

What follows is not intended to be a biographical study or analysis of the life of the Czech adept Franz Bardon. I have not done exhaustive study of the subject, quite simply because any exhaustive study of this man is impossible. Franz Bardon is one of the most mysterious magical figures in recent history; there are as many fables and stories about him as there are of Aleister Crowley, and yet as little is objectively known about his life as is known of MacGregor Mathers'. Anyone claiming to have "the scoop" on Franz Bardon should be abjectly ignored, and anyone claiming to be an authority on his life is probably just really good at making things up. For the purpose of gaining some insight into this extraordinary man, I will include what verified or witnessed material I can think of, but I will also include some of the fables that may or may not be based on truth. I think that both are important if we are to understand who Franz Bardon was. This document is not a biographical sketch, but merely the perspective of a student of magic who has followed this line of development, in addition to others, on the subject of this adept. It will not be air-tight, some names may be mis-spelled, or some events not recited perfectly. I'm not a scholar, and, thank God, neither am I a historian. I am just a magician.

From Franz Bardon the boy, to the Master Arion

To begin with a necessary character introduction, Franz Bardon was born in Czechoslovakia, in a city called Opava, on December 1st, 1909. There is very, very little known about his childhood conditions. Apparently Mrs. Bardon mentioned in a letter to a student that Bardon came out as a stillborn upon his birth, and that after two hours of intense care, "miraculously" came to life. He is also said to have been the oldest of a solid family consisting of thirteen brothers and sisters, all the children of a devout Christian mystic, Viktor Bardon.

At this point, what few resources are available on Franz Bardon seem to split into two different views. This has caused a sort of division in certain groups of students, each one believing they have the correct view. According to legend, Franz Bardon's father was a sternly mystic devotee of God. Having exhausted all benefits of religion, he would pray fervently for something more, for God to guide him onto a faster path than had been made available to him. In the performance of what exercises he did have, and because of the sensitivity that any such devotion will cause, it is recorded that Viktor had achieved accurate clairvoyance amongst other magical faculties. One morning, he realized as his fourteen year old son walked into the room, that his son was no longer his son. Clairvoyantly, he understood himself to be looking at a completely different person.

This conviction that Franz Bardon was now someone totally different was only strengthened as that week continued. Not only is he reported as having taken on a different way of speaking, as well as different mannerisms and gestures, but his school life changed also. The teachers at Bardon's school contacted Viktor and informed him that, all of the sudden, Franz was doing unusually excellent, and demonstrating knowledge of the sciences which should have been beyond him. His handwriting had changed, his knowledge had suddenly increased, and his overall behavior was different. Within a week's time, it became obvious that this was no longer

Viktor's boy. Unfortunately the details of that week essentially end there, and we are left simply to assume that Franz eventually told his father who he was and what had happened. The remnant of the legend as passed down by some students of Bardon, such as Oti Votavova, Dr. M.K., and Dietter Rugeberg, states that Franz became Viktor's guru. The outcome of this new relationship was never recorded and, to my knowledge, has never been commented on by anyone who could be considered a viable source or witness.

Some people, even students who have tested and verified the efficiency of Bardon's system, hold to the view that this detail of Bardon's life was likely a fabrication created by the over-zealous Oti Votavova. In some ways, it does not really matter whether the story is true or not. On the other hand, if we deny this story as fanciful, then we are also closing ourselves off to one of the few pieces of information that we have about Bardon's magical career. Likewise, if we deny this story, then we no longer have a viable explanation for how the hell Franz Bardon became such an accomplished magus. As I'll discuss a little bit later, the depth of mastery which Bardon maintained over powerful spirits and potent energies seems to provide a modern example even greater than some of the mythical magicians and sorcerers of legends and fairy tales.

It has fallen upon those people, then, to provide an alternative means of Bardon's meteoric and youthful rise to a mastery of magic. This these dogs do by trying to seek out any possible means of making Bardon appear to have been a normal initiate, which if anything else, he certainly was not. The most sure and direct approach to this endeavor is to try and identify who Bardon's "superiors" must have been, and therefore who he may or may not have learned from. Towards this end I have come upon and listened to some of the most fantastic stories, many of them less believable than even those legends of Bardon's own magical powers which they try to decry. According to these people, always with their own theories, and rarely with so much as a single possible verification, Bardon was a member of virtually every occult Order which was operating in Germany at that time. Some of them care absolutely little for the factual dates of Bardon's development, attributing his membership to Orders which did not even exist in Germany until long after Bardon was already regionally famous for his adeptness. From the O.T.O, through the Universalis and Order of Saturn, with conspiracy theories suggesting he was even a member of the F.O.G.C. Lodge that was villainized in his attempted biography, "Frabatto the Magician." According to these people he was a Mason, he was an Anti-Mason, he was a Rosicrucian, he was a Satanist, a Pagan, a Sex-Magic addict, and oh so much more. To believe such things would be counterproductive even to the most fetal faculties of common sense. He may have been a member of this or that Order, and it is known that he had correspondences with leading members in various lodges, but so do I! And I did not receive my own training from any of them, but am quite apart from them, and yet mysteriously I still maintain a working relationship with representative initiates of the AMORC, BOTA, EOGD, HOGD, SOL, and the AS, and I have an amiable relationship and correspondence with more than one Grand Master of such Orders. The continuing misinformation known as "History" will probably record, should I ever be worth making record of, that I received my training from one if not all of the above mentioned Orders.

The reality of the matter is that the two people most often accused of being Bardon's "teachers" most assuredly could not have been. These two people are Karl Weinfurter and Ra Omir (Wilhelm) Quintscher. In the former case, by the time Bardon had met Weinfurter, he had already surpassed him and had nothing to learn. In the latter case, we have only the word of Wilhelm Quintscher Jr., the son of the above mentioned, to go on. In correspondence with Mrs. Bardon, Quintscher Jr. records that Franz was eighteen years old when introduced to Quintscher Sr., and that by that time, Franz had already fully developed his magical faculties. Having asked his father about this mysterious man later in his life, Ra Omir said that himself and Bardon had been very good friends for many centuries, and often incarnated in similar time periods to help one another out.

Unfortunately, Wilhelm Quintscher still had some things to learn. When Bardon demanded Quintscher to cease their correspondence due to increasing pressure from Nazi authorities, he did not do so. This disobedience led to the joint capture of both Mr. Quintscher and Franz Bardon by the Nazis, where they were tortured and interrogated for the sake of learning their magical abilities, or until they agreed to use their magic to serve Hitler. It is also reported that Hitler desired to know where the other 98 lodges of the "99" Satanic lodge were, perhaps because he was under the misimpression that by having political control over all of them, he would be able to command their joint power. Bardon, we are told, resisted the interrogations and handled the torturing stoically. Quintscher, on the other hand, lost his calm during on such interrogation and uttered a Qaballistic formulae, likely one which Bardon had taught him, in order to paralyze the interrogaters. Unfortunately for Quintscher the effects of the spell wore off, and when the Nazis regained use of their limbs, Quintscher was shot. Franz Bardon lived on to serve in a concentration camp, and had been scheduled for execution in April. During his waiting period, he serves "Death Detail," where his job was to pick up the heads of those who had been executed and collect them in a burlap sack. To once again resort to legend (as we must do so many times with this story), it is said that Bardon expressed unusual confidence that he was not going to die on his execution day, since he had a higher task waiting for him. The day before his execution, the concentration camp was liberated by allied forces, and Bardon returned home.

Though we have taken a slight historical detour, this still leads us back to the point that he had nothing to learn from Weinfurt, and probably played more of a teacher role than anything else to Quintscher. Thus, ignoring the theory that Franz Bardon was what is called an "avesh" or "spiritual entry," we are left with little material of value to explain his magical prowess. This was not the skill of an average student of magic who dedicated himself to his art. This was the skill of someone who had been perfecting his art for centuries if not longer.

Returning briefly to what few accounts we have of his early life, we find Franz Bardon as a fourteen year old magus with apparently fully developed magical faculties, a different demeanor, a new style of handwriting, a changed personality, and unaccounted-for knowledge. Franz Bardon's own son, Lumir Bardon, follows the idea that he was an Avesh as the explanation of this knowledge, and we should assume that his son was privy to at least some information which the modern researcher would not have access to. Lumir recounts that,

growing up, he was told about how his father (Franz), as a youth of just fifteen or sixteen, would be used by the police for local investigations. Even by that time his fame as a seer had already grown to such a degree that he was considered a viable authority in solving crimes. In particular, we are told that Bardon excelled in “Missing Persons” cases. The police would give Franz a picture of a missing person, and after a moment of contemplation, Franz would direct them correctly to the location of the missing person whether dead or alive.

What is an “Avesh”?

Comparatively little is known about the act of a spiritual entry in the west, most likely for two reasons: firstly, the west does not maintain a culture revolving around the necessary idea of reincarnation, and secondly, because of the many source-texts of the Orient which are still not available to the average researcher. Regardless, even in those cultures which record such incidents, a genuine avesh is a rare happening.

There are many reasons for which an avesh may occur. Perhaps the most well known reason is that a particularly powerful being is subject to the same laws of reincarnation as everyone else. If a new body is taken by normal incarnation, then the astral body is re-outfitted, and the activities of the mental vehicle are suppressed and subjected to the brain of the new body. For this reason even great souls, when they reincarnate, will still have to go through the same training as everyone else to get back to their previously attained spiritual states. They will, in most instances, be born with no significant memories of previous lives. At most an advanced soul may be able to arrange for being born with a few natural magical faculties, such as etheric vision or clairaudience, but even that is not particularly common. Such souls do not usually return to their proper states until the age of thirty or so. The momentum of many previous incarnations of spiritual practice pushes them further and faster than the average person, yes, but there is still pushing involved.

This is not so in the instance of an avesh. It becomes a complete replacement of identity, a genuine “body-snatch.” This is called Parakaya Pravesh Siddhi, the willful entry into a body, whether that body is alive or dead, and its subsequent willed animation. In such an entry, the soul is able to keep the dynamics of its astral and mental bodies. Therefore a body which an adept has entered in this manner will suddenly possess magical faculties, and on astral and mental levels, the adept will still be able to perform whatever magic he has perfected in previous incarnations as though he had never died. He will also still maintain the knowledge, and the personality, which represents his essential character.

If one follows the view of theosophy, as well as the view of a significant number of Yogis, Jesus Christ is an example of an avesh performed for this reason. In this instance, the vehicles were properly prepared ahead of time, and a higher being in the form of consciousness alone entered into Jesus, making him “The Christ.” Other examples, such as Shirdi Sai and Chrowranginath, can also be investigated fruitfully. Helena Blavatsky, in the second volume of “Isis Unveiled,” also gives an interesting instance in which a Buddhist monk enters into the body of an infant, and that infant subsequently stands up and begins reciting scripture, wherein this power is called “the mystery of the buddha.” It might also be remarked that the crowning

achievement of the adepts of the RR et RC, besides the creation of the ever-burning lamp, is a sort of spiritual avesh: the invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

Therefore, the matter of whether or not Bardon was an avesh is important, because if we believe it, then he was necessarily a particularly advanced adept. If we don't, then we are forced to simply say that somehow, Bardon "magically" became a great magician at an outrageously youthful age. Critics will proclaim that anyone who finds the "necessity" to believe the legend of Bardon's entry into the body of the young boy is overzealous in their love of Bardon, and desires to promote Bardon to a "Jesus-like" status. And in this, there are two likely errors. The first is that one of the best accounts we have, Franz's very own son, agrees with the theory of the avesh. The second likely error is that, due to his religious status, people over-estimate the stature of Jesus Christ.

Franz Bardon and the Problem of Karma

The most logical argument against the "legend" of Bardon's spiritual entry which I have come across is that, karmically, it does not seem to make sense. For if we accept this theory, then we must also admit that Bardon chose to "work out" the karma of the original inhabitant of that body. This indeed, according to those who were close to him, is the very reason why Franz was unable to heal himself of the various ailments which assailed him, and unable to avoid his eventual painful death, in spite of the extent of his power. Though this should really only inspire awe in the character of such a selfless servant, it none the less provides for a legitimate question: is this against the laws of karma?

The answer is no, and the simple reason for it is that karma really doesn't give a damn who works it out. The fact that karma tends to come back to its creator is a mere convenience of the nature of our psychosomatic chakras, wherein our karmas become absorbed and stored. A magnetic happening, having nothing to do with some supposed "will" of the karma itself, as though it were a sentient force. This karma being lodged into the nervous system of a person at birth, and at that time imprinted upon the DNA itself, any body which could be taken over would still be forced to endure the karmas which it, by this time, had built itself upon. The potentials for such things as severe illnesses, personality shifts, and other manners of personal malfunctions, are all encoded upon our bodies at birth. Were this not so, then proven means such as legitimate palmistry or astrology would not be capable of producing accurate insights into future problems.

Though in the West the idea of living out another's karma might seem ludicrous, it is a fully functional aspect of some Eastern traditions, such as the Nath Avatar-Avadhut parampar, and the Bodhisattva tradition of the Buddhists. In these traditions, it is not an entirely uncommon occurrence for a master to choose to work out the karmas of certain disciples by suffering those karmas himself, allowing them to advance on to new lessons. Eventually such a student will still have to learn the lesson which the karmic repercussion was intended to teach; there are no "free passes." However, in the mean time he will be able to grow, and in some future incarnation when he is forced once again to confront that karma, he will be stronger and in a better position to emerge victorious. Sometimes this can be done by a spiritual entry, which is

accounted for in the yogic tradition where a discarnate yogi will temporarily “possess” a person to work out certain karmas. Other times a master can directly take the karma upon himself, volunteering to suffer immensely so that the recipient can advance further on his spiritual path. The sacrifice of Jesus could be viewed in this light, wherein his immense torture and crucifixion would have been natural byproducts of all his healings. The karma didn’t go away: it just got transferred.

This could bring us to a significant realization in regards to Bardon’s health problems. On the one hand, it could be that he had chosen to work out the karma of the original inhabitant of the body, seeing it as a fair trade for being able to use that body to write his books and to help Viktor Bardon. On the other hand it could be that the body would have been quite fine, and may have continued in perfect health, had it not been for his continued healing of others. To my mind, it was likely a combination of both. There then can also enter the equation yet another option which can be added to the pile, which is that Bardon had sworn an oath never to use his magic for his own benefit. There is evidence for this throughout Bardon’s life, where there are many situations which certainly could have been remedied with the proper application of enough force. Not only his poor health, but his imprisonment and eventual death could also have been avoided. Likewise we are told that Bardon possessed a manuscript detailing exactly how to create the Philosopher’s Stone, and yet he apparently did not do this either, since he spent his entire life in poverty. These facts, then, do not become testaments against Bardon’s magical skill. Far from it! They become testaments to his immense selflessness and his powerful sense of service.

That Bardon suffered on behalf of his patients is well known to those who knew him personally. Lumir Bardon recounts an incident where Franz healed a young girl of Tuberculosis, against his better judgment. In the pursuing weeks, his life became a living hell. He began to be confronted by the karma of the girl manifesting in so many ways, requiring that its debt be paid, that Bardon found himself entirely unable to continue with his workings. In what one could imagine to have been a heartbreaking affair, he eventually went back to the girl and explained to her that he had to give TB back to her. After explaining why, she consented and came down with the illness once more. Bardon was then able to return to his work as usual, without the added obstruction of that particular karmic exchange.

Another story comes down to us illustrating the other point also, that Bardon must have either sworn never to use his magic for his own good, or must have at least agreed not to interfere with the karma of the body in any ways. On one occasion, after the consistent pleas of his students, Bardon created an alchemical medicine for his high blood pressure issues. He drank it, and from that point onwards, had low blood pressure problems. He said to his students that it was due to his interference with the karma of his body, and assured that he would never do such a thing again.

The power of a magical oath is nothing to take lightly. Though most students of Bardon cringe at the name (I am not such a student), a pertinent example of a similar issue is brought to mind by Aleister Crowley. Crowley, after receiving the Book of the Law, pledged all of his

affections and emotions towards the fulfillment of what he called the Law of Thelema, and its spreading. He records in his “The Equinox of the Gods, Volume IV: Magick,” that though he had healed many people, both of his marriages ended tragically or disastrously, and he was forced to watch his eight-month old son waste away into death, unable to do any manner of healing on him no matter how much he tried. He attributes this to the breaking of the oath which he had previously sworn to Thelema.

Franz Bardon the Magus

It behooves us to take a look at the magical career of Franz Bardon, by giving a few examples which illustrate to us the kind of adept which he was. I have encountered a number of so-called “adepts” over the years, and have read about countless others, and some of the most remarkable stories are not to be pulled out of medieval tombs, but out of the recollections of this single modern magician’s life.

Franz Bardon seemed to exist in an almost constant state of trancelike peace, happiness, and most importantly, attunement to spiritual forces. On a number of occasions, he is remembered as having simply looked over to a cup of coffee (which he drank furiously) and remarked, correctly, on things going on elsewhere of which he could have had no prior knowledge at that time. One particular example sticks out, drawn from the childhood of Lumir Bardon.

One day while in school, a classmate of Lumir’s, a young girl, lost her purse. It had some things of value in it apparently, so everyone was looking for it to try and help this fellow classmate. Lumir, instantly (and innocently) thinking of the magical ability of his father, proceeded to hop on his bike and ride to Franz’s house as fast as possible. When he finally got to the house he walked in and instantly heard his father’s voice echo down from upstairs saying “I know why you’re here. Its all taken care of, so you can return to school.” When Lumir went back to school, he was told that the girl had found her purse, but no one could really recall how it had happened.

Bardon had apparently demonstrated many times that he was practically omniscient in regards to the affairs of his students, or rather, that he could instantly know any affair or proceeding that he had any desire to know. His son once asked the maid why his father would go on this trips to different countries, but then refuse to talk about anything that had happened there when he came back. Traditionally the maid had always refused, but on this occasion she decided to go ahead and share at least what little bit she knew. Almost as soon as she began, a box of matches on the table stood up on its end and began to dance around in the air. When they agreed that they shouldn’t talk about it, due to the display, the matches fell back down to the table. Lumir saw this as his father having been alerted about the conversation, and using the matches to harmlessly show that he was listening.

True to the nature of the magicians of old, Franz Bardon’s living quarters are described as an absolute mess of magical paraphernalia. He had chests full of talismans, shelves full of tinctures and elixirs, and a kitchen which he had entirely transmuted into an alchemy lab. On the walls of his personal studies hung photographic pictures he had taken of elementals, using

the technique he described in Initiation into Hermetics. From this storehouse he would draw for all of his medicines and all of his magical operations. It was a veritable vault of arcane knowledge, a magical treasury. In addition to the many interesting things he had for direct magical uses, he is said by his wife in a correspondence with another student to have had a personal library of 960 books at the time of his death. Amongst them were many archaic manuscripts, which no one was quite certain how he acquired.

In regards to his business with spirits, some more interesting information is available. It is said that almost every night at midnight, Franz Bardon would grab his magical regalia and equipment for evocations, and leave the house to go to an undisclosed location. Lumir recounts that, no doubt in spite of his efforts, he never learned where his father left to at that hour of the night. What he did know was, more or less, what he was doing: the evocation of spirits. It is recounted that he would not return until the early morning hours, and that on many occasions no one was certain whether or not he had slept. Indeed if he did not at least go for days at a time without sleeping, it was suggested by some that he may not have even slept at all beyond short naps every now and then.

This adept had such a fantastic mastery of the spirits which he worked with that he was able to, at will, give a veritable demonstration of their existence. Though people have criticized his book “The Practice of Magical Evocation,” calling it “useless,” Bardon could give ample demonstration of the spirits therein. According to some students, he would sit at his kitchen table, usually after dictating a part of the aforementioned book, and would draw a sigil from the book in the air. Almost instantly there would be an electrical disturbance in the house, and a sudden rush of sound would enter the room. It was reported as having sounded like a lot of flapping wings, flying around the room. The room would then grow silent and Bardon would go into a trance, which after coming out, he would relay what information the spirit had given.

This is a particularly interesting point from the eyes of a practicing magician. Anyone who has ever done an evocation into the dense astral levels, meaning into the Archeus, is familiar with that sound. It is a peculiar disturbance of the ethers which beats them like drums, you could say, causing their fluctuation when something is nearing materialization. It then follows that every practicing magician will know how utterly difficult it is to achieve such a materialization at will, due to the limited powers of both the spirit and the student of magic. It takes powerful spells, in most instances, to compel a being to come to you at all! Beyond that, it requires an even greater initiate to bring that spirit into a dense enough level of activity so as to allow for clearly audible phenomenon. Every practicing magician knows that as he advances, he can have more and more success in the sphere of evocation with gradually less and less ritual. The less ritual one uses, the more one must be familiar with the spirit being evoked, and the more masterful the magician must be. For him, the magic circle is now his aura, and not some external representation. To get to a point where one can summon forth a being, and cause such auditory effects with the mere tracing of that being’s sigil, is an incredibly rare accomplishment.

The thing which Franz Bardon became the most well known for in his region, though, was his

ability to heal people of difficult ailments with his alchemical medicines. This same practice, which he continued selflessly through his entire life, was eventually the excuse used by the oppressive government he was under to arrest him and seize all of his supplies. According to legend, Bardon could heal cancer up to the second stage of development using his tinctures and magnetic energies, and when the plague hit his region, was one of the only “doctors” remaining in the area who willingly worked with the victims. In spite of his service to others, he himself had many ailments. He possessed a malfunctioning thyroid gland, a gradual case of pancreatitis, and low blood pressure, all of which added up to create metabolic problems also. These conditions contributed to the gradual weight gain which Bardon experienced his entire life, going from pencil-thin in his early years to obese in his last years.

I have not given these examples to inflate the image of Franz Bardon. I have given them simply to serve as an indication of what manner of adept he was, and to what degree he had mastered the system which he taught to others. He is the best example of the accuracy of his teachings, and demonstrated mastery of the faculties and skills which his system is intended to develop. We might also add a comment in regards to one of the truest marks of genuine adeptness. Though he had been tortured and put in a concentration camp where surgery was performed on him without anesthesia, though he suffered from tremendous health problems with no cure, though he worked through the karmas of his students and clients, though his total devotion to his work kept him away from the family he very much loved, and though he was constantly spending his own time and energy for the wellbeing of others and often the destruction of himself, though he knew how he would die, still he was always happy. His son remarks, “My father was always ready for some good fun.” His students and family unanimously attest to his impervious joy and sense of self peace, no matter what very good reasons he must have had to have been a depressed or bothered person. We are told that he was seen genuinely sad by his own son on only one occasion: shortly before his death. This brings us to the next subject of our examination.

Franz Bardon’s Capture and Death

We are told that following that the publication of his books in 1956, a number of people came from Germany to visit him. Apparently he was already under close surveillance by various political forces, since this visiting is what Rugeberg attributes to the eventual arrest of Franz Bardon. It is said that the Czech medical authorities, jealous of Bardon’s growing fame as a healer, went to the government accusing Bardon of being a spy from the West. During this time the communist countries were extremely suspicious of any person with foreign contacts, and so it is reasonable to believe that they believed themselves to be taking proper measures when they eventually arrested and imprisoned Bardon in 1958.

Another story we have, that which comes to us from his son, is that both Bardon and another student were arrested by the authorities for the illegal production of alcohol without a permit, and using medicines deemed “illegal.” This is further elaborated upon by some sources, saying that the authorities felt that Bardon should have been paying taxes on his alcohol production, which obviously he was not, since the alcohol was produced by home distillation.

In prison, Franz Bardon requested simply from his wife a piece of bacon to be sent to him, saying only that “he had a need of it.” And so she cooked him up a piece of bacon according to the usual recipe, and sent to the prison for him. Almost instantly upon eating it, Bardon began to roll in pain in his cell. This continued for some hours ignored, because the guards believed that he was faking the pain in order to be given relief to a clinic or hospitable. After it continued on for a longer period of time, he was eventually sent to a hospital: the same hospital that one of his students, Dr. M.K, was working in at the time. No one was notified of Bardon’s removal to this hospital, and from the time he left his prison cell, no one ever saw his body again.

Upon his death, or according to some authorities upon his capture, Bardon’s house was raided by the police. All of his talismans and tinctures were confiscated, including all of his books, manuscripts he was working on (including drafts for Key to the True Qabalah and a large biography he was writing), pictures he had, etc. All of his magic rings were taken into custody also, and from that point forward, no one knew anything about what happened to Bardon’s possessions. What books were lost in that seizure, God only knows. Even the clothes that Bardon was supposedly buried in were not returned to his family. It was reported that his body was dissected not once, but twice, after his death. For his funeral and burial, the body was carried in a galvanized coffin that could not be opened, and no one ever saw his body. It is solely because of the incidents surrounding his arrest that we have almost no reliable information on the life, or even the personal practices, of Franz Bardon. All that we can surmise is what is gained via hear-say from those who knew him personally. He died at the age of forty-nine on July 10th, 1958.

Regarding Certain Criticisms

There is something about Bardon that unsuccessful magicians, occultists, and spiritualists the world-over absolutely hate. They despise Bardon, and they can’t stand those who follow his system. They sneer when people report their successes, and some strange ego-phenomenon makes them incapable of appreciating the progress of others when those others are not using the same system as they are. Feeling this discontent, such people have come together to try and debase Franz Bardon. They attack him from any possible opening, no doubt trying to make themselves feel better, or put themselves in a position where they can look down at those “silly fools who follow Bardon.” These people are snakes and dogs in the truest sense of the word, but they are snakes without any real venom, and they are dogs with no real bite. They just hiss and bark. It is because those hisses and barks have ruffled the feathers of some of the chickens trying to follow Bardon, or wanting to believe in him, that there emerged in me a desire to write this article. Hopefully just what I have written thus far has dispelled any need of this section in the minds of most readers, but just in case there are a few stragglers, I shall endeavor to retort to certain criticisms.

One of the first, most unintelligent, and purely fetal insults I tend to come across is that Franz Bardon was overweight, and therefore must not have had the willpower to be an adept. Such people as this, with their hands willingly over their own eyes, want nothing to do with the facts of the man they point their arrows at. They simply want an excuse for some personal reason,

the source of which I can not yet divine. Franz Bardon had a severe thyroid impairment, and anyone with even a cursory knowledge of that affliction knows that the two most prominent and common symptoms associated with it are weight gain and fatigue. The thyroidal hormones control the metabolic speed of the cells in our body, deciding what level of energy they work at. As these hormonal levels fall due to an afflicted thyroid gland, then speed at which the cells are metabolizing slows down, causing fatigue. Because they are no longer using as much energy, an increasing amount of the energy brought into the body becomes stored in the form of body fat. According to those who knew him, Bardon had a very sparing and strict diet. The only time he would eat a normal sized meal, according to his son, was when he would go to his family's house on Wednesday evenings for dinner. Thus his gradual weight gain throughout his life had nothing to do with some supposed lack of discipline. He stoically survived Nazi interrogation and torture! It had to do simply with a glandular problem which, for reasons outlined previously, he was unable to tamper with. He was allowed, apparently, to use the "mundane" medicines of his time, as he supposedly took some pills for his thyroid that Dr. M.K. would prescribe him.

Following the accusation of his obesity, as though on its tail, are the twin accusations regarding his smoking and copious black coffee drinking. It is true, according to accounts of his family, that Franz Bardon had picked up smoking some time in his mid-twenties as his thyroid problems began to increase. To someone as busy as Franz Bardon, smoking cigarettes was merely an unfortunate means to a necessary end. He could not slack on his work, he could not cease the practice of magic, and so he had to combat the affliction of fatigue vigorously. This he did in two ways: nicotine stimulation, and caffeine. The amount of nicotine in a cigarette will increase blood pressure (combating Bardon's low blood pressure problems), increase heart rate to encourage faster oxygenation and therefore increased cell metabolism in the body, and somewhat forces longer breaths, which itself produces more energy for the body. Unfortunately these effects last about a total of thirty minutes in most people, and for someone as physically large as Bardon, perhaps even less. Therefore what one lacks in quality, he is forced to make up for in quantity. This article should have already amply demonstrated that Bardon cared much less about his own wellbeing than he did about getting his spiritual work done. He further supplemented the stimulants to his body with large amounts of daily caffeine in the form of pure, strong black coffee, which he is said to have had a cup of several times each day. All of this he did in order to combat the no-doubt suffocating effects of lethargy from his increasing number of health problems. Had he not taken such routes, there is reason to believe we would not have the three spiritual classics which he gave us today. Any driver who has had to resort to strange methods to squeeze the absolute last breath of life out of his failing car can perhaps sympathize in some small way with what Bardon must have felt in regards to his own body.

Now the slightly more "educated" (and I use that term loosely) point out that there are some apparent discrepancies in Bardon's books. That he made "spelling errors" or placed things wrongly. Some go as far as to say that he tried to copy from older books, and made mistakes in that process as well. Unfortunately, there is little that has been translated into English in defense of these points, and so the English-speaking crowd has had their way with it.

For our first consideration, we must understand that Bardon wrote very, very little of his books with his own hand. The three books which we now have are in fact more of a summary of lectures and dictations which Franz Bardon would give to groups of students, and which Ms. Votavova and another student would take shorthand notes of, and later attempt to produce transcripts of. No doubt Bardon may have personally written a thing or two, for we hear that there were certain pages which he had written that were intended to be included in Key to the True Qabalah, but which were confiscated. However, it is reported that the vast majority of typing was done by two assistants and his wife. Therefore, it is at least reasonable to assume that certain “spelling errors” were theirs, and not his. Or even, perhaps, that Bardon just didn’t care too much about such details as where a vowel may be placed. Though there is certainly power in a spirit’s name, the real thing which designates what spirit you are working with is its sigil, which can be used successfully without any mention of a name at all.

One problem which many students will come across is the apparent disagreement in Key to the True Qabalah between the attributions to the letters in Step I of the practice, and those of Step IV. I say that many students will encounter it, because many students will fallaciously skip ahead and try exercises that they are not really ready for, or will read ahead to the theory sections of books they have not gotten to yet. Key to the True Qabalah will make no sense to someone who did not industriously work through all of Initiation into Hermetics. To someone who then went on to the next logical step of practicing spherical evocation, there will be no discrepancy at all. Not only will any details regarding Bardon’s methods of evocation become very clear, but all of his third book will make perfect sense also. I might add to this that all apparent “problems” with the sigils and names of the spirits in his “Practice of Magical Evocation” will also be resolved by simple practice. Whatever transcription errors might have caused confusion in his second and third books, and whatever manuscript problems may have been had in the initial transcriptions, will be ironed out and made clear when one has actually conscientiously worked up to that point in his practice. In the above mentioned instance of the apparent discrepancy in attributes to the letters of the Qabalah, the student who has actually worked up to that point will immediately and with complete ease be able to identify that one set of attributes corresponds to one realm of experience, and the other corresponds to another. In this instance, we are dealing with qualities as they differentiate between the etheric regions of the archeus and the spiritual regions of the astral realm. Bardon even makes it simpler for the student by stating clearly that some letters have two or more proper correspondences, depending on which plane they are active in. The only real “dirty work” the student will have to do is to discover the 12-tone vibrational scale for the Bardon’s Qabalistic key, since a manuscript problem resulted in the final edition of the book only providing for ten notes, leaving out the notes of E and A-sharp. For the student who has meditated on the qualities of the letters for even a few months, this will prove an easy and intuitive task.

The discussion of Bardon’s third book leads us into another problem which comes up. People, in their never-ending desire to make Bardon appear to be no more than a common magician who learned the same way we all do, have gone mad in their search for Bardon’s “sources” for his spirits and his Qabalistic attributions. At every angle they are bewildered,

and every person who believes he has found the answer is called a liar by someone else who believes that he has found the answer, so that no two people agree on any one source it seems. There are multiple reasons for this, but one of them is a simple error in human reasoning. If something is older, it does not mean that it was better. If a book written 100 years ago about how the human ear works seems to be contradicted by a modern book produced by fruitful research written on the same subject, it denies common sense to instantly assume that our 1909 edition of anatomy is more correct than the 2009 edition. The ear itself worked exactly the same in 1909 as it does today. Nothing, to my knowledge, has changed its function or its mechanics. Our researchers today are simply more advanced, and therefore have the authority to not only release new and hither-to unpublished information about our ears, but even to correct or change old assumptions.

The current author understands that such a simple and straight-forward reasoning on the grounds of common sense is utterly offensive to the sensibilities of certain critics. However, because he does not live in a world where facts change according to convenience, he must push on in this line of reasoning. If we are to believe even a humble third of anything which I have spent this time presenting about Franz Bardon and the stature of his soul, then we can safely assume that he was perfectly qualified to make corrections or complete changes to old dusty manuscripts written by such armchair-magicians as Athanasius Kircher. Indeed we may even believe that Bardon, having come across the writings of certain so-called magicians of the past (after all, he had 960 books), simply saw it convenient to use basic frameworks and terminologies that they had already worked out, but seeing it prudent to fix any errors which his own practice indicated that they had made. To say that he was influenced, however, would be ridiculous. Though a scholar can sometimes learn a thing or two from an idiot, and a king will sometimes find the political advice of a beggar to be quite prudent, it would take a genuinely misguided world view to be convinced that either the scholar or the king attained to their status because of idiots and beggars (speaking crudely of course, unless this sentence is about you).

Continuing on, it bears a moment also to consider the subject of the cipher which Franz Bardon employed. In the instances I have seen where it is mentioned, it is wrongly referred to as the “cipher that Emil Stejnar discovered.” Instead of saying that it is the cipher that Stejnar discovered, it would be far more accurate to agree with Stejnar himself, and refer to it as “the cipher which Bardon employed.” It was attested to by his secretary and his wife that when talking about magic with friends, family, and acquaintances who were not initiates, the subject of different spirits sometimes emerged. Bardon, having a healthy respect for what he no doubt considered to be the sacredness of their real names, created a cipher to be used when he was speaking about them to non-initiates. Why the cipher was not brought to light is uncertain. Like many masters, Bardon likely gave different or seemingly contradictory instructions to different students, each according to their needs. There can be little doubt that he instructed certain students in the decryption of the cipher, or simply never employed such a thing when he was speaking with them, removing the use of it. It is also perfectly possible that those who he taught the cipher to, he instructed not to reveal it. Thinking along these lines, Stejnar himself was uncertain as to whether he should openly publish his findings on the cipher and the nature of the spirits, not certain if it was quite time yet. Afterall, Bardon had often commented that his

books were written six-hundred years too early, and so Stejnar perhaps doubted whether or not it would be prudent to take this apparent step forward. Fortunately after an appeal to Bardon (long after Bardon had died, of course), he received a clear message from Franz that it was his desire for Stejnar to reveal the cipher. The details of how to employ it can be found elsewhere, so I will not bother repeating it here.

Regarding False Myths

Granted that I have already said in this same article that we are often forced to revert to myths and legends about Bardon in order to catch a possible glimpse of his nature, there are some such legends which have no real value towards that end. They do little more than try to make Bardon look even greater than he already indisputably was, presenting him in an almost godlike vesture. We have already considered that Bardon being an avesh is not a legend of this type, but instead serves a very real purpose as the only viable explanation for the level of his natural attainment. What concerns us here is not such legends as we have had to refer to in order to explain things, but those legends which seem to serve no real purpose other than to attribute even further greatness.

The greatest myths regarding Bardon are in relation to his past-life personalities. He has been variously called Hermes Trismegistus, Lao Tzu, and Apollonius of Tyana amongst other things. In one instance, certain photographs are presented under the pretense of having been photographs which Bardon had clairvoyantly made as pictures of his own previous incarnations. This photographs had nothing to do with Franz Bardon, but were taken directly from a German book in print in the 1930's, called "Book of the Buddha of the West," which Bardon was verified as having owned. In fact, Bardon had never once himself implied that he was a reincarnation of any particular adept, or if he did, no one has ever come forward to talk about it. It was the subsequent work of zealous admirers which created the idea that he was the reincarnation of such lofty beings as Hermes Trismegistus, who was invariably Bardon's senior in the spiritual hierarchy, or with such people as Apollonius of Tyana, who can likely safely be called junior to Bardon's own station. Of all the ideas of his incarnations, that of Apollonius is at least the most likely, though I still do not consider it to be true. At least in this instance, their general purposes were the same: the reformation of western magical practices and the integration of eastern practices. None the less they were likely not the same person, as the author has knowledge of a certain great yogi who was alive during the time of Franz Bardon, and who being in a state of constant Nirvikalpa Samadhi could not lie, and in secret humbly admitted to small groups of his advanced students that he was Apollonius. As for Lao Tzu, there are no essential similarities between their teachings or their respective life works, and so this view seems totally unfounded.

What has continued to amaze me is that no one has looked at the facts of various great magicians, and tried honestly to piece together who Franz Bardon was, beyond such insane suggestions as Hermes and Lao Tzu, with who little is held in common. No one seems to have searched out personality or life-work matches amongst the initiates of history, but instead prefer to pick randomly various great names. Amongst such initiates as Francis Bacon and Anton Mesmer, or in older times, Iamblichus and Apollonius, there are certainly similarities. I am not

at all suggesting that these are previous incarnations of Franz Bardon, but am simply pointing out that people have not been looking in the right directions for possible incarnations, if such things are even considered important. One interesting connection which I have never seen pointed out is that Franz Bardon signed his letters to advanced students as “The Arion,” which can be freely translated into the name Hil-Arion, or “Great Enchanter.” In the late 1800’s, Blavatsky is told by Koothumi that a master adept named Hilarion had recently attained to supreme achievement, and would “soon be ascending” to join the great master adepts of the white brotherhood. Just a few decades later, a spiritual avesh (Bardon) who signed himself as “The Master Arion” is recorded as having been promoted in the White Brotherhood to the station of the twelve Master Adepts. It is perhaps also of interest that in Blavatsky’s account, Hilarion had just finished his training in Tibet. According to his son Lumir, Bardon often talked about his “recent” training in Tibet, and the chores he would have to do for his masters there.

There is a final rumor, one which anyone with even the most mediocre of education on the subject would fiercely reject anyways, but which I will handle here for those who may not have known any better. It has come to my attention that certain people, out of what is doubtlessly mere innocent love of their teacher-preceptor Franz Bardon, are spreading the rumor that Franz Bardon may have been the guru of Mahavatar Babaji, the being made known to the world primarily through Yogananda’s “Autobiography of a Yogi.” Their basis for this belief are the rants of the eccentric, foolish, but well-meaning people at the “Babaji’s Kriya Yoga” organization, and their so-called channeled writings. They say that the historical Bhoganath (of which they know nothing, incidentally) of Kashi-Varanasi, who is later said to have travelled to China and become Boyang, then Lao Tzu, was the guru of Babaji. I have personally seen the ancient paintings, kept concealed in Gorakshanath Mandirs throughout the Himalayas and beyond even Badrinath, which clearly show Bhoganath sitting at the feet of the deathless “yogi-christ” called Mahavatar Babaji. Therefore, these ideas should be dismissed as being the creations of restless minds.

I then bravely put one foot forward to propose another option, which I always suggest to my personal students, but have hitherto never mentioned openly. Those yogis who have encountered Babaji in the Himalayan mountains, without exception, describe him as a gentle, luminescent figure, residing in the “Cave of Babaji” up in the Himalayas. They say that he appears to be constantly wet, dripping with the holy water of the Ganga, and looking as though he is dripping gold, his hair lightly outlined by celestial fire. This is what they testify to. In the book “Frabatto the Magician,” which is at least loosely based on unfinished manuscripts that were intended for an eventual autobiography, we find an interesting account of Urgaya:

“Urgaya sat in front of everyone in indescribable magnificence. His astral body was illuminated like liquid gold, his eyes sparkling like diamonds. There was no one there who was permeated with the feeling that incarnate divinity was among them.”

Those who have read the works of yogis that have come into contact with Babaji will immediately recognize in both the above quoted instance, and in the entire description of Urgaya and his status, the same kind of reverence and divinity with which the yogis speak of

Babaji. Perhaps it is irrelevant, but whether true or not, it is still an interesting parallel. Thus it seems to me that Franz Bardon could in no way have been the guru of Babaji, but that Babaji, if he was indeed Urgaya, would have been Bardon's highest commander. I think that further contemplation and investigation along these lines would prove interesting for those who are particularly concerned with the identity of Babaji.

The Continuation of His Mission

Franz Bardon's mission, if we remove the specifics, was fairly clear: encourage the creation of magicians, not philosophers. In a time when the only occult books accessible to most people are filled with what can effectively be called intellectual masturbation, there is something both refreshing and reassuring about Bardon's books to the student who desires to become a magician without acquiring a brain aneurism. People are running around with absolutely no qualifications, trying to "teach" magic not to benefit others, but instead merely to set themselves up as authorities on the subject. They want to feel important or something of the likes, and there is not an ounce of service in their bodies. It seems that everyone wants to make their own system of magic, solely because no one accepts that they might not know anything about magic. When they confront a system which disagrees with their own unpracticed and inexperienced opinions on how life works, they immediately assume that they must be the correct ones, and that the systems that have already proven themselves must somehow change. This idiocy is leading to the unraveling and ultimate destruction of magic before our very eyes. With the advent of the internet, anyone can sound like an accomplished magician, and trick others into following their teachings.

So now that magical systems are a dime-a-dozen, and adepts have simultaneously become a rarer commodity than ever, the world is in greater need of otherwise quiet magicians who have had a successful magical career to stand up and start shouting. The animals are running the zoo, and the people with the power to put them back in their cages and train them properly are merely sitting way back in the nosebleed section of bleachers, watching indifferently. This inactivity will more certainly be the death of magic than the actions of any of the frauds or charlatans now claiming to be its masters. So for those who want to carry on Bardon's mission, become a successful magician, and then start making some noise. Lead people to practice, and away from mere intellectual speculation. If you do that, then even if you don't know who Franz Bardon is, or even if you want nothing to do with him, you will still be aiding his mission.

One of the greatest advantages of Franz Bardon's system is that, because it is based on pure natural and spiritual laws instead of religion or dogma, it can be integrated into any other lawful system. Students of all magical traditions can find somewhere in Bardon's teachings something which will aid them along the way. Magicians who utilize ritual work earlier on in their careers, such as members of the Golden Dawn and the likes, have a unique opportunity to enhance their own exercises with a little bit of ingenuity, using Bardon's manual as a guide. The maxim of the master is not, as some suppose, "Stop what you are doing and follow me." It is instead, "Let me help you do what you are doing, better." So I invite every student of every tradition who still has an open mind, and has not been thoroughly indoctrinated by one group or another, to give Bardon's books a read and decide for yourself whether they are useful to you or not.

You will likely be pleasantly surprised.

And for those who follow Bardon strictly, or at least consider his manuals to be the core of their directional efforts in magical advancement, I can only give words of encouragement on a difficult path. Bardon is still very much alive. The temporary shedding of one pair of clothes does not make a person entirely inaccessible. Shortly after his death he appeared visibly to his family and to groups of students, to give them his final lecture without uttering a single word: there is no death for the magician. And still to this day, for those who have him in their heart, he makes appearances that are of such a fantastic and phenomenal nature that they can not in any way be written off to psychological effects. This, more than anything he did in life, is a testament to the stature of his soul. In life, he could be in one place. In death he is free, and can work on a greater level, a larger scale, and to a more profound effect, than was ever possible for him while incarnated. For those who desire this kind of meeting, I can only quote the great Yogi named Lahiri Mahasaya: “The surest way to come close to the master is to practice the techniques given by the master.”