

The Scroll of Set

Issue Number 3
Volume I-3
November 1975
Editor: Margaret Wendall IV°
Copyright © 1975 Temple of Set

[1] *The Book of Coming Forth by Night:* **Background Material** - by Michael A. Aquino V°

[See the *Ruby Tablet of Set* for the most current edition.]

[2] **Aleister Crowley and the *Book of the Law*** - by Michael A. Aquino V°

[See the *Ruby Tablet of Set* for the most current edition.]

[3] **Thanks!**

The Editor would like to thank the members of Bubastis Pylon, who have been helping to get the *Scroll* in the mail to you.

[4] **Psychic Hazards & Proper Use of Ritual Magic** - by L. Dale Seago IV°

During the course of a recent guest appearance on a radio talk show, a woman called in on the telephone and asked me if I were aware of the "psychic hazards" inherent in the practice of Satanism and black magic.

I must confess that her question jolted me a little. Having been so long and happily practicing these arts myself, it becomes easy to forget occasionally that there are still some people who claim to have studied the subject in depth and yet still adhere to such archaic, obsolete ideas. On examination of the ideas themselves, however, it becomes apparent that these people simply do not understand the actual nature of the perils against which they so ardently warn us. I therefore feel it is time for the matter to be presented from the inside, from the point of view of the practicing Black Magician rather than that of someone who has only skimmed the surface of the subject.

So what about these dangers, then? Do they in fact exist? Yes, they do, in much the same sense that if you tell a child a frightening story, he will have a nightmare. [To see just how appropriate an analogy this is, examine in the light of logic and contemporary scientific knowledge the

philosophical bases of the average Wiccan or other "white-light" occultist's beliefs.]

The principal hazards cited by occult "authorities" generally fall into two categories: the summoning or inadvertent arousal of uncontrolled forces or entities which will turn up and destroy the would-be magician, and possession by some malevolent force or entity. The proficient black magician recognizes both concepts as the absurdities they are, yet these things do seem to happen to some who attempt to use magic. Why?

The first reason is the manner in which the average person approaches the practice of sorcery. He is the victim of a Judæo-Christian religious and moral tradition which conditions him to believe that man alone is nothing, that he must place his trust and reliance in a power or being outside himself. He is also led to believe that sorcerous delvings are sinful and forbidden and will lead to the inevitable destruction of the student. A resultant attempt to justify such experimentation is the current emphasis on "White" magic.

If the student has been lucky enough to avoid a Judæo-Christian type of indoctrination, he is still generally ensnared by a magical orientation based on the same principles and teaching that some forces are "good" and others "evil", and that he should concern himself exclusively with the good or "positive" and avoid the evil or "negative". It is easy to see how this approach to morality and magic leads to frustration and to the repression of perfectly natural feelings and desires - such as lust and anger - into the subconscious. These may later erupt from within as twisted monsters, dæmons, elementals, or powerful compulsions and obsess the student. St. Jerome's account of his temptation in the desert is an excellent illustration of this:

How often when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling ... how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome! ... When I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I found myself among bevvies of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting, yet my mind was burning with desire and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead.

Indeed, the entire history of the Middle Ages is a case in point, as G. Rattray Taylor so well points out:

In the earlier part of the Middle Ages what we chiefly find is frank sensuality, with which the church at first battles in vain. Then, as it improves its systems of control, we find a mounting toll of perversion and neurosis.

Springing as they do from the depths of the subconscious mind, these monsters may be powerful indeed. The student, unwilling to admit that such things could arise from within himself, naturally prefers to perceive them as some sort of Influence from Outside. The student who encounters such phenomena is often too shaken to experiment further, and, bound by repressive conditioning, never penetrates past these shadows to confront the awesome majesty of his true nature.

So much for these “monsters from the id”. If the practice of sorcery is correctly approached, you will probably never be confronted by them. If you are, then recognition of their actual nature should enable you to easily dispel them. If it does not, then you are the type of person who is likely to become possessed.

Possession is supposedly the control of a human being by some outside intelligence, demon, or even the Devil himself. Now, logically speaking, one would think that any Devil worth his salt would find better things to do with his time than invade someone’s body and terrify his friends and neighbors into scurrying for the nearest clergyman and Getting Right with God. Such a project would be senseless and self-defeating.

We will understand the situation more clearly if we once again look within ourselves rather than outside. What I have said above concerning subconscious repression of elements of the psyche which are regarded as undesirable is just as applicable here, but so is an additional factor: the desire for attention and recognition. Let’s face it - being possessed by the Devil, here and now, is far more exciting than having been Bridey Murphy or an Atlantean High Priest in a fantasized former lifetime. In addition, possession frees the “victim” from all responsibility for his actions: he is not the one who murdered his mother [whom he secretly hated for years]; it was the dæmon who controlled him.

Possession allows one to express himself in socially-unacceptable ways and get away with it. It allows one to bathe in attentive sympathy or to provoke fear in those one dislikes, and gives one an excuse and sense of purpose for his otherwise-useless existence and his inability to cope with the pressures of life. In short, possession is never the “victim’s” problem; rather it is his subconscious solution to problems and conflicts which he cannot resolve in any other way. A good idea catches on quickly, too: remember the rash of “possession” cases following the release of *The Exorcist*?

The approach of the Setian to the sorcerous arts is from a basis of rational awareness which allows him to avoid the pitfalls which entrap others. He places no reliance or dependence on any force

outside himself. A materialist, he recognizes from the outset that the powers with which he deals are his own. He perceives “God” as simply the natural order of things: a mindless, non-conscious, impersonal cosmos which is in no way concerned with him or with anything he may do.

The Prince of Darkness is seen as a finite intelligence greater than that of man, but is viewed as a guide and mentor in no way “supernatural” and certainly not a “reverse Jehovah” to be blindly worshipped and obeyed. In the *Biblical* myth, Satan was cast out of heaven because he decided that, rather than serve God, he wanted to become a god himself. The Setian finds an allegorical inspiration in this and feels he can do no less if he is to be worthy of the title. The Dark Lord having infused man with knowledge and intelligence, which is what separates man from the natural order (the *Biblical* account, though a myth, is at least correct in that respect), man now has the key to turn the universal inertia to his amusement and make of the Universe his playground: to become, in short, a divine being in his own right.

To worship the Prince of Darkness in the Judæo-Christian sense of the term would restrict the magician’s own evolution and the development of his own powers and capabilities; hence the Setian does all he can to become more godlike by working to develop his mind and his abilities, and by learning to exert an increasing control over himself, his environment, and his chosen sphere of social influence.

In a ritual context the Setian may use candles and incantations and call the names of various demons from a number of different myth-cycles. He may even invent his own. However these are merely psychological props designed to stimulate the flow of emotional force which will ensure a successful magical working. He deliberately engages in a form of controlled, constructive fantasy in order to attain very real objective ends. And, because he recognizes it for the fantasy it is, he is able to manipulate it in any way he desires and control it rather than being controlled by it.

The practice of Setian ritual magic, in a nutshell, involves the deliberate release of forces from the Dæmonic or subconscious personality under conditions which are controlled by the magician. This has two principal effects on the practitioner: first, instead of driving a wedge between the conscious and subconscious and setting them against each other, it causes them to work together, unifying and strengthening the entire personality. This in turn results in the development in the practitioner of abilities, powers of concentration, and forms of will completely unknown to him before.

Magical rituals are not valid for influencing the Prince of Darkness; nor are they intended to do so. No entity as advanced and sophisticated as Set is likely to be impressed by ceremonial theatrics. Ritual magic procedures are a tool for the magician's personal use, which he can employ as a means of learning to focus his will and accomplish his goals. Once a certain evolutionary level is reached, he will find that they are no longer necessary to produce effects which he formerly could not obtain without them.

Paradoxical though it may seem, it is at this point that ritual may become most meaningful to the practitioner. He comes to perceive the dæmonic entities on whom he calls for aid as symbolic representations of aspects of his own personality, and the ritual now serves to make him totally conscious of the glory of his own unique Self.

He realizes that he has no need to ask favors of the Prince of Darkness, for he now knows - and demonstrates in every aspect of his existence - that the greatest gift of Set has already been bestowed upon him: the full awareness of the power of his own Will. Such a Setian has become Elect.

[5] **Bits and Pieces**

This issue brings to a close the series of background articles written by our High Priest on the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*. But this shouldn't be taken to mean that this is the last article you'll see on that text. The latest issue of *Voice of the Dragon*, for example, has an excellent article on Set and the creation of the universe.

If you're a I° or II° member with questions about the Temple of Set, chances are that your nearest III°+ official has the answers to them. Don't be afraid to ask questions; if you don't you may never learn the answer.

One of the questions recently answered by an "informational" letter to III°+ officials is: Who is responsible for the *Scroll of Set*? I am, and it's an awesome responsibility, for I expect to receive material for possible inclusion that I may not like or with which I may not agree. But if I feel that the article is of general interest to Setians - no matter what my personal feelings may be - it will be used. And, although I may contribute articles from time to time, the *Scroll* isn't going to be an ego-trip for me.

Just in case you've been meaning to write or draw something for the *Scroll* but haven't gotten around to it, here's a (TUIT). Happy Halloween!