

Ignorance of all things is an evil neither terrible nor excessive, nor yet the greatest of all; but great cleverness and much learning, if they be accompanied by a bad training, are a much greater misfortune.

Plato

Beware the Charlatan

The first steps onto the Magick path can be frustrating and treacherous. In your search, you will find twists, turns, steep hills, and forks in the road. The worst of all obstacles found on the journey are the charlatans and frauds: those who attempt to lead you from the path. There are many reasons for others to not want you looking for Light, Life, Love, Liberty, and Law; you may become hard to control; you may not be as servile; you may not be willing to pay homage to someone else, or to their god.

A charlatan may take many familiar guises, including that of a priest, a pastor, a swami, a prophet, a relative or as an advance Initiate. In many instances, the charlatan is in a state of self-delusion and does not recognize him or herself for what they are.

Signs of knowing a charlatan or a fraud:

1. When attempts are made to demand or coerce you into doing anything that is contrary to your nature or best interest. It is a short step from servitude to slavery.
2. Forced obligation to give services, material goods, or money. Demands for money in exchange for magical instruction, occult secrets, or admission to groups.
3. Insistence on faith, and condemnation of questions. Question all things. Harm will not come from it. Those who would mislead you will fear questions and those lacking the knowledge or ability to teach will fluster.

Mistaken Identity:

Some grey areas exist and may be hard to reconcile at first glance. It is therefore necessary to provide two examples of mistaken identity in the desire to stress proper introspection of any suspicious circumstances encountered:

1. The O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis), being a society constituted under the Law of Thelema, charges for membership. However, they do not charge for instruction and they do not sell secrets. Closer examination

reveals a structure related to the Free Masons and the fees collected maintain that structure. Magical instruction forms part of their tradition, however they provide other services, and these other services justify the membership duties collected.

2. The true story of the Apprentice arriving at an Adepts lodgings for his first instruction:

Adept: I must finish my studies before beginning your instructions. Please clean the kitchen and I should be finished by the time you are done.

Apprentice: I did not come here to clean your kitchen.

Adept: As you wish.

Apprentice: It is not like I am afraid of hard work.

Adept: I see.

Apprentice: Are you mad?

Adept: Not at all.

A short time later.

Apprentice: Are you finished your studies?

Adept: I am.

Apprentice: Can you begin my instruction now?

Adept: I will now clean my kitchen.

Apprentice: What of my instruction?

Adept: I have time to provide your instruction or to clean the crockery, not both. The decision has already been made. Please return tomorrow for your next lesson.

The two above examples demonstrate the care that should be taken not to mislabel or misjudge anyone at first glance. Only after careful consideration and application of the criteria contained in this chapter can a reasonable conclusion be drawn. Further, the student should read and apply the "Rights of Man" as listed in Liber 77 (Section One, Part 8, Chapter "Liber LXXVII Oz") to any situation bringing restriction or servitude.

If you think you are being used, abused, or taken advantage of, then you probably are. Self-preservation is a sacred law. Do not follow others to a needless death of the mind or body. Death will come in its own time and place. Here follows a list of the ten principal methods for recognizing dangerous groups, societies, orders, covens, or cults:

1. Exhibit signs of paranoia or persecution.
2. Domination of Leaders over Members.
3. Infallibility declared by Leaders.
4. Demands for money or '*worldly possessions*'.
5. Any forms of critical censorship regarding Leaders or Members.
6. Methods used to obtain, keep and return Members.
7. Violence used to command obedience.
8. Any type of demand for sex.
9. Removing decisions and personal responsibility from Members.
10. Any signs that the principles taught are not followed.

Further study of this chapter from the Required Reading:

Liber LXXVII, Liber Oz