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# INSIGHT MAGAZINE

118, Windham Road,  
Bournemouth, Hants, England.  
Editor's Tel. No. B'mth 37502

April - May 1968 Issue No. 6

Advertising Manager's Tel. No. 46944

Published every six weeks

3/6 each 30/- per year  
65 cents each \$3.60 per year

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Published by D. James, 118, Windham Road, Bournemouth, Hants.

Printed by Hurad Ltd., Bridge Street, Christchurch, Hants.

# MAGIC - The Practical Approach

by Margaret Bruce

A lot of people have given definitions of the meaning of the word Magick. The late Aleister Crowley called it "the Science and Art of Causing Change to occur in conformity with Will." Even this sane and succinct definition failed to raise the status of the discredited word which, thanks to the misdirected energy of the sewer scribes responsible for the bulk of the Sabbath and weekday Press, is permanently associated with the obscene and the ludicrous.

I add the Saxon "k" to magic in order to distinguish it from ledgerdemon, superstition and charlatanism. To stress the distinction I would then define Magick as "the art of using the creative imagination for practical ends." This immediately brings it out of the airy fairy dreamland of wishful thinking into its true environment of here-and-now reality.

The practical approach to Magick is not intended to write off as nonsense the exploration of the Aethyrs and the communication with Cosmic Entities. It is in fact the one means by which the solid reality of genuine Cosmic Relationships can be PROVED and UTILISED.

The first task of the student of Practical Magick is to realise and experience the simple truth that there is no division between "natural" and "supernatural" and that these are mere words, invented by an intellectual society to describe intellectual concepts having no existence outside of the words that describe them. This is the fault of much intellectual speculation. The individual, far from using his intelligence, is a victim of the fallacious assumption that, because a word exists, there must be a reality which it describes. Once you find that words are dominating your thinking and behaviour patterns in this way, you can be sure that you will have the greatest difficulty in discovering real Magick.

The answer is to forget all about words. Even the word Magick, which in our present day society, has been usurped by terms like "Science", "Psychology", "Botany", "Agriculture". This is the point where both the hardened sceptic and the out and out "believer" begin to scoff. The sceptic sees this as a regressive tendency to apply whimsical and archaic terms to familiar phenomena whereas it is merely a demonstration of the fact that these branches of Magick have been, to some extent, mastered by a wider section of the educated and intelligent community. Once the principles governing their material aspects have been grasped they are mentally removed from the category of "Magick" and popped into arbitrary intellectual pigeon-holes. Once again, the intellectual confuses the word with the thing it represents and eases his emotional conflict by a deft switch of labels.

The "believer" rejects the idea of Magick being found in the kitchen sink and under the automobile bonnet because, like the sceptic, he has been conditioned to accept the artificial terms "natural" and "supernatural". The difference is that he regards the "supernatural" in which he believes as a completely separate realm of experience and

tends to scorn what he calls "materialism" because it crops up at inconvenient moments to shatter his comfortable dream world where his powers are limitless and where he walks with the gods. It is a short step indeed from this attitude to the sick realm of paranoid schizophrenia, the "occupational disease" of the unfortunate occultist who fails to relate "spiritual exercises" with the material realities to which they refer. Had he understood the need for achieving occult balance by dragging his dreams, kicking and screaming, into the cold light of day he would be a Magician instead of a practitioner of Meditation that leads to Meditation that leads to Madness!

Because words mean different things to different people, those who practice effective Magick rarely call it by this name and may indeed be contemptuous of anything smacking of "occultism". In a number of instances, the most magickally orientated individuals would probably describe themselves as logical, scientific materialists. They use Magick instinctively. Having somehow escaped the full effects of the environmental and educational conditioning processes that turn eager, bright-eyed young people into state-owned zombies, these rare individuals have never lost their innate sense of wonder and are therefore able to discern and communicate with the living sparks of Magick that are in all things from a snowflake to a jet airliner.

A fault of most self-styled students of the occult is that they seek knowledge through sedentary methods. They will read, discuss, meditate and listen. They will rarely, if ever, do anything more practical than correspond with fellow students. Instead of establishing a relationship with NATURE, they create relationships with fellow seekers which, far from blossoming into a magickal rapport, usually degenerates into a reciprocal exchange of psycho-pathological symptoms.

Once one has grasped the significant truth that Magick permeates every level of awareness the danger of falling victim to self-delusion is reduced. By recognising the Magick in our immediate vicinity we become aware of the folly of seeking it in some realm of non-being outside the Universal Reality. The ability to see the Magick that surrounds each one of us depends upon retaining a childlike attitude of imaginative interest and wonder. This is not to be confused with a childish attitude. To illustrate the difference; the earnest senior schoolboy who takes himself seriously and is at pains to emulate the talk, mannerisms and opinions of sophisticated adults is childish. The "enthusiast" who has an all-consuming interest in some practical hobby and can infect others with this eager absorption in the intricacies of the seemingly commonplace is childlike.

The Ancient Egyptians knew the necessity for preserving the childlike attitude and harnessing this to material reality before allowing it to venture into the Choraes of the Universal Consciousness. The young Neophyte was not rendered spiritually costive by stodgy dollops of Arcane Philosophy and esoteric Allegory. Although Philosophical Speculation and Metaphysical Allegory have a legitimate function, they have, throughout the ages, been abused as a means of concealing ignorance, deceiving the gullible and excusing the professional Charlatan from giving material demonstration of his pretended powers. The Egyptians tried to prevent this abuse by basing their teachings on a first-hand practical knowledge of the behaviour and qualities of base

matter and relating this to the Cosmic Forces governing such matter.

The first steps were the acquisition of basic manual skills. Until one can command one's own ten fingers to manipulate yarn, wood, stone, metal, clay and imbue them with tactile knowledge of the four elements it is quite futile to attempt to control the Cosmic Forces that manifest in more elusive guise. When - and not until - the student can recognise the material manifestations of the gods all around him, he is ready to venture beyond the threshold of the first Aethyr.

All authentic occult schools know the importance of linking spiritual exercises with decisive and determined physical action which is why they refuse to let the eager student acquire mere theoretical knowledge ad nauseum. Every invocation, every orison, every ritual and every period of meditation must culminate in tangible material results. Anything less than material manifestation is not only a waste of time but, if indulged in for its own sake as is the tendency with certain types of meditation, is psychologically damaging.

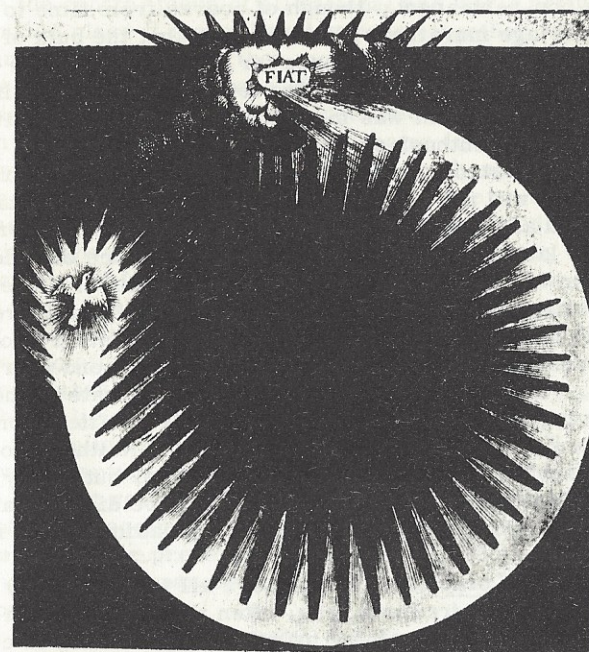
To demonstrate! A child is sick. One invokes Mercury by picking up the telephone and dialling the number of the Doctor. The doctor diagnoses and creates the appropriate talisman, the written prescription. At this point, the average occult student, if he runs true to form, would hang the "talisman" round the child's neck. The materialist would behave more sensibly and have the talisman transformed into the thing it represents by the chemist. The Magician would go further and accompany each step of the procedure by the appropriate invocation and blessing on medicine and child. Most mothers do this kind of thing instinctively and automatically. The simple assurance that "the funny medicine will make you better by tomorrow" accompanied by a kiss is nothing less than a magickal declaration of intent and has more true power than many an elaborate invocation by robed and incense burning "adepts". The conclusion is the logical truth that every man and every woman is a magician and that Magick is not some high falutin' Divine Gift doled out to a select few. The myth that "power" and communion with the gods is reserved for a select and favoured elite has been the trump card of charlatans and jealous priests since the beginning of civilisation. Magick is not a "closed shop". It is a birthright.

The next time you write out a shopping list remember that it is really a talisman symbolising your intention of acquiring something. When you return home with the goods in your possession you have completed a simple act of Magick. The apparently miraculous results of more complex invocations and rituals are simple and logical developments of this method. The first essential is to know what you want. Most occult students never really find out. Next decide which Cosmic Entity governs that need. (No good asking for a stone of potatoes at the stationer's!) and then ACT!

If you find it difficult to turn ideas into action you will have little success in the field of Magick. The irony of the situation is that those who hope to find in occultism an easy answer to their problems and inadequacies are the very people who will fail and fall victim to charlatans. They are the unfortunates whom our society has turned into zombies. The Magick people are hard working, eager, dynamic and successful and full of fun. The zombies are always victims of circumstances. Things seem to happen to them - unless someone can

help them out of their frustrating rut. The Magick people don't wait for circumstances; they MAKE things happen.

In my next article I shall explain how YOU can make things happen.



#### MAGICK IN ACTION!

A Hermetic drawing depicting The Creation as it spirals up from the Realm of Potentialities and explodes into the Realm of Physical Being. Every act of Magick is a repetition of The Creation. Until it culminates in Reality it is a trapped bird, fluttering in the darkness of the Chaos.

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