

Anton LaVey:

On Occultism of the Past

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“When anyone invokes the devil with intentional ceremonies, the devil comes and is seen. To escape dying from horror at that sight, to escape catalepsy or idiocy, one must already be mad....There are two houses in heaven, and the tribunal of Satan is restrained in its extremes by the Senate of Divine Wisdom.

“This explains the bizarre nature and atrocious character of the operations of Black Magic....the diabolical masses, administration of sacraments to reptiles, effusions of blood, human sacrifices and other monstrosities, which are the very essence and reality of Goetia or Nigromancy. Such are the practices which from all time have brought down upon sorcerers the just reputation of the laws. Black Magic is really only a graduated combination of sacrileges and murders designed for the permanent perversion of a human will and for the realization in a living man of the hideous phantom of the demon. It is therefore, properly speaking, the religion of the devil, the cultus of darkness, hatred of good carried to the height of paroxysm; it is the incarnation of death and the persistent creation of hell.”

from *Transcendental Magic* by Eliphas Levi

This is the writing of Eliphas Levi, one of the sustainers of occult **un**wisdom of the nineteenth century. In Levi’s works we are confronted by page after page extolling the merits of Jesus Christ as king and master. Any Satanist who has ever read *Transcendental Magic* cannot help but see Levi’s great contribution to Christian theology and Dennis Wheatley.

I MEANT what I said in *The Satanic Bible*, when I referred to such prior garbage as “sanctimonious fraud—guilt-ridden ramblings and esoteric gibberish by chroniclers of magical lore unable or unwilling to present an objective view of the subject.” Yet it not only saddens but antagonizes me when I find a member impressively stating his adherence to or compatibility with these worthless ravings.

It is bad enough to hear of the “great teachings” of Aleister Crowley—who hypocritically called himself by the Christian devil’s number, yet steadfastly denied any Satanic connections, who wrote and had published millions of words of Kabbalistic mulligatawny, the distilled wisdom of which could have been contained in a single volume of once-popular E. Haldeman Julius’ Little Blue Books (which sold for a nickel). Strange, how seldom one hears plaudits for Crowley’s poetry, worthy of inclusion with the likes of James Thompson, Baudelaire, Clark Ashton Smith, and Robert E. Howard. If Crowley was a magician, it was the beauty of his creative art which made him so, not his drug-befuddled callings-up of Choronzon, et al. Unfortunately, his followers today have taken up his worst, while neglecting his best.

I get fed up to the stomach-turning point, listening to would-be students waxing eloquent over Israel Regardie’s *Golden Dawn*, with its ponderous bulk blotched by sigil after sigil of holy esoterica. The very jacket design fairly screams out, “Oh God, how good and light and righteous we are!” with a rayed cross of a magnitude that should have awakened Bela Lugosi back to life out of sheer shock. Mr. Regardie, like his white-light predecessors, rambles through five pounds of accumulated Kabbalistic toxemia and burned-out Rosicrucianism before his literary enema yields a scant few pages of today’s dinner, namely, a watered-down version of the Enochian Keys.

No, I cannot accept the worth of these “masters,” who couldn’t even get off a semi-logical thought without falling victim to what H.G. Wells superbly defines as “big thinks.” These works were around when I wrote *The Satanic Bible*. I had even read them, as well as Montague Summers, Rollo Ahmed, Ophiel, Bardo, Butler, Hall, etc., etc., who wrote reams of arcane rhetoric and produced plates of pretty symbols, yet couldn’t seem to say what they meant nor mean what they said. Somehow, an occasional member who has “discovered” an occult “master’s” writings of the past, forgets all about those opening lines in the preface to *The Satanic Bible*, assuming, I guess, that I didn’t know about *their* new-found bit of esoterica when I took pen in hand.

At the tender age of twelve, when I grew disenchanted halfway through the *Albertus Magnus* and a third of the way through the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, it occurred to me there must be “deeper stuff,” so I delved. Alas, I found the deeper stuff was deeper all right, and piled higher as well. For every page of meat it seemed

there were a hundred pages of filler, adding up to a pretty, plump, but decidedly ersatz hunk of baloney.

I wrote *The Satanic Bible* because I looked for such a book all my life, and, unable to find it, concluded that if I ever expected to read what I was seeking, I would have to write it myself. The same principles applied with *The Compleat Witch*. (Now titled *The Satanic Witch—ed.*).

Summing up, if you NEED to steep yourselves in occult lore, despite this diatribe, by all means do so. But do it as a ritual in itself, i.e., *objectively towards subjective ends!* read on, *knowing* that you won't learn a damn thing in principle from Levi, Crowley, Regardie, (or Sybil Leek either!) that isn't extended one-hundred fold in *The Satanic Bible* or *The Compleat Witch*, *but* that you'll have the spooky fun, ego-food, and *involvement* which invariably accompanies a curriculum concerned more with the gathering of ingredients than the application of principles.

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