transmission of Crowley's mystical and magical training system based on the principles of Thelema.



1910: **Theodore Reuss**, the head of an organization based in Germany called the **Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.)** contacted Aleister. The O.T.O. were high-ranking Freemasons claiming to have discovered the supreme secret of practical magick, taught in the highest degrees. Crowley took over in 1921 and **reformulated the rites of the O.T.O. to conform to the Law of Thelema;** vesting the organization with its main purpose of establishing Thelema in the world. The order also became independent of Freemasonry **and opened its membership to women and men who were not masons.**

Hastings, England December 1, 1947: Aleister Crowley passed away. His legacy lives on in the Law of Thelema, many books and writings on magick / mysticism, and in the orders of the A.'. A.'. and O.T.O. which continue to advance the principles of Thelema to this day.

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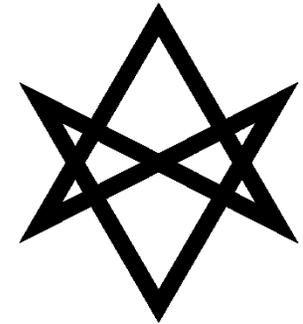


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What is Thelema?



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