

Black Magic

- by -

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Introduction 1: Why the Temple of Set?

I have had variations of this same question (“Why the Temple of Set?”) put to me many times since 1975. I have never answered in terms of atmosphere, services, convenience, or fun (in all of which the Temple scores acceptable marks). Rather I say, “Because the Temple of Set is metaphysically **correct**, and all the other religions and atheisms are **not**.”

This often gets a startled, sometimes indignant, sometimes amused response. In contemporary society religions generally are given lip service for social or traditional reasons, but never taken literally/seriously. Only the stupid or uneducated actually believe their myths. To the vast majority, atheism or agnosticism is the sensible option. All the profane religions, and the occult systems based upon their mythologies, are nothing more than propaganda devices for control of the masses.¹

The Temple of Set, however, is premised upon an apprehension of the *neteru*², and of the one particular *neter* (Set) who makes individual consciousness and distinction from all-else possible. This is not just reality, but inevitability. It is also very simple and self-evident to any isolate consciousness awakened to itself.

So to be a Setian is essentially to awaken to who and what you really are, and to apprehend “all else” as either non-conscious (in the sense of intentionally discretionary) phenomena (the “Objective Universe (OU)”³) or other uniquely/distinctly-conscious entities (collectively particular manifestations of the isolate consciousness Principle, or *neter*, Set).

Once the Setian realizes this, all other questions customarily embraced by religions, occultisms, or indeed human societies are understood to be mere arbitrary constructs and conventions: tools of convenience, control, manipulation. These are in themselves neither “good” nor “evil”; they are just there to be used/misused as human wisdom or stupidity motivates.

¹ “Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusion about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions.”

- Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 1844.

² See Chapter #2.

³ See Chapter #4.

Thus the Setian has no dictated, predetermined morality. The Setian is originally, initially amoral: a being of pure intelligence and discretion. The Temple of Set does argue for a high personal ethical standard, but this is based, as Plato understood, purely on a love of and dedication to virtue for its own sake - not on social or religious-ideological conditioning, threats, or enticements.⁴

And Black Magic is simply the language by which this Setian, this authentic god-being, communicates with and impacts upon all else: Lesser Black Magic (LBM)⁵ in the case of the OU, and Greater Black Magic (GBM)⁶ in the case of one's own Subjective Universe (SU)/others' SUs.⁷

That's what the Temple of Set, and Setian initiation, is all about, and why there is nothing else like it.

Why, if this is so simple and self-evident, isn't every human being a Setian? In a nutshell: lack of capacity and/or motivation. You have to be smart enough to grasp these truths. You have to be courageous enough to face them, with all of the universal responsibility that they require of you. And you have to care, because this is an enormous and constant responsibility, and it is much easier to just be an unthinking, unreflecting stimulus/response meat machine, and/or puppet of social/slave-religious propaganda.

That's "why the Temple of Set".

⁴ See Chapter #5, "Ethics in Black Magic".

⁵ See Chapter #5.

⁶ See Chapter #6.

⁷ See Chapter #4.

Introduction 2: Why You?

Why have **you** come to the Temple of Set? Presumably because:

- (1) You feel that there are metaphysical realities beyond the physical universe, and that this possibility is sufficiently important to you for you to investigate whether or not it is true.
- (2) Religions and atheistic/materialist schools of thought to which you have previously been exposed have ultimately impressed you as inadequate to this task.
- (3) What you have heard and read about the Temple of Set suggests to you that it just might have the keys to this puzzle.
- (4) Involved with such keys are unusual skills that you may use, both in pursuit of such metaphysical wisdom and in support of objectives in the physical universe.

Most of the world's conventional religions⁸ prefer influence over their members from birth, so that they have the advantage of working with a "blank slate". Knowing nothing else, the child is indoctrinated into the religion, taught that it is the true and only answer to questions beyond tangible experience. If such indoctrination is strong enough, that religion will remain the metaphysical boundary for that individual for life. Using the implied authority of its superior vantage-point, moreover, the religion will attempt to dictate ethical and moral codes for the individual, inculcating feelings for "rightness" and "wrongness" that will flow into his personal behavior and the social institutions he shares with others.

The more primitive and closed the society, of course, the more effective and enduring such religious indoctrination will be. But at various times and circumstances in history, such as the Greek Hellenistic and the Enlightenment eras, and in at least certain advanced cultures today, persons will eventually be exposed to other religions, and non-religions,

⁸ See Appendix #1.

besides the “inherited” one. The more inquisitive the individual concerning metaphysical truth, the more he may “shop” among such alternatives, looking for **the** one with the [most] right answers.

The Temple of Set not only does not indoctrinate anyone from birth, but it prefers to be at the end of an adult enquirer’s “shopping list”.

The Setian religion is not something that either can or should be taken on faith, or in the controlled instruction of childhood, or as an antagonistic rebound from any other religion. To be apprehended, understood, and applied correctly, it must be approached only by individuals who have first examined **and discarded** as many alternatives as were available and of interest to them. If any such alternative proved satisfying to an individual, that signals to the Temple of Set that he does not possess the extraordinary drive for metaphysical truth that is required for Setian initiation. He will be content and fulfilled at the level he has chosen; were he to attempt Setian initiation, he would soon find it disturbing, stressful, and even frightening.

A common feature of all conventional religions and Right-Hand Pathways generally is that they are, as they are designed and intended to be, vehicles of comfort and reassurance. “Just believe in this, do these things, and you don’t have to worry about who or what you are, your place in things, or your destiny. You are blessed, reborn, forgiven, and cleansed. When you die, you will be welcomed into a paradise of bliss and love.”

The Setian sees before him none of this. His initiation unfolds him into a god - a creator of universes, not their servant, pet, or otherwise-component. While still in physical incarnation, he distinguishes and distances himself ever further from the OU; upon his final separation from it he becomes fully, permanently, and immortally the font, source, *primum movens* of what was formerly his SU - and now his own OU. This is a formidable, even terrifying anticipation for nonSetian intellects; their literature abounds with warnings of the dire fate and punishment awaiting those who, like Icarus, dare to approach, much less become gods themselves.

But to the Setian this *Xeper*, this full Coming Into Being, is the ultimate affirmation, manifestation, and fulfillment of one’s conscious existence. Its culmination is implicit and foreordained in one’s very first step into the Temple of Set.

So your suitability for Setian initiation hinges not only upon the importance of the above four questions to you, but also upon the assumption that you have indeed explored and exhausted as many simpler

answers to them as possible. Because if you are indeed searching for something comforting to which you can surrender your doubts and fears, it is just a question of your settling upon the most pleasing metaphor. The very last thing you want is the Temple of Set.

But if, in your searching, you gradually come to discover that you are not looking for salvation at all - indeed that every additional invitation to it only increases this nameless, formless drive for self-affirmation within you - then the Temple of Set bids you welcome. Enter freely and of your own will.

The Temple of Set provides various publications and communications to present itself and its knowledge to you. At all times it is your responsibility not only to read and consider such information, but to judge it as it is intelligible and relevant to yourself. The importance of this responsibility cannot be overemphasized. The Temple is a vehicle to aid you in **your personal** initiation, so your comprehension, understanding, and evaluation of your own state of being are essential.

The Temple of Set is committed to the most direct and intelligible presentation of its philosophy possible. Every effort is made to define terms carefully, to avoid vagueness and logical fallacies, and to address important issues squarely. We emphasize this to a degree unmatched by conventional religion, by the "occult subculture", and indeed by most of the academic philosophical community.

Even so we are beset by three continuing difficulties:

- (1) Our knowledge base is incomplete and in many cases insufficient to answer certain questions definitively. In such situations we offer what seem to be the most promising theories and hypotheses, and encourage the open exchange of ideas towards the eventual truth.
- (2) We exist in a society that, despite its announced commitment to truth and freedom of expression, contains many taboos, morals, and prejudices which make even the discussion, much less the advocacy of certain ideas awkward, taboo, and occasionally dangerous - even if the ideas in question happen to be logically or factually valid.

Since the Temple of Set is "open to the public" as a formal, legally-recognized religious institution, we must take

appropriate care to retain the respect and tolerance of the community in which we exist.

So, while we must and will not shrink from asserting truth as we discover it, we also attempt to do so publicly in ways that will be understandable to that public, and in support only of constructive, non-harmful applications by it.

- (3) For the first two decades after its founding in 1975, the Temple of Set was predominantly first an American, then an English-speaking international institution. With the turn of the century, and in no small part to the influence and convenience of the Internet, we are now a presence in many non-English-language cultures. Beyond the task of direct dialogue, we face the challenge of translating Setian philosophy into non-English languages and idioms. Fortunately many such natives have acquired some fluency in English, and can help to bridge this gulf more accurately and empathetically than the Temple itself could originate. Nevertheless we must remain alert to this difficulty, and seek to minimize it as best we may.

Black Magic is the introductory section in the *Crystal Tablet of Set*, which is the first volume in the *Jeweled Tablets of Set* series - a sort of “encyclopædia” of Setian initiation, whose progressive jewel-colors reflect the medallions of the respective degrees. Thus the *Ruby Tablet* pertains to Adepts II° of the Temple, the *Onyx Tablet* to the Priesthood of Set III°, the *Sapphire Tablet* to the Masters of the Temple IV°, the *Amethyst Tablet* to Magi V°, and the *Topaz Tablet* to Ipsissimi VI°.

Black Magic presents the Temple of Set’s philosophy in its most elementary form. If it makes sense to you here, then it is probable that you will derive increased pleasure and satisfaction from the Temple as you proceed further into its initiatory system. If on the other hand you find that you are having difficulty with these basic propositions, or if you find them unsatisfactory, unconvincing, or disturbing, then it is an indication that you should probably seek out another religious or philosophical environment for personal exploration and expression.

Sic Itur Ad Astra.

Chapter 1: Origins of the Temple of Set

The story of the Temple of Set which you have now entered begins in 1966 of what archæologists, in an effort to be non-sectarian, refer to as the Common Era (CE). In that year Anton Szandor LaVey founded the Church of Satan in San Francisco.

LaVey, an imposing, congenial man with a carnival and circus background, had for many years been an enthusiastic but cynical devotee of the occult. He accumulated a unique library containing many works on the more peculiar and obscure facets of human nature, together with the major classics of traditional occultism. Disappointed with the lack of sophistication and practical relevance he saw in existing occult organizations, he decided that he would have to start one of his own to remedy the problem.

In the early 1960s, therefore, he began to conduct “midnight magic seminars” at his home in San Francisco’s Richmond District. By 1965 these had coalesced into a formal “Magic Circle”. The success of this Circle prompted him to found the Church of Satan on Walpurgisnacht (April 30) of 1966, which henceforth became known as the Year I *Anno Satani* (AS).

For the first four years of its existence, the Church remained essentially a San Francisco organization. Group rituals were held every Friday midnight at the LaVey residence, while during the week Anton gave lectures on various arcane subjects and taught classes to aspiring Witches and Warlocks.

This fascinating and controversial organization won its share of publicity around the country and abroad, and soon many curious individuals were writing to San Francisco to find out how they too could become Satanists. In 1970 Anton published the *Satanic Bible* (Temple of Set Reading List #6K) to summarize the basic tenets of his philosophy.

The *Satanic Bible* did not portray Satan and his fellow dæmons as actual “supernatural” beings, but rather as symbols and metaphors for hedonistic self-indulgence. Other religions in general - and Christianity in particular - were not considered to be deadly foes; instead they were mocked and dismissed as sanctimonious and hypocritical frauds.

The *Satanic Bible* went on, however, to promise results from the practice of simplified and standardized magical rituals. Such rites invoked Satan as well as various other gods and dæmons from many mythological