

The Scroll of Set

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[1] On Conclaves and Traveling

- by Vesa Iitti III°

Our High Priest recently pointed out that “Lady Lilith created the tool called conclave that we use to create our culture.”

This article is dedicated to Lady Lilith.

I completely agree with Priestess and Priest Schreck and Magister Kelly that conclaves are central to the work of initiation within the Temple of Set. I have attended thus far three international conclaves and all of the regional ones in the North [there have been 15 Kalevala Pylon and 4 Ultima Thule Pylon conclaves with planned programs to date], and I think that their effect on my initiation has been very important.

Conclaves, regional and international, are occasions where I can have as much total interaction with other Initiates as possible in order to enhance my own and other's *Xeper*. Conclaves are occasions that are much better forums to share initiation, to learn and to teach and to acquire keys to Darkness, than regular mail, e-mail, or phone discussions could ever be.

Interaction during conclaves does not occur only with the language of reason (which is of central value), but also with the language of the heart.

In addition to intelligent dialogues on initiation, we can sense the Flame face-to-face, and the efforts to *Xeper* of other Setians, thus strengthening our own and others' sense of meaning.

For the Setian I° conclaves are highly important occasions because there he can meet several individuals who can give him the feedback he needs in his initiation, he can have insightful dialogues on basics of Setian philosophy, and he can face other individuals pursuing *Xeper* who can give him a sense of Setian being. I remember that my own thoughts as a Setian I° before meeting other Setians were quite funny about what kind of people Setians are. When I met other Setians, the whole picture about the Temple unfolded and became energized for me totally anew. For the Setian I°, conclave is a great tool for awakening.

For an Adept II°, conclaves are highly important occasions because there he can increase his own strengths in pursuit of *Xeper*. An Adept understands the Temple philosophy in theory and practice, and is accordingly able to bring order and meaning to his life according to his will. An Adept is able to use the

tool of the Temple to intensify his life, his life-long initiation, and to make his dreams come true. Conclaves are great opportunities for an Adept to share what he has learned and to get meaningful feedback and inspiration for his work. For an Adept, conclave is a great tool to intensify his own life and to Remanifest himself.

For a member of the Priesthood III°, conclaves are highly important occasions to communicate his understanding of the Black Flame. I think that conclaves are occasions that the Priesthood should by its nature be willing to attend. Priests and Priestesses represent the Temple by their very being. They are dedicated to protect and to enhance the Gift of Set in themselves, in the Temple, and in the world at large. Communicating their understanding is an essential part of their work, their own initiation.

While the work inherent in the I° and the II° focuses largely on strengthening one's ability to reason and to enhance one's own strengths in pursuit of *Xeper*, there comes that special extra dimension from Set in the Priesthood III°. The work of the Priesthood could be said to synthesize emotion and intellect. Via his own work a Priest has Come Into being in such a way that he is able to represent Set and enhance his Gift in this world.

I think a Priest can - and it is one responsibility of a Priest - use his words, deeds, and living example to help other Setians in their *Xeper*, and to give them that sense of the Flame that he carries. Further a Priest also seeks to enhance the Flame in the world at large as he sees appropriate. I remember Priest Schreck pointed out in Munich that a Priest is a Priest wherever he is. For a Priest conclave is a great tool to communicate his understanding of the Black Flame.

Do you remember your first conclave? Do you remember how energizing and illuminating it was to meet others who pursue *Xeper*?

Once you've experienced a conclave, you will most likely want to experience it again because of its tremendous effect on your *Xeper*.

Conclaves are occasions where the power, richness, and majesty of an individual being is strongly present for those who seek to strengthen it within themselves.

On Traveling

Before the latest Kalevala conclave in Finland, I discussed with Adept Siira the symbolic use of traveling and its liminal (Lat. *limen* = threshold) dimensions. [Adept Siira traveled ca. 870 miles in order to attend the regional conclave.] The concept of liminality is used in comparative religious studies to mean thresholds, states of transition between the profane and the sacred. Rites of passages are famous examples of the use of such thresholds in various cultures. In addition to rites of passage, traveling can also be seen as a ritualistic transition

from profane, work-a-day, a usual time and space-category to a sacred space (holy day → holiday).

Traveling is a concrete transition from familiar surroundings, physical order, to a space that is less familiar, that potentially represents Darkness, potential change, a space where the divine manifests itself. A Setian who travels to a conclave (be it regional or international), or even to see grandparents in the next town, can symbolically approach travel as a transition to Darkness where yet unmanifested aspects of being are pursued.

Set was and is a *neter* of borderlands, of extension of existence. That is our job as well, and conclaves are not only geographical borderlands to our everyday world but much more than that.

I dream about an international conclave in Finland!

[2] Reflections on the Red

- by Natasya R. Katsikaris II°

My initiation to the level of Adept started in August of 1996, although I didn't know it at the time. It started at the Mideast Music and Dance Camp in Mendocino, California a few months after I had joined the Temple as a Setian I°.

The purpose of this camp, if you can't already imagine from the name, was to take **lots** of classes. Camp is an opportunity for students to immerse themselves into the musical culture and to study with master teachers. I had been to the camp once before, in 1993, but this time felt different; perhaps because I was going as a semi-professional dancer rather than as a hobbyist.

The seed of my initiation germinated to the sound of Ottoman clarinet music in a wood-floored room full of dancers in sweaty leotards. It germinated in the most crowded class of the most popular dance teacher when I thought, "There is nothing for me here. If I learn Dahlia's style I will only be copying Dahlia. She became famous by inventing her own style. I already know how to dance, and if I ever want to be a real pro I must stop learning other dancers' styles and invent my own." I walked out of the class in a daze and haven't taken another class since - concentrating instead on developing of my own style.

As in magic so in life. The separation between the magical and mundane worlds is a lie. The two are intertwined. I received my formal recognition as an Adept II° in April of 1997. During that time my monthly earnings as a dancer increased from \$80/month (in March) to \$600/month (in May). The initiation that began on a dance floor led to an initiation within the Temple, which led, in turn, to another initiation on the dance floor.

The power of this is staggering: First, the only

true power you will ever have is the power you invent; the most powerful magic you will ever use is the magic you create for yourself. Second, true initiation will reverberate throughout your whole being. A "purely" magical initiation is false; true initiation will filter into your mundane life and change every aspect of your being.

Yes, we all need teachers. To both my magical teachers and my dance teachers I owe a debt that can only be repaid by teaching others what I now know. The function of the I° is the function of the student dancer: to learn well the basics. Once this is accomplished, the lesson of the II° is the lesson that no teacher can teach: the lesson of inventing yourself, creating yourself, remanifesting yourself through your own style of magic.

This is also the lesson of the professional artist: to create and define your own style. To remanifest the influences of your teachers into a style uniquely your own. In magic or dance, to copy someone else's style will only make you a good imitator; to create your own style will make you a master if you follow it far enough.

[3] The Midian Pylon

- by Aaron Besson III°, Sentinel

To further facilitate the eclecticism and diversity of initiatory pursuits within its halls, the Nephilim Pylon has Remanifested as the Midian Pylon, geographically located in the Bay Area of California. Foci of interests will be limited only to that which is at the forefront of its initiate's *Xeper*.

No newsletter as of yet will be produced by the Pylon, as an editor is not available at this time.

[4] Sekhmet's Oasis

- by Eve Kochel III°

Sekhmet's Oasis Pylon is now opening up for correspondence membership. This is because the specific nature of our studies (the feline essence, Sekhmet and Bastet, *Kundalini*, healing, martial arts) seems to appeal to some Setians who are unfortunately not in a local area to attend meetings.

A long-distance membership will include mandatory quarterly submissions to our newsletter *The Well at the Oasis* on some subject relating to our Pylon studies, as well as regular contact with the Sentinel (myself). Contact between Pylon members will also be highly encouraged.

Please make sure you have the time to devote to these studies. Open membership does not mean you can merely sit back and receive the quarterly newsletter and not contribute or correspond with the other members. If membership in a Pylon via correspondence is to work, it requires commitment.

In brief, the foci of Sekhmet's Oasis Pylon are:

1. Study of Sekhmet & Bastet in their roles as opposite forces;
2. The feline essence in Setian magic;
3. *Kundalini* (also known as *Chi*, *Qi*, *Lifeforce*, *Prana*, etc.) and its manipulation;
4. Martial arts;
5. Healing techniques (allopathic and naturopathic).

These studies were a part of the ancient Priesthood of Sekhmet, and we will be exploring these things more deeply in our own workings and newsletter articles.

If you are interested in working within our Pylon's focus and are currently **not** involved in another pylon at this time, please contact me. If you are involved with another pylon and are interested in Sekhmet's Oasis, please contact me and let me know what pylon you are currently involved in and who the Sentinel is. You may wish to take it upon yourself to speak with your Sentinel first; some pylons do not allow dual membership.

[5] Experiences of the Setian I°

- by Connell Monette II°

At the request of Priest James Severson to communicate some of my recent Setian experiences, several weeks ago I began to recollect some of the developments in my life within the last few months.

For the last three years I have been a full-time student of Ancient & Classical History at Ottawa University, and my related research in the magical and religious traditions of that period led me to the Temple of Set.

The publications of Magus Webb and Magus Flowers had been an indication of the Temple's potential as a vehicle for serious study, interpretation, and application of the magical traditions of antiquity.

Affiliation with such a group of individuals seemed like a good decision in terms of my personal initiatory development, as a place to make contacts in my "professional" field, and also as a place to share ideas and theories with others of similar interests. Although the months following my decision to join were very different than I had originally imagined, my initial expectations have been met and exceeded within a relatively short time.

Previous to having joined the Temple in 1997, I became a member in 1995 when I lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia in the summertime with my family. Difficulties at home made affiliation impossible at that time, but in that brief period I had my earliest encounter with a Setian of similar interests: then-Magister Webb, with whom I spoke with several

times between 1995-1997.

I remember having first written him to discuss the character of Typhon in myth, and I was very glad when *Seven Faces of Darkness* was published; I was one of the fortunate to get an autographed copy.

The "Typhonian" element in the Hermetic tradition is something I feel has been overlooked by many historians, and I am very glad to see it developing into a very workable system of its own. I am proud to be a practicing student in that tradition.

Since history was [and is] my primary interest, and my earliest contact in the Temple was another student of history, when I joined the Soa Gild in early September I expected I would probably be assigned to work with an Adept or Priest with common historical background and interests. Magister Whitaker, who introduced to me the Gild, kindly made me feel welcome and "at home".

My experience with the World Wide Web demonstrated that the Temple of Set has a growing "online" presence, and pages like the "OIT" and "Soa Gild" speak well for the Temple as a place of serious study, especially compared with other contemporary groups who show more zealotry than content.

Shortly after I met Priest Severson, who I learned later on was a long-term student of Eastern/Vedic philosophy and practice in addition to whatever skills he has acquired in his own studies within the Temple. Although several months ago I found that interesting but unrelated to my own studies, in the recent times this has changed. I will elaborate on this further, but I must mention first my Soa mentor, Adept Alex Burns.

I must confess to confusion when I was first introduced to Adept Burns. He did not strike me as having much interest in history, but seemed instead a "seer" of the future. This fellow is one of best-read Initiates I have had the privilege of meeting.

Adept Burns' initial emails to me demonstrated his knowledge of the works of Ouspensky and Gurdjieff, psychology, and made me learn a new terminology: "memetics", a concept of information existing as a sort of viral entity that inhabits the human mind, which has profound affects on contemporary culture.

We bantered back and forth about the character of Alexander the Great, the Macedonian conqueror of the Mediterranean, and the ethics of the early Roman Empire. We identified similar interests in Sufism and Persian mysticism, and [to use his terminology] our habit of "fusing borg-like with our computers", and a primal, almost instinctive need for coffee.

Adept Burns displayed an excellent sense of humor, which is something that makes it a pleasure

to correspond with him on a regular basis. He has graciously shared with me a number of his “mundane” articles: interviews, reviews, etc. from the contemporary to near-future. In turn I have shared my latest findings, which usually relate to something I’ve dug up from the dusty past.

It’s been a good learning experience, and Adept Burns is a good influence to keep me with one foot anchored on this side of the CE/BCE timeline.

This is a clear case of something one needs as opposed to what one originally wants. Our serious discussions of Setian-related material is counterbalanced by our frequent, light-hearted banter, made possible by the ICQ phenomenon which is sweeping the Net.

Both Priest Severson and Adept Burns have studied the LHP for some considerable time, and I have had the benefit of learning some of the basics from them.

My fiancée suffers from a condition known as fibro-myalgia”, very similar to arthritis except that it attacks the young as well as old. Most days I spend 20 minutes massaging her joints to relieve some pain. Between my Soa Priest and Mentor I have been taught some simple exercises to augment these massage techniques to serve as a medium for healing, using “prana” - a Yogic term corresponding roughly to “life force”. It strikes me as a synchronicity that I was assigned to both a Priest and an Adept who possessed skills that have been very applicable not only for my own initial development but my fiancée’s health in recent times.

It may be simply that these two have skills that they saw fit to apply, but I should mention that the Vedic/Indian culture is a field in which I have been encouraged to do graduate work previous to this summer, although I had not previously mentioned it to anyone in the Temple. Nevertheless, even if graduate school does not lead to expertise in this particular area of ancient history, knowing and learning these lessons from my Soa Priest and Adept have expanded my horizons and worldview several miles farther.

My recent experiences as a Setian have been an exercise in **balance**. Full time student, part time job, and the move towards a marriage are all major time commitments that demand constant energy and attention.

I am fortunate in that my initiatory work is tied into my academic studies. The danger in this is that it is all too easy to “bury” yourself in your work and ignore the world around you; a close friend recently echoed the same thought. I really enjoy the study of history, and I look forward to next year when I will have more control over the direction my studies take (the Master’s level).

It is difficult sometimes to communicate the

importance or the drive I feel for my work to my loved one, who has a gifted mind in her own right but focuses her attention on more literary pursuits. She is supportive, but it is important in my own work as a student or magician that I devote attention and energy towards our home as well.

To draw upon a recent conversation with Adept Burns, one of the best lessons I have learned in the last month is that while knowledge is great, the practice of that knowledge is equally essential. If I gain insights but don’t apply them, I become neither a good student or a good magician; instead I would be a miser.

My goal for the upcoming year is to really focus on practical application of acquired information. I feel the basic yogic exercises are a good example of this. The mental exercises will also help me as a student with better focus, better concentration.

Another area I have been able to work with concerning the “practical” side of magic has been relations with my parents. My family is well aware than I am no longer a practicing Christian, which created much tension over the last two years.

This past summer and Christmas holiday gave me an opportunity to visit with my family and work on reconciliation. Instead of usual defensive mechanisms which are ingrained in my behavior, I have consciously been using Lesser Black Magic to change my behavior to modify our relationship.

The culmination of my efforts of the last few months came several weeks ago in Halifax, when my parents had a long talk with me to reconcile some long-buried issues. They also expressed their approval of the upcoming wedding, and they are so pleased with my success at school that they will be covering tuition in order that I might not have to work nights. Instead I will be able to spend more time studying. [Latin and Greek verbs are much less fearsome when one has a fresh mind to tackle them.]

The other advantage to this is that I will have more time and energy to spend on my relationship with my fiancée, about which I am very pleased. I am curious to read LBM articles in the *Scroll* this year, as I am able to appreciate its uses more and more with time.

I enjoy sharing information that I learn, and in the course of studying for academic papers I usually come across things which I feel are applicable to my own initiatory quest or the pursuits of others. Over the last two months I have written several papers and received very encouraging feedback from a number of Setian correspondents.

Part of the reason that I do this is for my own selfish benefit. Ever since my earliest experiences as a language tutor, I found the best way to learn something is to communicate it to others.

I do not yet consider myself in a position to be able to teach others. I do work towards a career as a professor, and perhaps in future years in the Temple I will be in the position of Adept Burns and be able to share insights gleaned from previous experience.

In the meantime writing gives me the chance to rigorously study a subject and glean some important insights that have a bearing on initiatory matters. The act of sharing these forces me to make sure I can back up everything I attempt to convey, and to learn how to communicate ideas.

Lastly, by sharing with others who have more knowledge than I in these areas, I put myself into a position where if I'm on the right track I usually get a nod, and if I'm wrong or off-track, then I can be corrected.

All in all it's an excellent learning exercise. And it makes for great discussions with some professors too.

* * *

I would like to add to this essay at least one paragraph devoted to my perception of the being known as Set. My earliest encounters with magic were when I was 16 and performed my first "Satanic" ritual. That experience left me with a definite sense of something "other", some being alien to my sense of self whose presence I felt. Not all rituals cause this feeling, but most involving summoning elements such as gods/neters have left me with an impression that there was/is something other than my self in the ritual chamber.

I understand that ritual is a subjective experience, but based on my own personal experiences in GBM, I am of the opinion that (to coin a phrase) "we are not alone". I am most familiar with Set in the Græco/Roman form of Set-Typhon, who is best known through the magical practices of the Hermetic magicians of the Classic period and the Remanifested tradition in modern times. I perceive Set-Typhon as the god who overcomes stasis (personified in myth by Zeus) in the world, and he is a role model for my self in my *Xeper*, as well as a friend and brother.

* * *

I feel that the Setian I° period is a great time to learn general knowledge about a large number of subjects. An Adept II° has certain demands placed upon his time by Order affiliation, whereas a I° has great freedom to learn about a number of subjects without the necessary restraints that a II° has.

I cannot yet speak from a II° perspective, but having spoken with others of that degree and the clergy, I realize that I have a great amount of freedom to research, to learn primarily whatever I choose to.

My own area of study was mainly determined before having joined the Temple, but even so I have

been free to ask questions about new things (i.e. yoga), and I have felt that the Setians I have had the privilege of meeting and learning from have been mostly warm, kind, and courteous individuals. I think that while no person has the right to interfere with another's lifestyle, it is good to have friendships within the Temple.

Here I would be amiss if I did not mention that Adept Burns has been good to "chat" on ICQ and email with my fiancée Veronica, and as a result of his friendliness (and also that of Magister Petri Laakso - our "friend in Finland"), she feels as though the Temple is more a group of well-connected friends with common interests rather than a "secret" society. I myself think it quite amazing that through the Temple I have met an Anthropology Ph.D. student in India, an archæologist in the States, a journalist in Australia, a translator in Finland, a professor in Mexico, and a computer technician in South Africa!

Imagine, if all this is the fruit of five months, what will next year hold?

The recent months in the Temple have been full of challenge, learning, and personal discovery. They have also brought me together with many whom I am proud to call friends. A friend within the Temple once said that because of knowing certain Initiates he knew the reality of the Prince of Darkness. I agree wholeheartedly. I look forward to continuing "adventures" within the Temple, as we continue together to *Xeper* and Remanifest.

Great is the might of Set, greater still he through us!

[6] ***Terra Incognita:***
A Guide to Dark Destinations
- by Nikolas Schreck III°

Set is known as the lord of foreign lands. He is a wanderer who crosses familiar borders into unknown territory. The Setian who consciously integrates this dimension of the Prince of Darkness into initiation transforms mundane travel into a forceful means of Xeper and Remanifestation. May the adventurous Setian hear the beckoning call of the mysterious locales showcased here.

**The Birthplace of Walpurgisnacht:
The Harz Mountains, Germany**

According to Teutonic legend, Walpurgisnacht, or St. Walburga's Night, falls on April 30, the eve of May Day.

The modern practitioner of the Left-Hand Path in North America may have misguided associations concerning the alleged "historic importance" of

this date. As the Temple of Set comes to reject certain false information, ever updating and refining its knowledge, this April season is an appropriate time to take a more comprehensive look at this legendary Unholyday and its actual source.

To middle Europeans steeped in German culture and folklore, Walpurgisnacht is the dreaded eve in which the Prince of Darkness holds his wicked revels on the shadowy summit of the Harz Mountains. Boschian visions of lewd pandæmonium come to mind, images of the Devil and his mortal students engaged in the ultimate Witches' Sabbath.

This colorful, diabolical celebration has been further mythologized by the works of some of Germany's most inspired artists. Goethe, whose seminal poem *Faust* has cast a long shadow over Left-Hand Path thought, includes a famous Walpurgisnacht scene. This scene has subsequently appeared in the many operas based on *Faust*. The composer Mendelssohn crafted his anti-Christian mini-opera *The First Walpurgisnacht* from folkloric sources.

It was with all this brewing in our imaginations that Priestess Schreck and I journeyed by train to the Harz Mountains a few Walpurgisnachts ago to take part in this Mephistophelean merriment first hand.

The Harz is located within what was once the Communist dictatorship of East Germany, and it was to that then-recently-liberated region we headed.

Our trip from the sleek consumer paradise of West Germany ended in Hamelin, on the forlorn East German border. This picturesque little town is where the sinister Pied Piper from Hamelin is said to have lured away the local children as a retaliation for the ingratitude shown for his rat-catching services. It was an appropriate embarkation site for a voyage deep into an enchanted past.

The *Hexentanzplatz*, or Witches' Dance Place, was our ultimate destination. Located high atop the Harz, in the German state of Saxony, this clearing on a densely forested cliff was said to be the very place in which Hell's legions met for their annual conclave.

Our research revealed that long before Christianity had come to this area, with its attendant demonization of all local religious activity, the same mountain clearing had been the yearly meeting-place for Saxon Germanic tribes.

Some students of Nordic religion maintain that the Saxons had gathered there for thousands of years to celebrate May Day festivals in honor of Woden. It was that dark warrior lord of isolation and self-initiation who formed the authentic prototype for the particularly German concepts of "the Devil" so prevalent in the area.

We arrived in Thale, a tiny burg buried in the Bode valley. The people of Thale had been holding a Walpurgisnacht festival on the nearby mountain for centuries, reverting to the dimly-remembered ways of their Wodenic forefathers as the hold of the church began to loosen in the seventeenth century.

As true knowledge of Woden had faded, the townsfolk identified with the figure of the Devil. Walpurgisnacht became a gently antinomian rejection of Christianity and an excuse for whooping it up annually Mardi-Gras style, allowing normally staid inhibitions to fall by the wayside.

We came to a horrific example of post-Stalinist architecture in the center of town, owned by former Communist Party big-shots who now rented out to the few tourists passing by. We were made to feel entirely at home by the gracious elderly couple, who explained that the last Walpurgisnacht festival in the Harz had been held in 1944, immediately before Soviet occupation.

The atheistic Communists, eager to wipe out any German folklore or archaic Pagan remnants, had outlawed the Walpurgisnacht. We were privileged to be attending the first revival of the tradition since the end of the war nearly half a century earlier.

We found ourselves surrounded by a wildly romantic landscape of misty, fairy-tale forests and brooding mountains, an environment completely in keeping with the local legends. The atmosphere only deepened when we took a treacherous ride via a strange Czechoslovakian ski lift that swayed creakingly over the mountainside. On *Hexentanzplatz* itself one could easily imagine the presence of the Archfiend lurking in the woods or soaring on to the craggy cliffs. A magnificent overview of the Harz spread out from our vista.

One long-forgotten structure from the turn of the last century appeared in the layer of fog that clung to the mountain. This was the *Walpurgishalle*, a Wagnerian romantic's idea of an Odinist temple, built by the local fantastic artist and student of Germanic saga Hermann Hendrich in 1901.

A huge head of one-eyed Odin towered grimly above the heavy wooden structure, a dominant pillared mass topped by a sharply angled roof. Inside the *faux*-temple, frescoes from Teutonic myth and of the Walpurgis legends covered the walls.

We had never heard of this wonderful shrine, and were more than surprised to find it there on the mountain, the very symbol of the fabled aura of legend that had clung to this obscure site for centuries.

In a small animal preserve, we were able to pet a frisky family of wolves, as well as some bear cubs named Bodi and Brunhilde, after two other local myths. Brunhilde, the Valkyrie, was said to have fended off her opponent Bodo, who pursued her

over a waterway on his giant horse. A curious "hoofprint" on the edge of a cliff is pointed out as the mark of the horse by locals.

As night fell, the Walpurgis fires were lit and devil masks and costumes were donned. The townsfolk were so thrilled to have "Amerikaners" present at their quaint festival, we were immediately pressed into service to judge the best children's devil costume!

In an open-air theatre reminiscent of the ancient Germanic thing, 16th-century plays of sorcery and Faustian pacts were performed against the incredible starlit backdrop of the mountains all around. The Devil had come back to the Harz Mountains, and you can be sure that a private ritual was held by two typical American tourists to mark the occasion.

May your own Walpurgisnacht be as festive this year.

[7] High Priest Policy

- by Don Webb V°

Any administrative notice, such as an expulsion or involuntary downgrading, will be sent from the Priest making the action by registered mail (or equivalent) to the person receiving the action, with a copy (via regular mail) to the Executive Director.

We have seen in the last six to eight months a growing change in the tenor of our e-mail lists. For the most part this is good and expected as ÆS Working II reaches its crest on April 30, 2001.

People have begun to realize the great freedoms that Setian philosophy holds, and that many things held self-evident by the small cultural group that Remanifested Set's Temple are not the only conclusions that can be drawn from Set's eternal Word. As we expand into new cultures, languages - and as we draw our membership from places other than the occult community, we will see an even greater broadening and an even livelier dialogue.

This situation has three drawbacks which the Priesthood of Set must overcome.

Firstly, there has been an intrusion of Internet culture into our lists. In Net culture speed of reply is the great good, so you whip out a response before you think about it. This means you get editorials, not initiation. Becoming aware of this, and helping our students become aware of it as a fetter from the WOH is important [both for now and for the creation of better forums].

Secondly, we have allowed ourselves to be fooled by the apparent nature of the medium. We treat it as print that will last forever, rather than as chat that will be forgotten tomorrow. We see something we disagree with, and feel that we need to shut it down, rather than doing what we would do in conversation which would be to ask "Why?".

Instead of doing our Priestly job of leading discourse, we reach for our big guns of authority.

If you want to master this medium rather than be mastered by it, you should spend some time in leading small group discussions. If a Setian were to say something you didn't think was good, you would ask him to explain; you wouldn't threaten him with expulsion, demand apologies, or order him from your house.

We can stop a great deal of our over-reactions by reminding ourselves and others that this is a transitory medium.

Thirdly, we have the greatest ease in inviting other people to mediate the situations. This is bad, because a dispute of four people can become a dispute involving twelve, in perhaps two hours. This makes it very hard for the participants to calm down and work things out among themselves.

By no means should this imply that I am not as adversely affected by e-mail as anyone else. It is an anger-inducing medium. For example, just ten minutes ago, I was spitting mad at a Priest of Set; I thought he was a great idiot, and it even passed my mind that I should expel him. Why such anger?? He left three letters out of a post to me. They happen to be "N-O-T", and their absence made the whole document inflammatory rather than soothing.

If you are having problems with a good Initiate because a fight has developed, please contact one of the List owners [privately] and ask if he will toss the man or woman off-List. Then let at least 24 hours pass while you think about this.

There is no loss of dignity involved if you write "I feel that your tone and manner are not appropriate to the constructive dialogue that this List is meant to have, so the dialogue is over at my end. If you adopt a more civil tone, I would be willing to engage with you again."

This sends the message we always want to send: Exploration by means of discourse is good; emotional baiting is bad.

Writing "I am a Priest, and what I say is so!" doesn't work, especially when what you say is indeed so. People are not here to ape our ideas; they are here to think. If we the Priesthood fulfill our own job of having better ideas, then they will come to think as we do. And sometimes they come to those better ideas before we do.

Let us keep in mind the two reasons we engage in these electronic forums:

(1) We do this to inspire ourselves to thought which we then use in our private letters to Initiates, our articles, and - most importantly - our lives.

(2) We do this as training, so that we can use these skills beyond simple chats with 60 people, toward reshaping the world. The long-term view of why we are here should not be forgotten.

[8] *Xem*

- by David Moore II°

Xem is not the word for ancient Egypt, but rather the state of higher man - the realm of higher beings. - Ronald K. Barrett V°

What follows is my personal understanding of the Æonic Word *Xem*. This may seem like a redundant statement since the understanding of *Xem* can only be personal.

I choose to write this now, after reading Magus Ronald K. Barrett's *The Book of Opening the Way*, because that work has led to certain clarifications of my own experiences, my own way of looking at things. I also want to write now before I expose myself to any other interpretations of *Xem*. It seems to be a controversial topic, so I want to stake my own claim before engaging the ideas of other Initiates.

Egypt, my Egypt, they strove to bring eternity down upon the Earth. But even eternity can decay. Rejecting me, they became mockeries, drowning in a world of seething chaos and corrupted order. But I live, and they are dust. Behold, I shall reveal to you the arcane commonwealth.

Let us begin with the phrase *Xeper ir Xem*. *Xeper*, while being vitally important, is outside the immediate scope of this paper. And we will be getting to *Xem* shortly. But let's take a moment to pause on *ir*.

This little word, also spelled *er* in some sources, has several possible translations. According to Budge it can mean "at, by, near, to, towards, into, with, among, against, from, every, upon, concerning, up to, until, so that". Such a multiplicity of meanings might be frustrating under ordinary conditions. Yet for my purpose it illustrates the elusiveness of *Xem* itself. Where is *Xem*? It's "out there" somewhere and also immediate.

My voice is a soft whisper. Will you take a moment to listen? For I shall share an enigma. My voice is a mighty shout. Listen to what it says: "*Xem*."

There is a mass of humanity sprawled upon the Earth. There is much that is loud, and vile, and dirty. But enveloped within, concealed from view, there is a colony of those on a hidden shore by the secret sea of mythic beings and deep currents

Few are those who dwell there; few are those who seek that shore. *Xem*.

Ronald K. Barrett (RKB) makes many pronouncements about what *Xem* is; he drops a lot of hints. In the *Book of Opening the Way* his most systematic way of trying to explain *Xem* is symbolic, especially when he elaborates on his "Stele of *Xem*".

There is a certain wisdom in this because *Xem* is not the slave of interpretation and definition. It exists beyond and within words, but rarely on the surface of the words themselves.

Each magician must claim *Xem* as his own and understand it in his own way.

Reading Barrett makes me look back on some of my own experiences, makes me realize that I have had encounters with *Xem*, even though I would never have called it *Xem* without exposure to Barrett's work.

I am going to try and explain as clearly as possible what my *Xem* is. I hope that my words will resonate with others who reside in *Xem* and maybe even set the spirits of the receptive in motion to find *Xem* for themselves.

Shall I say that *Xem* is non-physical? Astral? Trans-temporal? All these words that mean so much and yet so little - trite phrases of the New Age and Sci-fi. They are true and not true, only useful if they guide you toward your destination. This is true of all my words, just as it is true of all RKB's words.

Try it this way: *Xem* is the secret universe that exists outside of us and within us. *Xem* is perceived and known through what Dr. Aquino calls "the magical link". It is the secret confederation of human, *neters*, and others.

I say "confederation" because RKB indicates that one aspect of *Xem* involves cooperative work between humans and *neters*. I don't wish to dwell too long on his specific understanding of the *neters* and our relationship with them in this essay, because it is ultimately up to the individual magician to forge that relationship and understanding for himself. All I want to stress here is the idea of a sort of partnership, a working together for mutual benefit.

The Word (*Xem*) at once defines the individual being and the realm of beings, all of whom are Becoming cooperatively ... but for now let's say that the Initiate has a specific *neter* with whom he shall function in the cooperative effort.

What I want to emphasize is the idea that there is this secret confederation, a magical community of humans and others that is highly interactive and beneficial to those who participate. This community, at least at this point in our evolution, can really only be sensed subjectively by the human Initiate. This is why *Xem* is "hidden"; it can be detected and

entered only within the inner universe of the individual.

This secret confederation, this family of intelligences, is preexisting and continues to exist. It is not static and remote, but personal and dynamic; and it has a goal.

The Elect must take their rightful place in the cosmos. Read this statement by RKB: "Rather it (*Xem*) is the constant construction of a metaphysical/magical/philosophical state of being and state of beings ..." Think of this not just as "state of mind" but as "state" as in the sense of a nation, a country, a commonwealth.

If you wish, take a moment to meditate on *Xem* as a network of entities working together for mutual empowerment, for mutual *Xeper*. Next realize that it is all just a metaphor.

If my little interpretation resonates with you at all, it can only be as a hint, something to activate your own intuitive ability. "It must be further understood that with this new dimension of being which is ever evolving, the work shall not be accomplished by employing human standards which are but games, petty religion, and politics. Neither is the work involved in an organizational concept like any other on Earth."

Xem cannot be manifested in the world as a government, corporation, or society. Yet history teaches us that many a leader, many a priesthood, has become aware of the secret confederation and tried to impose it on the people. I think of the Aztecs, a whole culture based on relationship and exchange with their gods, based on sacrifice and subservience to those gods.

Xem awaits, the gates are open. Come to *Xem*. Become to *Xem*. But here is my warning: If you come to *Xem* as a slave, you shall be enslaved. If you come to *Xem* as a servant, service you shall provide. Come to *Xem* as a sacrifice and you shall be consumed. Come to *Xem* as children and I shall be your parent. Come to *Xem* laughing and I shall laugh with you. Come to *Xem* as an equal and you will be divine.

Xem can only be "brought to Earth" within the being, within the heart of the individual Initiate. He can obviously work with other human beings who have "grounded" *Xem*. But they cannot force *Xem* on others by legislation and decree. Those who try may have entered *Xem*, but they have entered it as servants; thus they wish to make others servants.

This is why the Temple of Set is an excellent place to quest for *Xem*. The Temple understands the importance of true individuality, both in the mundane and the magical sense. Under the auspices

of Set, one can be a real denizen of *Xem* because the Word of Set is *Xeper*. To enter *Xem* as a true individual, one must Come Into Being as a true individual, not as a sheep in a flock.

One other reason that the Temple is an excellent place to start is because you are not required or expected to quest for *Xem* at all unless it is what you want to do. It is fully possible to be Elect and not deal with *Xem*, or to wait until a later day.

This is the only way to approach *Xem*. Otherwise tensions between the idea of *Xem* as a community and the idea of isolate intelligence will emerge, tensions that can only impede everyone's progress. The idea of true will is not without merit in this regard.

The downfall of the *Xem* Magus is quite instructive to those who would follow the path he charted. From what I have heard and read about him, it seems he tried to use the office of High Priest to impose *Xem* on the Temple from above. But even if it is in one's nature (or un-nature) to *Xeper ir Xem*, it must be done in one's own way, own rate, and own time. RKB, like many others, probably got so excited by his discovery that he was certain he could drag everybody along if he just used some leverage and some charisma.

Because of the nature of *Xem*, this danger is perhaps greater for a *Xem* Magus. It is a tendency that must be counterbalanced by a strong commitment to individualism.

How does one get to *Xem*? "*Xem* must first be recognized, then realized, and finally actualized by each aspiring magician."

To engage this process RKB indicates that certain abilities are required. One must be able to "learn with the intelligence of the heart". You must be able to intuit *Xem*; you must be able to feel *Xem*; you must be able to pierce the symbols of *Xem* and find the living, thriving, vibrant existence of *Xem*.

You must have the powers of the heart: desire and will. Remember Magus Webb's comment that for the Egyptians "the action of the *ib* (heart) produces magic". It is through magic that we have the most deliberate and most direct access to *Xem*.

Xem cannot be arrived at by reason alone. What that means is it cannot be deduced by objective observations or the scientific method. But this does not mean that reason is disregarded as one enters *Xem*, otherwise you might just serve yourself up a bowl of pseudo-mystical gumbo and mumbo jumbo. You must still use yourself, your subjectivity, as an instrument of observation. You must still construct a frame of reference for what you experience.

RKB is even more dramatic when he says that "higher man must conquer fear". What does that mean? Should we not be afraid of anything? Should

we test ourselves by driving on the wrong side of the freeway, wrestling alligators, or running naked through the shopping mall? I doubt this. I think that the true meaning of the phrase is that we should not fear our own magic, our own *Xeper*, and where they might lead. To *Xeper ir Xem* is to work with the arcane commonwealth. The consequences will be unforeseen. We will be challenged in ways we have never dreamed of.

“The ‘Way’ itself is change-transformation. Change is the most significant cause of fear, because the process is frightening and difficult, and the result is unknown.” We must conquer fear with purpose, not just to be daring. Perhaps our personal quests will call for such bravado, but *Xem* itself does not call for us to risk jeopardy or incarceration.

There is another angle to this as well. The *neters* (among others) can be very overwhelming and intimidating when you first meet them. Even the connections with other human beings who walk in both *Xem* and the mundane world can be intense. It takes a very special kind of courage to keep focused on your own *Xeper*. It takes a special courage not to lose your way.

Perhaps most mysteriously RKB speaks of creating *Xem*, of Coming Into Being as *Xem*. How do you create *Xem* if it already exists? Remember that *Xem* is not a place on a map. Each Initiate must “actualize *Xem*”. To *Xeper ir Xem* is to make it anew, to create it for yourself. *Xem* is always present, yet regenerated each time a new intelligence claims it for itself.

Each magician casts *Xem* and all its citizens into the magician’s own image. This is the essence of what RKB means by “uniting the Two Lands”.

Another way to think about it is to define a somewhat artificial distinction between *Xem* as the state of mind you have to be in to experience/interact with the secret confederation and *Xem* as the confederation itself. RKB does not seem to make such a clear distinction, which in some ways makes *Xem* more confusing than it necessarily has to be. The archaic alliance is yours by right. Claim it!

The blood of the serpent flows within you,
life-force of stars and trackless voids. Beyond
gods is self. *Xem* is now! Are you there yet?

In closing this essay I will acknowledge that I chose to examine certain aspects of RKB’s work and set aside others. I have not forgotten these things; I simply did not need them to make the points I wanted to make in this preliminary study of mine. But I wish to acknowledge some of them as topics for future writings: the role of Anubis, the role of Ma’at, the unnamed *neter*, *Xem* and the Statement of Leviathan, and the self ahead of self.

[9] From Where I Stand: A Brief Look at Two Æonic Words

- by James Foster I°

I have recently been pondering the two Æonic Words I find at once the most confusing and the most fascinating: *Xem* and *Runa*.

In reading through some of the newsletters from the *Xem* Pylon (available on the Intranet - everyone send in your money, this is an invaluable and readily accessible resource! - I was struck by the various descriptions of *Xem*. It sounded so much like various Buddhist sects talking about differing viewpoints on Buddha-Nature: “It’s like this, but not like that, and a little bit like that thing” and so on.

What stood out the most to me was a brief statement by then-Adept Youril, concerning the relationship between *Xem* and *Runa*. This has occupied my thoughts ever since that reading, and I’d like to share the product so far [I think I’m quite a ways from an end result].

I began by examining the relationship between *Xeper* and Remanifest, each both goal and process, and the way in which Remanifest helps define *Xeper*. I began to wonder just how close these other two Words might be in association. My understanding of *Runa* so far - as a I° Setian - is that it is the ever-receding mystery, the eternal unknown that draws us onward and is, in fact, the impetus behind *Xeper*.

It is that wonderful knowledge that’s always right on the tip of your brain - that clue that you’re always just a few thoughts from figuring out, if only you could put the right words in the right order.

Of course it can never be the “known”, never discovered. This doesn’t deter us from the search, however; and while we may stumble across the answers to our questions, if they’re real answers they lead to even bigger questions and deeper mysteries. This seeking-forward propels us through our process of *Xeper*.

Before I begin talking about *Xem*, I’d like to explain my current working model of the self. I do not believe that everybody has one. In fact I’d say most don’t. I think we grow our selves.

There are, as we all know, moments when we are briefly outside of the herd with the realization that “I have Become”. It was, I imagine, just such a moment that lead each of us eventually to the Temple.

At this moment it becomes possible to develop a self, a sense of identity that is separate, isolate from the herd. While everyone at some point may experience this, not everyone uses this moment in the same way.

The “common” person relishes the brief ego boost and then returns to the herd with his tale of glory, to be retold countless as he attempts to relive that moment when he briefly experienced a sense of greatness. Very little self is actualized.

There are those few, though, who not only relish in that moment of realization but also notice the antinomian aspect of being separate. They in turn do not spend fruitless time trying to recreate a moment of the dead past. Rather they attempt to create more moments of separateness. These moments, these periods of being “awake”, are the only moments wherein self may be nurtured.

While the masses are part of the herd, they react to external stimuli, they react on internal instinct, but they do not develop self. Only in a moment of separation can one say “I”, and the more one creates those moments, the longer and the more frequent they become.

The self, then, is a point, a referent where one stops briefly on his journey and looks behind (*Xepera*), at the present (*Xeper*), the future (*Xeperu*), and the forever-ahead (*Runa*), for those moments are when we are “aware”, when we are “self”.

Those times when we are not aware, not awake [most of my time is spent like this], we are only drones, plodding along - perhaps upon a course chosen during an awakened moment. But only during those moments of experiencing *Xeper*, those magical moments of being awake and aware, can we truly say “I am”.

How does this relate to *Xem*? As I stated earlier, as we progress, our moments of separateness, of isolate awareness become more frequent and longer in duration. Eventually it may even be possible - it certainly seems so for some - that they may be created at will.

Sooner or later there is a moment that lasts: when one is awake, aware, and fully self. Of course this isn't an end, as the self must continue to evolve and strive after *Runa*. But after this point there is no more plodding along blindly on a course chosen when your eyes were briefly opened. No, after this point you know your name. The unknown god has Come Into Being, and undergone *Xeper* with full awareness.

This is *Xem*, that point where moments of separate awareness no longer need be sought out, because that state has become the mode in which the being operates. It is the moment of immortality and divinity.

As I said, this isn't an end. As many have pointed out, *Xem* cannot become a goal in and of itself. It can only fulfill its proper function when it is reached on the way to something beyond.

This is the function of *Runa*. It is always that something beyond, towards which we must always

move and strive. With our eyes firmly fixed ahead and our reach always stretching out towards the eternal mystery, we are assured that *Xem* is a state which is reached in its proper time, and one which fulfills its proper function. Without the goal which is forever out of reach, *Xem* may become a miscarriage of divine birth.

This, then, is their relationship, their balance. Seek after the mysteries, and you will discover *Xem*; and the seeking which brought you there will also be what assures your movement onward.

Anyway, that's what it looks like from where I stand!

[10] **Beginning a Research Project**

- by Mark Martin I°

I am doing some research into a willed state of “flow” during ritual workings.

What were the special conditions of a particular ritual of yours? Did it result in any mental/spiritual growth? Have you noticed any subjective or objective universe changes? Can you summon up that “flow” again? Is it applicable only to formal ritual situations, or could it also be applied in LBM situations?

Please feel free to send experiences or suggestions to me. I thank you for your time and consideration in this project.

[11] **Sba.Sn Set r Sbt: Announcement of the Fourth Gate of Hell**

- by Lauri Jean Crowe II°

On February 17, 1996 I entered the Gates of Hell Pylon as a Setian I°. As I look back on those two years with the Pylon, I think to myself, “I did not do enough.” I always think this, even if others feel I have - it's what keeps me striving to do more, and excel in those things I do.

Still I wrote a few good articles, participated in “Project Nosferatu”, created the “Tarot of the Cat People Project”, and saw it through. As a result of the work I did with the Pylon, I had the opportunity not only to interact with many strong Initiates, but also to evoke much personal growth and change within myself.

It is these changes that cause me to joyfully announce the manifestation of the Fourth Gate of Hell - *Sba.Sn Set r Sbt* - and call to Initiates seeking a Pylon: “Let them learn of Set at this Gate!”

The first task of the Initiate seeking affiliation through this Gate would seem to be pronunciation of the Gate's name: “Saba Esen Sutk err S'bet”. [And I give heartfelt thanks to Magus Webb for his gentle suggestions and education concerning Egyptian grammar.]

As to what else the Initiate can expect to find:

This not a Gate for the non-productive Initiate! Those who pass through this Gate will quest to explore and to express their individual perception of Set and self via regular and active communication within the Pylon and the Temple. The Initiate will have a strong dedication to interaction within the Temple, leading to the opening of new doors of perception and new veins of discussion. Thus they will create their own doors through which others may explore various principles, ideas, and constructs brought to manifestation. The primary vehicle of this exploration will be written communication.

If this interests you, your next task after conquering pronunciation of the Gate's name is to write me and express the desire to communicate and become a part of one of the oldest and largest Pylons within the Temple, the ever-growing Gates of Hell.

[12] Recognitions

Jared Davison was Recognized to the Priesthood of Set on February 21, 1998 by Magister Robertt Neilly, along with Magus Don Webb and Magister Roger Whitaker.

David Moore was Recognized as an Adept II° on March 1, 1998 by Priest Aaron Besson.

Andrea Palhares was Recognized as an Adept II° during the Kalevala Pylon Conclave XV (February 6-8, 1998) by Magister Petri Laakso.

Markku Siira was Recognized as an Adept II° on February 7, 1998 by Priest Vesa Iitti.

Marcela Lopez was Recognized as an Adept II° on March 7, 1998 by Priestess Eve Kochel.

[13] The Chalice and the Elixir

- by Eulit M. Hinson II°

The Grail Quest, the primary focus of the Order of the Trapezoid, would also seem to occupy a central position in the initiatory endeavors of the Artisans of Xnum, even though it may be called by a different name.

Knights of the Trapezoid swear fealty to the *fylgja* upon taking the Oath of the Order. The Artisans of Xnum seek to remanifest the Hellenistic cult of *Agathodaimon*. In both cases the Initiate is pledged to follow the dictates of the essential self. Yet it is often overlooked that in speaking of an essential self, a higher self, a true self, etc., a dualism arises that is not usually addressed. In both the Grail Quest and the pursuit of the *Agathodaimon* one can find a duality concerning the object of the quest(s).

Priest Pridgen wrote:

From the *Dialogues* we have the tradition of the Platonic *Agathon* and the Socratic *Daimon*. These were eventually combined into a single concept, that of the *Agathodaimon*, in the Hellenistic era.

The *Agathon* is the guiding principle, the motive principle, knowledge of which is the foundation of all ethical behavior.

The *Daimon* is the informing principle, or the source of one's knowledge of the ethical.

There is a dynamic tension between these two principles, the *telos* of which is *Runa*.

With the Grail, similarly, there are two such elements - the chalice, the cup itself, that is sought; and the elixir that is contained in it. In *Black Magic* Dr. Aquino wrote of the Grail:

It symbolizes Truth in its purest and most sublime Form.

The Grail is ever sought, never found by the profane, for they fear Truth even when they profess otherwise. Should they chance upon the Grail through innocence or accident, they dash it from their lips in terror or, upon drinking from it, come hideously to grief through their rashness.

Only an Initiate of the Left-Hand Path may dare to drink from the Grail with impunity, and only he shall see it brought forth before him whenever he desires.

Woe unto him who drinks from the Grail with deceit and falsehood in his heart; it shall consume him utterly.

It would seem that the Grail chalice represents what would essentially be the *Agathon*, the motive principle, while the elixir would be synonymous with the *Daimon*, the informing principle.

To simplify this even further, it could be said that the *Agathon*/chalice is "desire"; the *Daimon*/elixir is "inspiration" - and both arise from the realm of the hidden (*Runa*). The Seal of *Runa* itself represents the relationship between curved space (realm of the *Agathon*/chalice) and angled space (realm of the *Daimon*/elixir).

From these rather abstract speculations arises a more practical aspect: What do these concepts reveal that can actually be used to further *Xeper*?

Speaking for myself, the *Daimon*/elixir represents that which is permanent and unchangeable within the self - the very essence, the essential self. It is the secret center, already perfected. Yet all too often we are cut off from it because we fail to recognize it for what it is. It cannot be remade or further developed. It must be uncovered, rather like peeling away the layers of an

onion.

The *Agathon*/chalice consists of those aspects of the self which can be changed, shaped, and perfected through individual effort. Through such work as the Quest for *Xem*, the construction of the *Wode*-self, the work (Gurdjieff/Ouspensky style), etc., one can willfully alter non-essential aspects of the self in order to create a better vessel in which to house the essence. In other words, fine wine is better tasted from a crystal goblet than a styrofoam cup.

The trick to achieving balance in initiation, and thus wisdom, is to be able to distinguish one of these from the other.

[14] From the Well of Pythia

The psychology of man's possible entertainment
- by Tony Pizzini II°

In the past nine months, we have heard nothing but praise for this column. Which, of course, means that there are very likely also Setians who may not have encouragement on their minds, but who might wish to see the space taken up with some other thing. A woodcut of a really handsome teshtesh, for instance.

To them, we have this to say: If the scribe in charge of these reviews appears to limit his writings to musical borders too unfocused or to so narrow a bandwidth that it enrages the reading listener, then you are asked to please send him reviews of those types of music/films you feel should be included here. Music that is useful during a Working, while relaxing, while staring down one's ferret, to scare the neighbors with, etc. It can be a favorite recording or just as easily a much-hated one. Marilyn Manson, Mansun, Hansen, Danzig, Rancid, Manson, Man, Can, Magma, Khan, Kraan, k.d.lang, The Damned, ChemLab and Kate Bush have yet to have anyone speak up for them here. Or, for that matter, Adept Pizzini's intricate work for orchestra "Ra's Well," (although he is likely to deny it ever happening) with its beautiful Aria 51 (to be fair, many find this difficult to get into).

Set is a god of borders; they exist to be crossed, but patrols along the perimeters quite often will relay news of activity on the other side which is equally as useful as the signal that comes from within the (seemingly) walled city itself.

A thank you to Priest Nikolas Schreck for the push.

[15] Movie Review: *Alien Resurrection*

- reviewed by Brian Karasek I°

My mommy always told me there weren't any monsters. Not real ones. But there are.

- Ellen Ripley

With those words the fourth in the *Alien* series begins. This episode, based on the same characters and storyline, takes place two hundred years after Lieutenant Ellen Ripley died on a prison planet in the third movie. I have the same hatred for interminable sequels that most of us do I imagine, but I was not disappointed in the slightest.

The plot is familiar fare to anyone who has seen the films in the series. A distant space station, a handful of humans, and a sudden infestation of aliens. Ellen Ripley, reprised by Sigourney Weaver (whom I hope one day to marry), has been cloned by United Systems Military. USM clones Ripley in the hopes of obtaining a viable embryo of the Queen alien which was in her at the close of the third film. Upon the surgical removal of the queen embryo, Ripley is kept under surveillance. It seems that Ripley's DNA has been blended, *a la The Fly*, with that of the queen. At first sight we see that Ripley's fingernails are pointed and iron gray. After a brief scuffle, Ripley has a bloody nose. She wipes the blood off, and flings it off to the side. Her blood hits the steel floor and burns through the metal. The plot thickens...

A group of smugglers have come on board the USM space station, bringing with them cargo: the live humans which will serve as hosts for the queen's brood. In this crew is Call, played by Winona Ryder (for whom I hope one day to leave Sigourney), the secondary heroine to Ripley. Havoc ensues, the beasts break out, and lots and lots of people die. I'll not spoil the ending for you.

The real reason I write this review is a strongly appealing Setian vein in the film. Ripley works with the rest of the humans, and her otherness stands out. She is alone in the universe, a crossbreed. Her sense of identification with the aliens is evident. In the past, she was bent on the creatures' destruction for its own sake. This time around, the creatures she is trying to escape are her children in a sense. She kills one, and Call comments, "Isn't that like killing one of your own kind?" Ripley responds with a terse "It was in my way." No more the martyr, no more the cleanser of the universe, Ripley is a predator at her soul. "I can feel her, behind my eyes," she says, and we can see it.

How Ripley wrestles with her existence appeals to me. The way the others are leery of her strikes a chord with me. And her casual reference to a man as "this ... human" sings to me. I am afraid I can't say if the movie is in theaters or video stores when you read this. In the Middle East it's out in theaters, and once I finish this, I'm going to go see it again.

[16] **Book Review:**

The Long Hard Road out of Hell

by Marilyn Manson with Neil Strauss

- reviewed by David A. Cohen II°

I always wanted to review a book for the *Scroll*; I just never thought it would be this one! So here I am on the birthday of George Washington - America's founding father and great revolutionary - writing about a man's life of revolt for whom ol' George himself would never have thought his work would have given such liberties.

For those of you unfamiliar with Marilyn Manson, this is the bizarre life story (to date) of the singer, songwriter, concept-producer, etc., of the infamous Satanic band which goes by the same name.

This ultra-Gothic and recently "sickest" underground band went mainstream with notoriety in such a short time, it somehow allowed them to be counted among the *avant-garde*.

Their music is a blend of styles referred to as Industrial, Dance-Pop, Metal, and an undertone of a melodic Rock sound, albeit with a deep, dark, brooding, S&M menace. This unique blend is enhanced with soundbites from serial killers and odd movie bits, as well as Manson's rendition of the "boatride" from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*.

They are most known in pop-music culture for their re-mix of Charles Manson's song "My Monkey", Annie Lennox's Eurythmic's song "Sweet Dreams", and Screamin' Jay Hawkins' "I Put A Spell On You". Of recent success is the song "The Beautiful People", Manson's condemnation of what society and ol' Hollywood specifically consider as the "norm" value of beauty. Among the various EPs and singles, the band's three albums to date are *Portrait of An American Family*, *Smells Like Children*, and *Antichrist Superstar*.

Part of one of their albums was recorded in the house in which the Sharon Tate murders occurred, and another was done in an old mortuary/funeral home. They are the most notorious and depraved stage performers of their time, with 50-foot high sets of impaled angels in stained glass backdrops; and red, white, and black Nazi-inspired banners of the same size with the band logo used for stage presence.

Manson himself appears to be a corpse from a recently exhumed grave, and his bandmates zombies or ghosts, all endowed with face makeup so spooky as to make the exploits of the 70s' band *Kiss* look like cartoon characters in comparison.

When I saw Marilyn Manson in October of '96, there was a bomb scare that delayed the concert by

about 1-1/2 hours, and a rumor that Manson was going to commit suicide on stage. He quickly debunked the rumor, telling the audience something to the effect that he wouldn't give 'em the satisfaction, later slashing his body during the show and tearing up a *Bible*. All normal for a Manson show!

The band's earlier exploits were even more depraved, both on and off the stage, but you'll have to buy the book for that info. A very macabre bunch of performance artists. Don't eat while reading this book!

[17] ***Aq-t-er-pet: A Pylon Remanifests***

- by Daniel Ayres II°, Sentinel

On the evening of February 7, 1998 the *Hlidhskjalf* Pylon of the Temple of Set, located in Denver, Colorado, was formally Remanifest as the *Aq-t-er-pet* Pylon. In order to understand how and why this change came about, it is necessary to understand some of the Pylon's history.

Hlidhskjalf was brought into being on October 31, 1993 by Priestess Ayres and myself. At the time we were both very heavily into Teutonic studies, and we wanted a Germanic name for the Pylon.

I chose the name *Hlidhskjalf* not just because it was Germanic, but because of the concept it expressed. It is a dual concept. *Hlidhskjalf* literally translates as "high seat". It is the throne of self on which you must place yourself to come into being as a god. The second part of the concept is that of the *Irmisul*, the central column of the Universe which supports the high seat.

The concept seemed to be a good symbolic description of *Xeper*. It symbolized both the goal we work towards and the means and process of achieving it.

We decided to represent the *Irmisul* as a great trapezoidal tower with the high seat situated at the top amongst the pointed battlements. I had also unconsciously incorporated into the design of the tower the *Tiwaz* and *Aer* runes, both ideographic representations of the *Irmisul*/high seat complex.

As time went on and others came to work within the Pylon, it evolved and grew in power and focus. This evolution followed the lines of the concept of the central column and high seat. We wanted to alter the outward form of the Pylon to more truly express what it had become internally.

One of the problems with the Germanic name and aesthetic was that people tended to assume that we were a purely Teutonic pylon. But the idea of the central column is inherent in many different cultures and traditions, and we wanted this new outer form to be beyond any one cultural expression.

I was trying to find an Egyptian parallel to

Hlidhskjalf because I felt it would be possibly the oldest, *neter*-derived expression of this principle.

A couple of years ago I began working with a magical concept known as the “ladder of Horus and Set”. It is a spell from the *Pyramid Texts*, a funerary rite for pharaohs.

In this spell the words of power are uttered to summon forth a divine ladder, which is held up by Horus and Set. The pharaoh then ascends the ladder to the heavens (symbolized by a plate of iron), where he takes his seat upon the throne of self.

Along his journey up the ladder, the pharaoh is assisted occasionally by Horus and Set, who each extend a finger - no more, no less. Even with this small amount of aid it is the pharaoh’s responsibility to complete the journey himself.

If we apply this concept to Initiates of the Temple, it then becomes an apt description of the process of *Xeper*.

One factor to consider concerning the ladder is that in order for the ladder to appear, Horus and Set must be working in harmony with each other, not in conflict.

My first application of the spell was at the regional conclave in Dallas, Texas in the year 1995, as part of the working in which Magus Webb reunited the Two Lands, and the cycle of harmony between Horus and Set was brought into being once more.

On this and many other levels, the Remanifestation of the Pylon is a direct result and further expression of the reUtterance of *Xeper*. The *Xepera Mundi* Working was also an expression and refinement of *Xeper*, and the magic sent forth in that work has returned to us in the form of our Remanifested Pylon.

Aq-t-er-pet is the name of the ladder of Horus and Set. If you break the word into its constituent parts, it basically means “to ascend the ladder [to *Xeper*] and in so doing act as an example of *Xeper* and open its way to others”. Compare this to the Formula of the Æon of Set, *Xepera Xeper Xeperu*.

The ladder is the central column parallel I was looking for. This and all other symbols, including the tower, expressing this principle will be used within the Pylon.

However one symbol which I will be focusing on and working with the most is the skull and spinal column. In Egyptian thought this was considered to be the seat of consciousness, and the central column and high seat are perfectly represented here.

This pylon - its strength, power, and productiveness - would not have come into being were it not for the work and efforts of a group of individual Initiates working within the Temple of Set. Great is the might of Set, greater still is he through us.

[18] Notes from *Neheh*

- by Don Webb V°, High Priest of Set

Concerning Robert W. Robinson

Robert W. Robinson reached a point in his own development that he felt that he needed to live, work, and play in cosmological systems other than the Temple of Set. He ceremonially ended his degree of Magus and has begun a quest for certain solar mysteries.

As I have profited from his teachings, I wish him well. May he find the rebirth he seeks! In honor of his fourteen years of learning and teaching here, I gave him the title of Honorary Setian on March 3, 1998.

Priest Aaron Besson has volunteered to act as Acting Grand Master of the Order of the Sepulcher of the Obsidian Masque until the agreed-upon closure of that Order on September 9, 1999. The Order will be accepting no new members, and will have its last *Dromenon* at the international conclave this year. Its theme will be announced at the right time, and encodes an important lesson for the Year of Cthulhu Rising.

Words are not learned through books, but through living influences. The word, both written and spoken, is the primary medium of spreading the perception of the Magus, but it is his living experience that connects the Word to Set, the creator of possibilities and potentials.

As Robert has (by his own will) stopped his Task, the Word “Essent” ceases to live for us. It will not be included in future editions of the *Crystal Tablet*, nor part of salutations in official letters.

Does this mean the Word is gone? No. But it does mean that if you find the Word important, you must now do the harder work of making a personal connection to it. Robert’s teachings, as codified in the *Book of the OSOM*, will become part of the Temple’s archives.

Concerning Virtues & Teachers

I am in the process of writing *Uncle Setnakt’s Essential Guide to the Left-Hand Path*, which will be “the *Satanic Bible* for grown-ups”. I hope it will do as well as my *The Seven Faces Of Darkness*, which is distributed by Abyss and Weiser, so can be ordered now by any occult bookstore in the world. *Seven Faces* even made Abyss’ best-seller list.

In Chapter #1 I mention the virtues and vices of initiation. Here’s a slightly different version than will appear in the book:

Vices are those habits of mind, heart, and will that hold us back from our self-determined goals.

Virtues are those qualities of mind, heart, and will that lead to an increase of being.

The Vices

1. **Narcissism.** Because the Left-Hand Path focuses on the self, there is a sad tendency to see the self as an object of worship. This is as useful as if a sculptor began to worship clay.

The Initiate guards against this by humor, willingness to apologize, and asking himself the question about any bad situation he finds himself in: "How did my actions contribute to this jam?"

2. **Hubris.** Because the LHP Initiate does have access to mental states that 99.9999% of his fellow humans do not, he can come to believe that all of his actions are justified. He may even come to believe that the truths he has come to by the practice of initiatory magic are universal truths, whereupon he becomes the same sort of bigot from whom he fled early in his life.

The cure for *hubris* is to associate with powerful, smart people who make you aware of how little you know and how much more room there always is for achievement in your life.

Such associations also remind us that at all levels of the Left-Hand Path, we must have the dedication to cause changes in the objective universe. And good associations give us good people to network with. The mature LHP Initiate shuns being a big fish in a small pond.

3. **Forgetfulness of past orthodoxies.** Since we come to a surface-level (some would say intellectual) understanding of the fettering power of Right-Hand Path thought, we often think that we are "over it".

Those channels are cut very deep in ourselves, just as they are in the world. If we do not understand this, we will inevitably return to the bad habits of thought that we loathed. The victim of the religious bigot will become a religious bigot. The former Christian will come to believe in a loving Prince of Darkness. The former skeptic will disbelieve even the results of his own magic, and preach against the idea of magic.

The LHP Initiate remembers to test [and asks those in his life to test] whether or not he is showing the bad thought-patterns of his past.

4. **Despair.** Because of the immensity of the task of self-change, it is very easy to be overcome with despair. Once this happens, initiation stops. The Initiate must learn how to keep a certain amount of pleasurable challenge in his life at all times, so that fun - as much as anything else - will draw him back into initiatory practice.

5. **Attachment to the thought-system of another.** When you have had your eyes opened to the fact that world is very different than society would have you believe, it is very tempting to embrace the first coherent thought-system you encounter. People may pick Crowley, Gurdjieff,

Plato, Sartre, Whitehead, or some nut on Access TV that channels kazillion-year-old Lemurians; but in each case they have stopped thinking on their own and replaced thought with a language-game that requires memory and repetition.

The LHP Initiate will look at all these things with a bit of mental force-field in place, saying to himself "That might be helpful for me, but what do I think about it?"

6. **Obsession with magic.** Magic, which in one sense is manipulation of the mind, is very entertaining, so much so that it can eat someone's life away as much as TV or surfing the Net.

The Left-Hand Path magician holds this tendency at bay with the use of a magical diary that integrates each magical operation into the overall scheme of his life.

7. **Emotional servitude.** Many would-be writers write only when the "mood is right". Many would-be Initiates take care of their initiation only when the "mood is right". In both cases people don't learn their craft, and they don't have the hard and painful breakthroughs that are as important as the easy "Aha!" breakthroughs.

The Left-Hand Path Initiate knows that he doesn't follow his emotions, but that his emotions follow him. He practices doing things that are difficult for the sheer power it gives him over his emotions.

To destroy vices you need to use your diary and self-honesty.

Bad habits can be ended in three ways:

First, simply stop them (easy to say, hard to do).

Second, consciously pit them against each other. Let's say your bad habits include procrastination and nonproductive anger. The next time you feel that you are about to throw a fit, tell yourself "I know that I should be mad at Bob, but I'll do it tomorrow." If you succeed in your weakness matching, make a note of the victory.

Third, bad habits can be knocked out of the way with good behavior. Let's say your bad habit is watching a half hour of TV you don't like, between two shows you do enjoy. Fill up that time with your diary work, and note it as a victory.

The Virtues

1. **Magical curiosity.** The magical level of the world is maintained by the actions of coherent and transformative systems.

These are seldom the systems you can learn about in an occult bookstore. If true secrets were found in such places, then your fellow customers would be the most powerful people on Earth.

The true systems may have their broad outlines available there, but the hard work of finding out how these things really work is the Initiate's job. His

quest for knowledge will lead him into truly hidden areas that may require pilgrimages to ancient sites, research in dusty libraries, or picking up a few additional languages.

The occult industry, which is based on getting people to buy a few books about everything under the Sun, hates this sort of seeker, after he has paid back the occult world by doing a couple of general books on the topic.

The LHP Initiate knows that each answer leads to nine more questions. The quest of getting those answers is the very Path itself.

2. **Quantifiable pride.** We live in a world that is very short on recognition. People are afraid to recognize quality. It might empower a rival, or make them aware of their own lack of achievement. Yet as humans we long for recognition.

So LHP Initiates do speak of their real-world deeds. But in order to avoid the traps of egotism, they use a certain formula. They mention the real deed, and then link it to the next real-world achievement they are striving for. For example, "Last semester I made the Dean's list; next semester I will get into the doctoral program."

This type of formula has four effects:

First, it lets people know that you are a force in the world, and they will treat you accordingly.

Second, it will plant an image in their minds of your success, so that they will be unconsciously working magic for you to succeed.

Third, it lets you know that you are a person of real worth.

Fourth, it reminds you of how far you need to go in order to achieve your long-range goals.

3. **Sense of humor.** If Initiates cannot laugh at their own mistakes, they should give up trying. If they can't laugh at the world, they will go mad. Laughter is the banisher of obsessions, and the mark of someone sure of his sovereignty.

4. **Openness.** Many people are so insecure that they lead lives so tight that magic couldn't break in even if from the Prince of Darkness himself.

They have rules about what to eat, when to sleep, who to have sex with, what to read, how to vote - until every second of their life is filled.

The LHP Initiate, because of trust that his magic will open doors for him, tries new things and is very spontaneous. True development will come to someone with will-to-succeed long before it will come to someone with will-to-control.

5. **Moderation.** The sovereign self knows that nothing outside of itself is essential, nor is anything forbidden. Therefore it refuses those paths and people that have a "one is the right way" attitude. It chooses between libertinage and æstheticism, knowing that each is a distortion of the self. Neither addiction nor abstinence is an answer for a person

who rules his life.

6. **Synthesis.** The late Anton S. LaVey was ahead of first part of the game at this. He took useful aspects of life from a variety of sources - photography, fiction, sexology, and so forth to form his system. He failed in not synthesizing them well. The LHP Initiate looks for his tools in a variety of life experiences, and does not draw all (or even most) of his practice from the occult world.

7. **Cunning.** The Left-Hand Path Initiate always has an ace in the hole for any situation. He does not put all of his eggs in one basket.

He has cunning: a type of knowing and thought formed by a complex but coherent constellation of attitudes and skills which combine flair, extensive networking, wisdom, forethought, subtlety of mind, deception, observation of people's nonverbal cues, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism, various skills, and experience acquired over the years.

It is applied to conditions which are passing, shifting, nonplussing, and ambiguous, and to those magically-potent situations which do not lend themselves to precise measurement, exact calculation, and rigorous logic.

To obtain virtues you must find a living person who possesses them and learn to copy his example as it applies to your life.

You will need different instructors. Some may be very good at one thing and very bad at all the rest. So you need a good picture of your role model, and make him your role model in that virtue only.

Concerning Lesser Black Magic

Here is the most powerful formula for LBM: Warn your marks of your intentions. If you are trying to make them buy a house by being nice to them, say: "Some people might try to influence you into buying a house by being friendly to you." If they ask if you are doing this, admit that you could be, that they have to be the judge.

This works every time. How many times has it been used on you?

Here's a second tip: Look for LBM training seminars. The best are free seminars selling a product that you can't afford and don't want. You get an ad in the mail saying that they have a valuable mock emerald pin they will give you if you come to their spiel for a house on Lake Mosquito. Go listen to the spiel, see how the crowd is moved, and experience the tough moment of breaking from the herd by saying, "No!". [The Temple assumes no responsibility for those of you who lack the strength to say "No!" to a realtor.

Notes toward a Cosmic Ecology

One of the secrets of the Left-Hand Path, realized in the Temple by the Adept II°, is that

meaning is imposed by the individual onto a meaningless world. We have a model of the universe, hopefully up-datable, that determines what we see and how we act. Clearing this cosmology of useless or contradictory notions is the ongoing task of every Initiate.

We all need a model of how humans act. I am going to suggest a model. It is only a model, not reality.

In the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus the *Xepera Xeper Xeperu* formula divided mankind into five races. These are not "races" as that word is used in this world, but are rather types of spirit determined by the divine ancestor one has.

This division, which would be an examination of which *ka* rules their actions, is a useful one in learning how to read people, and is particularly useful to people who derive their power from the XXX formula. I will leave it as an exercise for you to see the LBM applications, as well as what benefits may come from using this model.

But keep in mind one thing: We would all have some of each of these essences in ourselves, so this likewise explains certain sorts of contending ideas we may have, and can help us satisfy those needs so that we may proceed with our greater goals.

The five races of mankind are the children of the children of earth and sky. They are:

The Children of Osiris. Their approach to existence is that existence is best maintained by preserving what has gone before. Their rituals and slogans are based on preserving whatever they have come to believe is the past. They are the most numerous race, and provide a matrix for civilization to continue. They idolize the laws of nature as a guide for the laws of man.

The Children of Horus. Their approach to existence is to find their place in the hierarchy. Existence is a war against nonexistence, and everyone has a part and must find it. Their rituals and slogans revolve around self-knowledge and duty, and their test is social functionality. When they rally around a change idea, such as the American Revolution, it takes off and becomes the new order. They idolize the principle of mankind against the cosmos as the guide for the laws of man.

The Children of Set. Their approach to existence is to pit themselves against limits (either social or personal). Existence is the feeling of resistance being overcome. Their rituals and slogans revolve around identifying and overcoming challenges. They idolize the principle of opposition as the guide for the laws of man.

The Children of Isis. Their approach to existence is self-sacrifice for the future. Maybe they didn't have it good, but their children (literal or figurative) will. Their rituals and slogans emphasize

children. They idolize the potential of another's Becoming as the guide for the laws of man.

The Children of Nephys. Their approach to existence is opting out of the world and living in a willed construct. The world they live in may be strong enough to change ours, or they may wind up as nutcases. Their rituals and slogans are idiosyncratic, since you must enter into their worlds to understand them. Examples include Emperor Norton, Salvador Dali, H.P. Lovecraft. They idolize human creativity as the guide for the laws of man.

It must be stressed that these groups include non-initiates as well as initiates. A Child of Set might be the angry guy that throws rocks at cars, a Child of Osiris might be the most brilliant scholar you know.

Before you pick up and use this pretty thing, there are some questions you should ask yourself:

Is this model useful for you? What would be the test for such a model? How do you deal with each of these parts of yourself? Who are examples of each of these groups? What is their place in the world community? In world history? In your life? What are the limits and dangers in such a model? You may also wish to try these questions on models you are already using.

In the meantime be looking for notes from your own future. *Xeper*.

[19] The Sethian Gnostics

- by Connell Monette II°

This is the book which the great Seth wrote and placed in high mountains on which the Sun has not risen, nor is it possible that it should do so. And since the days of the prophets and the apostles and the preachers, the name has not at all risen upon their hearts, nor is it possible that it should do so. And their ear has not heard it. - *The Gospel of the Egyptians*

One of the most fascinating mystery sects during the time of the Roman Empire were the Sethian Gnostics, a subject which until recently very little has been known.

A large amount of information has become available in recent years to shed light on this group of men and women, which began as a Samaritan sect led by a mysterious teacher named Dositheus.

During the last ten centuries Dositheus' name came down to us only through the writings of early Christian, Samaritan, and Moslem historians, who claimed him as an early Samaritan magician known for his role as the teacher of both Simon Magus and Jesus the Nazarene, two magicians who went on to have serious influence in the magical and religious

history of the Western and Middle-Eastern world.

It was said that Dositheus was originally the leader of a mysterious religious movement of likely Jewish or Samaritan origins. However in recent years the unearthing of the Nag Hammadi Codex and other primary Gnostic sources have allowed the academic community the chance to reevaluate much of what had previously been assumed about the early Gnostic schools of thought, and this newly available information also allows the modern magician to learn a great deal about the Gnostic Sethians, their beliefs, and their practices from their own viewpoint.

For any student of history primary sources are necessary, and so it must be said that a great debt is owed to several ancient manuscripts. The primary source of Sethian thought and practice is the Nag Hammadi Codex, a collection of original Gnostic and Coptic manuscripts from Egypt.

The Codex is the source of two precious texts called "The Second Logos of the Great Seth" and "The Three Steles of Seth", which is the revelation concerning Seth transmitted to the reader by Dositheus. These three short verses (steles) are based on material which Dositheus himself claims to have seen, to have remembered, and then to have shared with a group of people called "the Elect".

Other Gnostic texts identified as specifically Sethian documents are the "Apocalypse of Adam", "The Gospel of the Egyptians", "Zostrianos", "Allogenes", "Marsanes", and the "Untitled Text" from the Bruce Codex.

A document from antiquity which sheds light on Sethian magic is the "Stele of Jeu the Hieroglyphist" (PGM V.96-172), which has been studied and commented on by Magus Flowers in *Hermetic Magic* and Magus Webb in *Seven Faces of Darkness*. This stele is important because of the Samaritan and Sethian Gnostic magical names used during the operation, which lends support to theory of Dositheus as the author of the stele.

A last source I'll mention is the work of the early bishop Irenaeus of Lyons, who wrote from a bishop's perspective against the "heretics" of his day. While his work does not present a complete image of Sethian Gnosticism, it does provide us with valuable information with which we can compare our other primary resources and fill in many otherwise difficult omissions on the early Sethian tradition.

Sethian cosmogony was similar to the basic Gnostic creation doctrine adopted by most other Gnostic sects.

To give a very simple summary, according to common Gnostic cosmology creation is dualistic. This means there exists a spirit world and a material world.

The spirit world was the creation of a pre-existent power from whom all creation has its origin, including all spiritual and celestial powers who could be interpreted as divinities or angels.

The material world was the creation of the Demiurge (Greek: "craftsman"), who was also known as Sabaoth, Iapas, Ialdabaoth, and several other names through the Græco-Egyptian magical papyri. He was a created being, and he is best identified with the Jewish deity of Old Testament (Iao), and was understood by all Gnostic sects as a malicious being.

The Demiurge sought to create a world of its own where it might be worshipped by a subservient race, and so it brought into being the material universe as we know it. It created the planets, suns, and the Earth. It then created a series of Archons (Greek: "rulers"), which the Demiurge set to governing various aspects of the created material world.

If we imagine the material world in the form of an onion, with the earth as the center and each planet corresponding to an outer layer, then we have a decent image of the cosmological plan that the Gnostics themselves used.

The human was a product of both worlds, since each human was a material body with a spiritual component to the soul. After death this spiritual component would attempt to flee the Earth and ascend to the stars, but in doing so it would be opposed by the Archons, who would hurtle it back down to Earth to be reincarnated.

The Gnostics believed that these spiritual barriers could be overcome if one could gain access to secret knowledge (*gnosis*). Armed with secret signs, passwords, and the magical names of the powers (Archons) that controlled the atmosphere, the Gnostic initiate could ascend beyond the material world after death and return to the primal world of spirit.

There were various opinions on how to achieve *gnosis*, and because of the diversity of methods and practices there were numerous sects and schools which developed across the Hellenistic world. Most were based on previously Jewish or Christian communities, with a strong Hellenistic culture. Many had exposure to Egyptian, Syrian, and Persian religious or magical ideas through trade and travel.

In the days of Classical antiquity, it was common for a single, charismatic leader to influence numerous groups in his own area and impress upon them a set of teachings that would in time develop into a recognized Gnostic "system" such as Valentinians, Ophites, and Simonians.

Several common trademarks of Gnostic schools were ritual fasting, abstinence from (or indulgence

in) carnal activity, celibacy, ritual meals, and baptism.

These characteristics made some Gnostic sects in many ways similar to early Christians groups. What set the Gnostics apart from the Christian groups was the emphasis on personal experience with the divine instead of salvation through obedience. The spiritual development of each Gnostic was a pilgrimage that called each initiate to focus on the divinity within.

The Sethian Gnostics were a unique group for several reasons, and primary reason for this uniqueness stems from the being of whom Dositheus claimed instruction: this figure was the celestial power known as Seth.

An interesting observation is found in Dositheus' name: it is Greek for "gift (*dosi*) of the god (*theos*)", and the spelling of the name implies that the god is Seth, who hails from "Setheus", understood as a secret celestial realm.

Most Gnostics were familiar with Typhon, but he is always understood to be the ass-headed Iao, the Jewish deity who is the Demiurge. So why did the Sethians see him as a positive figure?

This can appear confusing at first until you recall that Sethians began as Samaritans who adopted the Gnostic cosmology under Dositheus' leadership. The Sethians associated Set-Typhon with both Seth and Iao. Previous to adopting the Gnostic cosmology, the Samaritans were a messianic Judaic group who worshipped Iao.

All Gnostic groups identify ass-headed Iao together with the Demiurge and Seth-Typhon. What made the Sethians unique is that, when they were confronted with a system (Gnosticism) that was hostile to their deity Iao (Set), they allowed him to take the outward form of a "negative" power. They shifted Iao-Set into the role of the savior "Seth" or "Aberamentho", who is separate from Iao but who still resembles his image (an ass-headed figure).

The Sethians still invoked Iao the Demiurge for magical purposes. The best example is the Rite of the Headless One, which employs the original Samaritan pre-Gnostic concepts of Iao (Set) as a positive figure.

If this type of duality seems confusing, bear in mind that many cultures in this era split a *netter* into three separate persons to explain separate functions - the Trinity or the Maid/Mother/Crone are both examples.

Several observations can be made regarding Seth:

Seth as a Historical/Celestial Power

Seth was known to the Judaic and Samaritan communities as an early figure from the *Torah*. He was the third son of Adam and a figure of magical

significance in Jewish and later Christian mysticism. He is also seen in a genealogical context as the progenitor of the human race, since neither of his other siblings are ever mentioned by name in the Book of Genesis.

Dr. Kurt Rudolph, who wrote *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: Harper, 1987) identifies the "children of Seth" in the Gnostic texts to mean those men who have carried secret wisdom (*gnosis*) throughout the ages, understood to be both the biological and spiritual children of the patriarch Seth.

At the same time Seth was understood to be older than the material world; Seth was a figure who originated in the spirit, and so in a spirit context he was the power entrusted with the deepest of secret knowledge from the father of all.

Seth is then a progenitor in a double sense: He is the biological father of the human race and the spiritual father of the Elect.

This use of the double meaning of "fatherhood" is found later in the Christian canon, where the predominantly Gentile church is said to be the "true offspring" of Abraham.

Kurt Rudolph further states in *Gnosis* that despite the fact that many Gnostic societies used historical figures from Jewish, Samaritan, or even Persian myth, these figures were used primarily as figurative icons and a double meaning was commonly understood.

The pre-material Seth lives in a celestial realm called Setheus, identified by Magus Webb as a secret place hidden beyond the stars and which the Gnostic texts identify as the place beyond the Archons who ruled over the planets.

This secret place is the seen as the source of *gnosis*, and there may be some connection between this domain of Seth and the Græco-Egyptian magical term *Pyripeganx* ("Lord of the Font of Fire"), since Setheus was seen as place from where the secrets of divinity (Dark Fire) flowed. The Sethian baptism is described in the ancient texts as "fire from the heavens" falling upon the initiate.

Seth as Savior

Christianity has colored the term "savior" over the centuries, as its original meaning was not merely "one who dies for another". A "savior" was a common title given to a *daimon* or deity who performed some act of mercy to assist a less fortunate person.

The Sethians believed that the power Seth descended from his celestial (spirit) realm beyond the stars in order to offer the human race a chance to discover their own divinity. Since the human was effectively a divine spark (spirit) trapped by a shell of flesh (material), Seth gave a Gift by means of a

message (*logos*) to mankind that would allow them to rise above their herd-like state. It was understood that those who could hear the message would not be many, and because of this the few who awoke were called the "Elect".

The message from Seth to the Elect is the story of their divine origins, of their potential to rise above mere mortality; it was a Gospel in the truest sense that it was "good news" to the listeners, who might no longer need to live as simple men and women. Instead they could chose to live as gods.

Seth gives of his own essence, which is his sacrifice in performing this task. He gives a sacrifice of knowledge to the Elect in order that they might wrestle with the Archons, with fate, with Ialdabaoth himself in order to live and act as gods.

Seth's message is akin to the words of Magus Flowers: "Awaken, see, and act!"

The joyous tone of the "Three Steles of Seth" is rooted in the excitement of a magus who has done this. By writing "We have seen! We have seen!" for others to read, Dositheus was trying to help others to understand the message and freedom offered by Seth, part of the Task of this early magus.

Seth teaches Worship of the Self

The Gnostics focused their devotions and rituals inward, believing that the source of power was found within and not in an idol or temple.

In reading the remaining texts of Dositheus, it can be confusing to see where his praise is directed, since he praises the father, who can be misunderstood as Zeus, Ra, or any other outside force.

Often the best way to judge the core of a teacher's message is to study the results of that teaching on the students. The records of the historian Hippolytus (*Refutatio* VI 9-18) and also bishop Irenaeus state that both Simon Magus and Dositheus directed men to consider themselves as gods and to worship them. This bold act seemed daring to the historians, but is in perfect keeping with our understanding of the early Sethian movement of antiquity and also with the Typhonian tradition which has Remanifested in the modern era.

No worship is directed to Seth in any of the records, but only thanks and appreciation. The only worship is the worship of *Nous*, god of the Mind, the divinity within revealed in our times through the Black Flame.

Seth teaches Power through Knowledge

The Greek magical papyri hold a wealth of magical traditions inherited from Babylonian, Egyptian, Jewish, Persian, Phœnician, Greek, Hermetic and Gnostic sources. These and other

documents (the Books of Jeu) teach us that some Gnostics were avid practitioners of magical rituals, and the Sethians were identified as some of the greatest magicians by early historians.

The "Stele of Jeu" is one remarkable manuscript identified with the Dosithean school by Magus Webb because of its Samaritan content, and Dr. Rudolph also comments its Samaritan origins and connects them with the Simonian and Dosithean "Samaritan" group.

The "Stele of Jeu" and other Gnostic rituals focus primarily on self-deification, a process which takes place by overcoming various Archons, the Demiurge, and even fate by use of the names of those powers, certain sigils, and other ritual acts commonly found in Hermetic magic.

Seth is seen in Sethian cosmology as the donor of this knowledge, and the "Stele of Jeu" causes the magician to return to Seth's realm to obtain more knowledge (*gnosis*.)

Under Dositheus' influence the Sethians used the magical names of Archons and powers to bend fate to their designs, so that instead of mere claiming to die as gods, the Sethian magicians lived as gods.

To quote Dr. Betz (editor of *The Greek Magical Papyri*) concerning the magician:

He knew the code words needed to communicate with the gods, the demons, and the dead. He could tap, regulate, and manipulate the invisible energies. He was a problem solver who had a thousand remedies for a thousand petty troubles plaguing mankind: everything from migraine to a runny nose to bedbugs to horse races, and of course, all troubles of love and money. - Introduction to *The GMP*

Seth was the one who revealed the names and the powers, both savior from herd humanity and teacher of divinity. Knowledge is useful, but actual practice based on knowledge is excellence. Seth was a very practical and very unique teacher.

Closing Remarks, or "The Hidden Book in the Mountain"

What is truly amazing about the Sethians is that they entered into Rome at a time when Imperial persecution of the mysteries was reaching dangerous heights, yet they thrived for years and outlasted even the most devoted of the Bacchanals.

Years later the knowledge of the Sethians earned them the persecution of the Christian state when Rome began its final "heretical" purge and the Gnostics as a whole were forced underground and faced dissolution.

The fact that their writings and secrets have survived the two thousand years to testify on their behalf is evidence of the success of their magic, and though Dositheus himself no longer remains among us in the flesh, his message and spirit are with us still in the Remanifestation of antiquity through the Typhonian tradition.

One of the last messages of Seth to the Gnostics before their death as a sect concerns the "Hidden Book": That message is the eternal call to seek the mysteries, the "Hidden Book" which is hidden on the high places in the land of endless night and awaits our discovery.

Ir Shti Shta-tu!

[20] **The Return**

- by James Knowles III°

I have died, and in death am I resurrected.

You ask "Why?"

True death is the divine sleep, and in divine sleep is the divine dream.

The divine dream is the æon of my self.

The æon of my self is a perpetuation of the Æon of Set.

A perpetuation of the Æon of Set is a perpetuation of the Majesty of Set.

Behold my self and my opposite self! I am Set; I am Horus. I am the majesty! I am MehenPetTha.

[21] **Book Review: *The Goal***

- by Volker Schlecht II°

"Earning money is the goal of a manufacturer," he explains, "but it's not my goal, and I don't think it's yours either."

"Then what is our goal?"

"What do you think the goal should be?" he asks in turn.

I begin stuttering, "Well, hm, I don't know."

"Then goodbye for today, Alex," Jonah says. "We'll stay in touch. In the meantime I have a proposition for you."

"What would that be?"

"Think about what the goal should be."

With these words, E.M. Goldratt ends his novel *The Goal*, and these words should explain why I introduce to you a book which seems to have production-management as its main topic.

Goldratt, an author of new management-strategies who has been called an "industrial guru" by *Fortune* and a "genius" by *Business Week*, tells the story of a director of a manufacturing company who has to face a deadline of three months to make his factory profitable. He finally succeeds with the help of his former mentor, Jonah, who teaches him

the right methods by means of Socratic teaching.

The story itself makes a very relaxing read, and is in itself of no big importance. As I mentioned above, the focus on management and economy is indeed a disguise as well. You won't be confronted with tons of statistics, and it certainly isn't a beginner's course in accounting. Neither is it a step-by-step manual for making your firm more profitable.

In fact the examples of which I'm aware of the application of what the management world perceived as the principles laid down in this book are a perfect demonstration both of "reading without understanding" and of exactly the way of thinking Goldratt attacks in his book.

Mindlessly maxims and theorems were adopted and repeated blindly, ignoring the fact that the whole story is fictional. It serves to demonstrate only a way to find solutions, not solutions themselves.

In one sense it is a story of initiation. Alex Rogo, the main figure, learns with the help of his mentor to question the dogmas and beliefs he has been taught. Most importantly he learns how to get to the very core of a problem in order to solve it.

And this is what the book is really about: getting to the core of things and finding solutions for oneself.

Note that this is not purely my personal interpretation. In his preface to the later editions of his book, the author himself states that he is aware that the bulk of his readership consciously ignore the main message of his work. He expresses the hope that some readers may be capable of detecting that message without being distracted by the specific examples.

I highly recommend this book. It's one of those very few ones which can really change and challenge one's way of thinking. It's an inspiring and great read, and provides you with something new each time you re-read it.

It is published by MacGraw-Hill worldwide under the title of *The Goal - Excellence in Manufacturing* (in German as *Das Ziel - Höchstleistung in der Fertigung*). I guarantee you won't regret having bought it.

[22] ***Xem***

- by Markku Siira I°

Hidden this fire that breathes my name, yet unknown even to myself here and now. For years I have waited to seize the moment that comes but never reveals itself completely.

The hour of my *Neheh* is here for just a little while. Fierce was my yearning. Yet now I feel only the void that awaits for new creation.

Here in the abyss of difference my journey of inner atrocities rekindles the flame that almost died during the struggle.

Yet I won. My bloodied head rises enough to watch the dawn of *Xepera*. Ma'at has brought me to a secret place. There waits the god I will become

The alien being that I am and am not reveals hard and delicate truths in the name of *Xem*. A glimpse of tomorrow is here today.

[23] You Know How Couples Pick

- by Brian Z. Karasek I°

I have a problem with relationships. It seems that there's a big conversation I can't have with most women. And I've learned from experience that you don't want to have that conversation with some women. You know how it is: Relationships are hard, and emotions run high. And the first time you have an argument with your suddenly Christian significant other, the hidden feelings come out.

"You're going to burn in Hell!" they say, and you reply, "Your god is the God of weakness and impotence!" You know how couples pick.

And I remember the serious talks I've had.

Leigh wanted a house with two kids and a dog, and church on Sunday. She knew I couldn't give her that, and let me go to my Darkness while she stumbled in her Light. And we parted with sadness after two years.

Lisa couldn't share her heart with someone who didn't have Christ in his soul. And so we said goodbye after three years.

We don't share ourselves easily, do we? Our self is too valuable to us to give away loosely. And when we do it and it works out poorly, I rather suspect that it hurts more than it might hurt the profane. And after conversations that end things like that, we hurt.

I recall the rage that I felt at those two, Leigh and Lisa. I remember the fury I felt at the God that had dared get in my way! And the temptation to unleash that fury in the form of a working.

But what would be the sense in that? If I were give this girl disaster, if I were to drink her soul like blood, what would be the justification for that? The one girl left because her eyes saw clearer than her heart, and the other because her heart ruled her flesh. I had to respect that, and that eased the fury, but not the pain.

So the easy fix is don't date a Christian!

But people find Jesus quickly when they realize they're in bed with a Satanist. The most devout pagans have proven to be God-adorers when they see a black candle on your altar.

Where to go? Hiding the Shadow isn't worthwhile if you're in a relationship for any period

of time. I've found that people pick up on that huge gap in your conversation.

"What did you do last night? I called you at midnight, and you weren't home. Midnight on a Saturday? Where'd you go?"

"Um ..."

I see some of our members married or engaged to each other. That must be so nice, I think. I hear from them that there is a great joy in sharing not only the profane aspects of the self, but also each other's initiation. The respect between lovers, magnified by the respect between Setians. It must be nice, I think, and perhaps one day I'll see.

In the meantime I, and most of us, will keep stepping around certain conversations. We will keep reading the souls of our dates deeply, to see the spark of White Light before we share too much.

[24] One Brief Response

- by Linda Reynolds IV°

Setian Karasek's article on "mixed" relationships was indeed thought-provoking, and I expect he'll get some feedback from several initiates.

My husband Jerry and I have been together for 25 years. I met him 3 years before I encountered then-Priest Ronald K. Barrett and the Temple of Set.

Jerry had never been involved nor even particularly interested in any form of spirituality (occult or otherwise), but has always been completely open-minded and supportive of my pursuits.

As my own initiation progressed during those early days, an interesting phenomenon occurred. He started asking me questions about the Temple's philosophy, etc., soon developing his own interest in various aspects of it.

After a year or so he joined the Temple, remaining for - if I remember correctly - about three years, participating in the many activities of the old Anubis Pylon in San Francisco and eventually becoming an Adept II°.

Although it became apparent that, because of the emerging intolerance of the political climate and his high-profile position in government at that time, he would have to quietly withdraw from membership, he has continued through the years to stay acquainted with and supportive of all the friends we have in the Temple. He helps me with all of my administrative duties, up to and including stuffing *Scroll* envelopes!

What I'm illustrating here by my own example is that it's completely and utterly within the realm of possibility to have and hold a loving and permanent relationship with a non-Setian individual, as has also

been proven by many other Initiates with whom we frequently associate.

There are plenty of people “out there” who aren’t so insecure about themselves that they would be unable to accept, understand, and cherish the sometimes awesome manifestation of a Setian life partner.

We are powerful and aggressive individuals, capable of overwhelming even the strongest psyches, but also capable of sharing those extremes with those closest to us by our very being. Fortunately a frequent and desirable result is the birth of understanding and recognition of the potential for godhood within themselves as well.

[25] *Kundalini and Tantra*

- by Nikolas Schreck III°

I really think this comment by Priest Schreck is so good that it should be in the next *Scroll*. There is much confusion and misconception about this particular topic, and I think this clears all that away. - Lilith Aquino IV°

Priestess Kochel and Adept Natasya’s comments [on line] concerning *Kundalini* and *Tantra* should open the gate for the usefulness of this initiatory power source to all Setians.

The very idea of the Left-Hand Path is Tantric in origin, literally translated into Sanskrit as *vamachara*. Setian practice is very much a western Tantra, sharing with its Indian cousin almost identically analogous traits.

Tantrics ascribe to five elements (colloquially known as the “5 m’s”), which are meat, fish, alcohol, parched grain, and sexual congress. These are basically reflective of a form of deliberate antinomianism, although one only relevant to a Hindu culture.

In a region where vegetarianism is literally a sacred cow, Tantricians consume meat in a provocative break with tradition. Meat also symbolizes the recognition of initiation occurring within the fleshly shell in this lifetime rather than only in an after-death state.

Fish symbolizes to Indians the feminine principle essential to tantra.

Alcohol symbolizes the use of and joy in ritual rather than the somber orthodoxy of the established priestly class. [That reminds me of the only known surviving description we have of a Setian priest in Khem, as a randy drunkard!]

Parched grain symbolizes the withholding of energy and preservation of self sometimes literally manifested in female Tantrikas by delaying orgasm, or in males by retention of semen.

Sex is seen by Tantra as a form of meditation and ritual tending towards self-deification.

At the heart of Tantra and Kundalini is the awakening of a feminine dæmonic within the body and *psyche*.

Kundalini literally means “she who is enclosed”. The Saxon word *cunt*, the Modern English *cunning*, and the Germanic legend of the sorceress Kundry are but some western echoes of *Kundalini*.

The language of Tantric practice, like that of alchemy and ceremonial magic in the Occident, is thick with codes and twilight meanings. Many initiates experimenting with Kundalini will waste time if they literally seek the described “fire serpent to uncurl up the spine”.

The force awakened is fiery in that it burns and destroys delusions and neuroses, much as *Xeper* slays Apep’s ugly psychic accretions. “The fire of death blazes.” “A streak of lightning.” These are the poetic descriptions of the ascent of Kundalini.

One need not use Sanskrit terminology nor immerse oneself in antiquated and confusing exoticism from the mysterious East to practice the yoga of Kundalini. It is a timeless experience outside any cultural restriction.

While I have studied its roots, I practice it in a manner suitable to this time, just as I do not wear robes and wave around swords when I need to ritualize. While RHP seekers of psychic oblivion have utilized this technique for their own purposes, I think you can see that in its essence this is an initiatory magic very much of the self’s divinity and the Left-Hand Path.

This barely scratches the surface, but I hope others will explore this realm, for it is a reservoir of great strength.

Even the serious discussion of Kundalini and Tantra will tend to shed its flaming light on two of the great taboos of Setian culture.

One is the squeamish attitude I have seen among some Setians regarding erotic magic in general.

The other is the need for more assertive feminine Initiates to come into their own in what, save for a few obvious exceptions, has been far too much of a gentleman’s club. May the hidden powers of the dark goddesses Tiamat, Kali, Lil and Sekhmet arise and summon their sinister sisters into new forms as the Children of Set.

[26] “Oh, Hell!”

- contributed by Thomas White II°

A thermodynamics professor had written a take-home exam for his graduate students. It had one question: “Is Hell exothermic or endothermic? Support your answer with a proof.”

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law or some variant. One student, however, wrote the following:

* * *

First we postulate that if souls exist, they must have some mass. If they do, then a mole of souls can also have a mass. So, at what rate are souls moving into Hell, and at what rate are souls leaving?

I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave. Therefore no souls are leaving.

As for souls entering Hell, let's look at the different religions that exist in the world today. Some of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there are more than one of these religions and people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all people and all souls go to Hell.

With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially.

Now we look at the rate of change of volume in Hell. Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the ratio of the mass of souls and volume needs to stay constant.

1. So, if Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.

2. Of course, if Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls in Hell, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over.

So which is it?

If we accept the postulate given to me by Theresa B. [another student] in my Freshman year, and take into account the fact that I still have not succeeded in having sexual relations with her, then #2 cannot be true (Hell has not frozen over), and therefore Hell is exothermic.

* * *

The student got the only "A".

[27] The Mystery that did Pass Thereafter

- by Bryan Karasek I°

Behold! For the fall from grace of Adam and of Eve did herald in a great age.

The Lord set out his first and only children, saying, "Go from me, ye cursed!" And go they did; and as they did, they swore that they might one day reclaim the grace from which they had so rashly fled.

All this was beheld by the serpent, who was held by the Lord to be no greater than dirt, for this was

the beast which had led his favorite creation away from his grace. But even so was the serpent known by another, who looked with glad eyes on a creature of Earth given to him by the Lord. The serpent in the earth, the Worm which Dieth Not, that is called dragon and Satan, destroyer of kings, watched with joy.

And so did the dragon say unto the serpent, "Sigh not. For I am come to you, you who did my work without that I should ask it. You are above all things in my sight. For on this Earth is it not the law of God that what he hath made shall be, and not that which any other hath made? But you, proud creature, you have made your own, and in that you are and ever shall be my proud friend and ally."

And the serpent, who knew who it was that spoke thus, cried out, "You are he who dwells within. You are the scaled emperor. Your face is known to me and to all who crawl or fly. Great horned lizard, dragon king, you do me honor undeserved. Grant me only that I may be called yours, and gladly would I risk the ire of the Creator again and again, unto the end of time."

But Satan, the Accuser, whose wings blacken the world, would have none of this. He spoke again and in calmer voice to this, his favorite creature:

"No, friend serpent, I am not your king. Dragon and Worm I be, but I am your brother, your cousin, your friend. Know you this: that while the Lord is the Creator, I am the Changer.

"While Adam and Eve toil and suffer, cursing ever their lot in life, they strive, as they and their kind shall always strive, to regain the favor of their God. They have gone from me, from open arms, to pound on gates which were closed to them. I tell you that there is another Path."

And the serpent, who was still greatly afraid, trembled and said nothing. But it came to pass that the Devil, whose fall cast light on the world, set out to Change forever the face of the Earth on which the serpent crawled.

Lucifer, the wind from the north, rose up in a distant land and gathered to him the cast-out. Cain, the first killer and he who would wander forever, did see the dragon approach him, and screamed aloud:

"Get thee hence, dragon, for though you be more powerful than I, to the Lord who hath wrought you, you are no more than a gnat, and he hath laid his mark upon me. See there upon my brow that no man nor beast may lay hand or harm on me."

And the dragon that is called Devil and Satan smiled down on the father of murder and greeted him.

"Son of Adam, your Lord created no dragon. I am my own, as you are your own since he has set you from his sight. And I come to you with greeting. I have found you a wife, if she be pleasing

to you. I have told her of your heroism, and your great wronging, and of the fondness you hold for the beasts of nature, even as your brother Abel did slay them for nothing but to burn. She cares for you in the image I have given unto her, and if you find her to your liking, mayhap you can find peace in her arms and the length of her body.

“She knows of you and of your family, and finds that it is good. She too was cast out, for crime which hath been committed in secret. God, you shall find, has many secrets, and many of them have fallen hard on the flesh of the Earth.”

Cain, who knew little of the ways of women, was afraid and ashamed, for he was dirty and naked, as God had thrown him from the sight of others; and Cain had forgotten how he might seem to another. But the Worm which Dieth Not speaks with a tongue like quicksilver, and before a day had passed Cain was prepared for the meeting of his new wife, who might one day foster a line of sons and of daughters.

Satan took Cain then to the warm and sunlit lands where his bride waited for him. And when she stood before him, he was much pleased with the sight of her. Her limbs were long and smooth and olive-hued. Her eyes shone like gold in the Sun. She strode toward him with ease and grace, as though she were fluid given form. She was taken by his handsome form, as he was by her beauty.

And Satan gazed with pride on his children, for so in love with the sight of one another were they that they looked upon no other thing.

Cain stared at his bride with eyes that seemed never willing to blink, and she stared back with eyes wider still. Cain was first to break the silence between them, as the shadows lengthened.

“It is known to me that we might be friends, though I know not your name. I am called Cain, and if we are to be friends I must call you something. What name can there be for such beauty?”

The woman spoke in a whisper, so great was her admiration, and she lightly answered her name to him.

“He who gave me form hath called me Naamah, for he finds me pleasing. If it suit you, sir, then you may find me pleasing as well and call me the same.”

And Cain was exceeding glad, for Naamah, which means “Pleasing”, was to be his wife, and she was lovely to him, smooth as silk and cool as fresh water in the summer to his touch.

And with Naamah did Cain make himself a family, while black wings flapped to fan the fire of their love. So did their children grow by the side of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, and play in the same gardens, along a different Path.

[28] Anton LaVey: Legend and Reality

- compiled by Zeena & Nikolas Schreck III°

Anton Szandor LaVey (1930-1997), along with Charles Manson, Timothy Leary, and other messianic pop *gurus*, was a notorious figure of the 1960s' subculture of social experiment. As the flamboyant High Priest of the Church of Satan and the author of the *Satanic Bible*, he served as an ideal bogeyman for the sensation-seeking American media of that tumultuous period.

His curious celebrity was based largely on a self-created legend. This carefully-orchestrated legend may, in the final analysis, be LaVey's most enduring legacy. LaVey disseminated his legend through interviews with journalists, personal discussion with his disciples, and two LaVey-approved [auto]biographies (apparently ghostwritten by LaVey himself).

The first of these, 1974's *The Devil's Avenger* (credited to LaVey associate Burton Wolfe), embellished on the fabrications Wolfe had already sketched in his introduction to the *Satanic Bible*. The second, 1990's *Secret Life of a Satanist* (credited to Blanche Barton, LaVey's live-in secretary and mother of his son), contradicted many of LaVey's own claims in the earlier volume, while putting forth new legends for public consumption.

As social historians and scholars of occult movements begin to study LaVey's life and times in an objective historical context, a wealth of information concerning the man beneath the Devil horns has come to light. This brief checklist is a concise guide to separating the deliberate prevarications from the human, all-too-human facts. For brevity's sake, only the most well-known aspects of the legend will be clarified here.

* * *

Legend: Claimed that “Anton Szandor LaVey” was his genuine birth name.

Reality: Born “Howard Stanton Levey”.

Sources: Birth certificate 4/11/1930, Cook County, Illinois. Confirmed by relatives.

* * *

Legend: Claimed his parents were Joseph and Augusta LaVey.

Reality: Parents were Michael and Gertrude Levey.

Sources: Birth certificate 4/11/1930, Cook County, Illinois. Confirmed by ASL's daughter Zeena and daughter Karla according to her entry on ASL's death certificate.

* * *

Legend: Claimed he was introduced to the Dark Side by his Transylvanian Gypsy grandmother, who regaled him as a child with supernatural folklore and

tales of vampires and werewolves.

Reality: ASL's grandmother was not Transylvanian nor of Gypsy stock. She was a Ukrainian named Cecile Luba Primokov-Coulton ("Coulton" was Anglicized from "Koltonoff"). Despite his frequent claims, ASL had no Gypsy ancestry.

Sources: Relatives, including ASL's parents.

* * *

Legend: In 1945 the 15-year-old ASL was brought to the ruins of postwar Germany by his uncle, a U.S. Coast Guard officer. There the teenaged ASL was shown top-secret films inspired by Satanic cult lodges and their rituals. ASL claimed that the "German" rituals in his 1972 book *The Satanic Rituals* were actual transcripts of the filmed rituals he saw as a youth.

Reality: Young Howard spent the entirety of 1945 in suburban northern California, and never visited Germany at any time in his life. The uncle who he claimed brought him to Germany was incarcerated at McNeill Island Penitentiary for involvement with Al Capone-related criminal activity during 1945, and was never in the armed forces. Allied martial law forbade U.S. citizens from visiting postwar Germany. The "German" rituals in the *Satanic Rituals* are written in extremely poor, Anglicized German. They are clearly uncredited adaptations of the short story *The Hounds of Tindalos* by Frank Belknap Long and H.G. Wells' famous novel *The Island of Dr. Moreau*.

Sources: ASL relatives, former wife Diane LaVey, *The Hounds of Tindalos*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *The Satanic Rituals*, Church of Satan member Rosalind Herkommer (who translated ASL's rituals into German).

* * *

Legend: The 15-year-old ASL played second oboe with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, making him the youngest musician ever to play with that prestigious institution.

Reality: There was no "San Francisco Ballet Orchestra" in 1945. The San Francisco Ballet was accompanied by a local orchestra, whose records show that none of its three oboists was named "Levey" or "LaVey".

Sources: San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum, San Francisco, California.

* * *

Legend: In 1947 ASL ran away from home and joined the Clyde Beatty Circus. The Circus employed the 17-year-old as a lion tamer. He then replaced the Circus calliope player, accompanying such famous Beatty acts as the Concellos, Harold Alanza, and the Cristianis.

Reality: The voluminous Beatty archives show no record of a "Levey" or "LaVey" as lion tamer

or musician. The Concellos, Alanza, and Cristianis were never Beatty performers; they worked exclusively for the Ringling Brothers Circus.

Sources: Beatty 1947 Route Books, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin (Wright, "SD", page 67); ASL relatives.

* * *

Legend: In 1948 the 18-year-old ASL was engaged to play organ at the Mayan burlesque theater in Los Angeles. There he met a young stripper named Marilyn Monroe, with whom he had a passionate love affair in the period before her rise to film stardom. According to ASL, Monroe had resorted to stripping to pay her rent. As proof of his relationship with Monroe, ASL later showed visitors a copy of Monroe's famous nude calendar inscribed "Dear Tony, How many times have you seen this! Love, Marilyn".

Reality: ASL never knew Monroe. Monroe intimate Robert Slatzer and Harry Lipton, Monroe's agent in 1948, have exposed and discredited this tale. Lipton paid Monroe's expenses, including her rent. Paul Valentine, director of the Mayan Theater, has stated that the Mayan was never a burlesque theater, and that neither Monroe nor ASL ever worked for the Mayan in any capacity. Diane LaVey, ASL's former wife, has admitted that she forged the "Monroe" inscription on the calendar. ASL's former publicist Edward Webber claims ASL admitted he never knew Monroe.

Sources: Diane LaVey, Paul Valentine (Wright, "SD", page #68), Harry Lipton (Aquino-Lipton conversation 12/1/82), Robert Slatzer (letter to Aquino 11/27/82), Edward Webber (interview by Aquino 6/2/91).

* * *

Legend: ASL was exposed to the savagery of human nature during his stint as a San Francisco Police photographer in the early 1950s.

Reality: San Francisco Police Department past employment records include no "Howard Levey" nor "Anton LaVey". Frank Moser, who was a SFPD photographer in the early 1950s, said that ASL never worked for the Department.

Sources: SFPD records, Frank Moser (Wright, "SD", page 68).

* * *

Legend: ASL studied criminology at San Francisco City College during the Korean War.

Reality: SFCC has no record of ASL's enrollment at any time.

Sources: SFCC records (Wright, "SD", page 68).

* * *

Legend: ASL purchased the house at 6114 California Street (which would later become the headquarters of the Church of Satan - the infamous

“Black House”) because he discovered on first inspection that it was the former brothel of Barbary Coast madam Mammy Pleasant. The house was honeycombed with trapdoors and secret passageways, built by Pleasant to elude police raids.

Reality: 6114 was ASL’s parents’ home. It was never a brothel, nor did Mammy Pleasant ever live or work there. ASL’s parents first allowed ASL and his first wife Carole to live in the house, then transferred ownership of it to ASL and his second wife Diane in 1971. Such secret passages and hidden rooms that exist were constructed by ASL.

Sources: Relatives, San Francisco property records (Michael & Gertrude Levey, Joint Tenancy Grant Deed, July 9, 1971).

* * *

Legend: In the 1950s ASL traveled to Nice, France, where he recorded an album of organ music under the pseudonym of “Georges Montalba”.

Reality: ASL’s first and only trip to France was in the mid-1970s, when his Dutch disciple Maarten Lamers, Amsterdam sex club owner, financed his voyage. The “ASL=Montalba” story appeared in 1989, when a gullible Church of Satan member found a Montalba album and suggested that it was similar to ASL’s own music. ASL, never pleased by competition, responded with the preposterous “pseudonym” claim - which is still ardently supported by his posthumous followers.

Sources: Diane LaVey, Zeena LaVey.

* * *

Legend: ASL was the official city organist for San Francisco until 1966, playing for gala events such as government banquets and political meetings.

Reality: San Francisco has never had an “official city organist”. According to ASL’s first wife Carole, his only income of \$29.91/week was generated by his regular engagement at the “Lost Weekend” nightclub, where he was the house Wurlitzer organist.

Sources: Julie Burford, Civic Auditorium, San Francisco, California (Wright, “SD”, page 68). Carole LaVey’s divorce proceeding records (Wright, “SD”, page 68).

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Legend: On the night of April 30, 1966 (the German Satanic festival of Walpurgisnacht), ASL in a “blinding flash” declared himself the High Priest of Satan, proclaimed that the Age of Satan had begun, and founded the Church of Satan as a religious institution.

Reality: In 1966 ASL supplemented his income by presenting weekend lectures on exotic and occult topics, and by conducting “Witches’ Workshops”. He charged \$2 a head, filling his living room with the curious and establishing a local reputation as an eccentric. Professional publicist Edward Webber

suggested to ASL that he “would never make any money by lecturing on Friday nights for donations ... it would be better to form some sort of church and get a charter from the State of California ... I told Anton at the time that the press was going to flip out over all this and that we would get a lot of notoriety”. In the summer of 1966, long after the fictional founding-date invented later, a newspaper article about ASL’s lectures offhandedly referred to him as “priest of the Devil’s church”. This mixture of Webber’s idea and the newspaper’s characterization resulted in the creation of the Church of Satan as a business and publicity vehicle. Jack Webb, a San Francisco Police investigator who knew ASL from the “Lost Weekend” nightclub, also suggested that he should form a church of some kind to exploit his recondite knowledge.

Sources: Edward Webber (interview by Aquino 6/2/91), Jack Webb, Diane LaVey.

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Legend: ASL’s trademark shaved head was the result of a ceremonial head-shaving on April 30, 1966, to formalize his role as High Priest of Satan. This ritual was performed in the tradition of the Yezidi devil-worshipping tribes of Iraq, who were said to have carried out a similar ceremony.

Reality: ASL shaved his head in the summer of 1966 due to a light-hearted dare from his wife. The “LaVey look” had nothing to do with the Church of Satan founding nor any mystical meaning attached to it later. Nor do Yezidi *qawwals* (religious teachers) shave their heads.

Sources: Diane LaVey; Ethel S. Drower, *Peacock Angel*, 1941; C.J. Edmonds, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, Royal Asiatic Society, 1967.

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Legend: In 1966 ASL personally designed the Baphomet emblem of the Church of Satan. He owns the right to this design, claiming it cannot be reproduced without obtaining licensing rights from the Church of Satan.

Reality: The Baphomet emblem used by the Church of Satan was neither original to it nor created by ASL, hence cannot be trademarked. The original Baphomet dates at least as far back as the medieval Knights Templar. The artwork for the current emblem’s goat/pentagram first appears in a 1931 book by Oswald Wirth. The complete emblem with the added circles and “LVYThN” Hebrew letters appears on the cover of a book by Maurice Bessy two years before the creation of the Church of Satan. Early photos of Church activities often show ASL or his disciples using the Bessy book as a photo-prop because of its prominent cover-Baphomet, and he included that book in his *Compleat Witch* bibliography. The Baphomet, including this rendition of it, is clearly in the public

domain.

Sources: Oswald Wirth, *La fran-maconnerie rendue intelligible à ces adeptes - II, "Le compagnon"*, Paris: Derry-Livres, 1931, page #60; Maurice Bessy, *A Pictorial History of Magic and the Supernatural*, London: Spring Books, 1964 [the original edition of this work - *Histoire en 1000 images de la magie* - was published in 1961 by Editions du Pont Royal]; Thomas H. Hilton, *Sex and the Occult*, Vol. I, Los Angeles: Centurion Press, 1974; Church of Satan members, *The Black Flame* (a 1980s Church of Satan magazine).

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Legend: One of ASL's most widely-accepted falsehoods is his claim that he served as technical advisor for the 1968 Roman Polanski film *Rosemary's Baby*. ASL also claimed to have played the curiously-uncredited part of the Devil in that film.

Reality: ASL had no involvement with *Rosemary's Baby*. Polanski's close friend Gene Gutowski (original producer of the film) stated that there was no technical advisor, nor did ASL ever even meet Polanski. Producer William Castle, who details all aspects of the film's production in his autobiography, never mentions ASL. He does describe Polanski's diligence in basing the film exactly on the Ira Levin novel from which it was adapted, eliminating any need for technical advice. The father of the actress who played Mia Farrow's body-double in the Devil scene recalled that a young, very slender professional dancer played the part, dressed in a small rubber suit. In 1971 this suit was acquired by Studio One Productions in Louisville, Kentucky, for use in a low-budget horror film *Asylum of Satan*. Michael Aquino, technical advisor for that film, examined the suit and concluded that the 200-pound, 6-foot ASL could not possibly have worn it. [The suit was worn by a girl in the *Asylum* film.] Not a single member of the cast or crew of *Rosemary's Baby* has ever mentioned ASL's involvement. In 1968 a San Francisco theater did ask ASL to make an appearance at the film's local opening as a promotional event. This appears to have been ASL's only connection with the film that engendered the 1960s' popular interest in Satanism.

Sources: Gene Gutowski; William Castle, *Step Right Up! I'm Gonna Scare the Pants off America*, New York: Pharos Books, 1992; Diane LaVey, Michael A. Aquino (*COS*, page #17).

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Legend: Jayne Mansfield, Hollywood sex symbol and actress, was a card-carrying Satanist and had an affair with ASL.

Reality: Publicity agent Tony Kent, an associate of Ed Webber, arranged the meeting

between Mansfield and ASL as a publicity stunt. ASL was smitten with the actress. Mansfield, who made no secret of her many affairs, denied knowing ASL intimately, and no associate of hers has ever confirmed any supposed romance with ASL. In a 1967 interview she said, "He had fallen in love with me and wanted to join my life with his. It was a laugh." According to ASL's publicist Edward Webber, Mansfield would ridicule her Satanic suitor by calling from her Los Angeles home and seductively teasing him while her friends listened in on the conversation. ASL's public claims that he had an affair with Mansfield began only after Mansfield's death in an automobile accident, which he also claimed was the result of a curse he had placed on her lover Sam Brody.

Sources: Edward Webber (interview by Aquino 6/2/91); interview with Mansfield quoted in *Jayne Mansfield* by May Mann, Pocket Books, 1974.

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Legend: ASL wrote the *Satanic Bible*, his principal work, to fulfill his congregation's need for a scriptural guide.

Reality: The *Satanic Bible* was conceived as a commercial vehicle by paperback publisher Avon Books. Avon approached ASL for some kind of Satanic work to cash in on the Satanism & witchcraft fad of the late 1960s. Pressed for material to meet Avon's deadline, ASL resorted to plagiarism, assembling extracts from an obscure 1896 tract - *Might is Right* by Ragnar Redbeard - into a "Book of Satan" for the *SB*, and claiming its authorship by himself. [Ironically these *MiR* passages are the ones most frequently quoted by ASL disciples.] Another third of the *SB* consists of John Dee's "Enochian Keys", taken directly but again without attribution from Aleister Crowley's *Equinox*. The *SB*'s "Nine Satanic Statements", one of the Church of Satan's central doctrines, is a paraphrase, again unacknowledged, of passages from Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. The last words in the *SB* - "Yankee Rose" - have been puzzled over for years by readers. "YR" is actually the name of an old popular tune in ASL's nightclub repertoire.

Sources: ASL, *The Satanic Bible*; Ragnar Redbeard, *Might is Right*, Port Townsend: Loompanics (reprint), 1896; Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (Galt's speech, ca. pages #936-993); "Yankee Rose" by Sidney Holden & Abe Frankl (Irving Berlin Music, 1926).

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Legend: ASL claimed that at the height of the Church of Satan's popularity there were hundreds of thousands of formal members.

Reality: Diane LaVey (who administered the Church as High Priestess 1966-1984), Michael A.

Aquino (senior Magister of the Church and Editor of its *Cloven Hoof* newsletter 1971-1975), and Zeena LaVey (High Priestess of the Church 1985-1990) have all affirmed that the figures claimed by ASL were grossly exaggerated. The membership of the Church of Satan never exceeded 300 individuals, several of whom were nonmember subscribers to the newsletter or ASL friends receiving complimentary mailings.

Sources: Diane LaVey, Michael A. Aquino, Zeena LaVey.

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Legend: ASL claimed to be a multimillionaire, owning three homes in northern California, a convent in Italy, a chateau in France, a fleet of luxury automobiles, a 185-foot yacht, three salvage ships, and other property.

Reality: During Diane [LaVey] Hegarty's 1988-91 lawsuit against ASL, and ASL's subsequent 1991 filing for bankruptcy, ASL stipulated under oath that he owned nothing more than 50% of the house his parents had given jointly to him and Diane, along with the personal items he kept therein. ASL's final years were subsidized by California state aid. Assessors declared the house to be in such poor repair as to be nearly worthless on the real estate market. Family members have attested to the fact that by the mid-1970s the LaVeys lived in near-poverty, frequently having to rely upon ASL's father's generosity. According to other LaVey relatives, ASL continued to rely on handouts from friends and relatives until the end of his life.

Sources: *Hegarty v. LaVey* (San Francisco Superior Court Case #891863), *Anton LaVey Bankruptcy*, Chapter 7 (U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern California, Case #91-34251), Zeena LaVey, other relatives.

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Legend: ASL was a close friend of Sammy Davis, Jr. and inducted him into the Church of Satan.

Reality: Sammy Davis, Jr. was invited to accept an honorary membership in the Church of Satan by Michael Aquino. After Davis sent Aquino his acceptance on March 17, 1973, he was presented with the honorary membership on April 13, 1973 by Aquino and Karla LaVey alone. ASL did not meet Davis until August 1973.

Sources: Davis letter to Aquino 3/17/73; Church of Satan Priesthood Bulletin 4/30/73; Aquino, *COS*, Chapter 23; Sammy Davis, *Hollywood in a Suitcase* (pre-publication text, printed in *Daily News*, New York, 9/11/80), Karla LaVey.

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Legend: ASL presented himself as a loving family man.

Reality: ASL violently beat his wife Diane throughout their marriage. In 1984 a police report was made describing Diane being strangled into unconsciousness by ASL, who was in such a murderous rage that his daughter Karla had to pull him off Diane and drag her outside the house to save her life. ASL routinely physically beat and abused those of his female disciples with whom he had sex, forcing them into prostitution as part of his "Satanic counseling" and collecting their earnings. In 1986 ASL was a passive witness to the sexual molestation of his own grandson by a longtime friend who was later convicted of sex crimes with minors. In 1990 ASL informed a mentally-ill stalker of his daughter Zeena of her whereabouts and the time & location of a public appearance she was scheduled to make, deliberately endangering her life.

Sources: San Francisco Police records of ASL attack on Diane LaVey, Zeena LaVey, Diane LaVey, Stanton LaVey.

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Legend: ASL had a deeply affectionate relationship with Togare, his pet lion.

Reality: While ASL was always careful to portray himself to the public as an animal lover, in private he was cruel to and neglectful of his pets. When he was given Togare as a cub in 1964, he was ill-equipped to deal with such an exotic, wild animal despite his pretensions as a circus lion-tamer. As Togare became larger and more unruly, ASL frequently used an electric cattle prod to hurt and frighten him into submission. Many animal-rights proponents, including Togare's final owner Tippi Hedren, agree that it is detrimental to a wild animal's development to be raised in a domestic environment. ASL was arrested due to Togare's unruly behavior, and ASL was ordered to donate him to the San Francisco Zoo. After complying, ASL made only two visits to Togare. Due to the trauma of his early life, Togare needed special care at the Zoo and at every animal-care facility in which he later lived.

Sources: Jack Castor (Lion Keeper, San Francisco Zoo), Diane LaVey, Zeena LaVey, Tippi Hedren (*The Cats of Shamballa*, McGraw-Hill, 1985).

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Legend: ASL had a deeply affectionate relationship with his other pets.

Reality: In the late 1960s ASL acquired a Doberman Pinscher (Loki) as an accent to his "sinister" image. ASL never took the time to housebreak or train Loki, and relegated him to the overgrown and unkempt backyard of the house, regardless of weather. If Loki ever tried to slip into

the house for shelter, ASL routinely used Togare's cattle-prod on him to terrify him back outside. In his old age Loki developed such severe arthritis that he could not climb the stairs to the back door to eat, and began wasting away from malnutrition. ASL then gave him to one of his prostitute "students", who at least saw that Loki had a warm, inside home until he died a few months later. During her young childhood ASL's daughter Zeena once awoke late at night to hear slamming sounds and the shrieking of her German Shepherd puppy. Running downstairs, she saw ASL savagely beating the cowering, cornered dog with a wooden plank. When Zeena begged ASL to stop and asked him what the dog had done to deserve such treatment, ASL screamed, "She won't listen to me! I'm going to force her to obey me!" ASL continued beating the dog until her face was covered with her blood, then dropped the plank and left the dog quivering in the hallway, so injured and frightened that she wouldn't let even Zeena come near her. This incident left the dog traumatized for a long time afterwards.

Sources: Diane LaVey, Zeena LaVey.
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Legend: On ASL's original death certificate the date of his demise was recorded as October 31, 1997 (Halloween).

Reality: An official investigation by the City of San Francisco determined that ASL's actual date of death was October 29, 1997 and that the "Halloween" date had been illegally written on the document.

Sources: Death Certificate #380278667, San Francisco Department of Public Health; Dr. Giles Miller (attending physician at ASL's death), Physician's Amendment to Death Certificate, 11/26/97.

Research References

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Aquino, Michael A., *The Church of Satan*. San Francisco: Temple of Set, 1983.

We extend our thanks to ASL's relatives and associates who contributed their memories.