

The Scroll of Set

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[1] The First Year

- by Michael A. Aquino V°

High Priest of Set

It has now been almost a year since the reestablishment of the Temple of Set. I would like to review that year for you, touching upon both the highlights and the problems we have experienced. Then I will outline the plans we have for the next year, as well as some long-range projections. If you would like to discuss any of this material in greater detail, feel welcome to contact the Priest or Priestess of Set nearest you.

At this time last year the situation was chaotic. The Church of Satan had disintegrated, and absolutely no plans for a successor organization had been made. Until the appearance of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* on the night of June 21-22, almost no research into pre-Satan concepts had been done. Nor, upon close examination, would the old administrative/executive structures of the Church of Satan have been of any use to the Temple of Set. In fact, they were practically non-existent, because the structure, Priesthood, program, membership, and policies of the Church of Satan could be - and were - changed at a moment's notice by decision of Anton LaVey.

Creating a new organization that would be merely a carbon copy of the old one was out of the question, else we could eventually expect to encounter the same problems as the Church of Satan. Moreover, the Æon of Set embodies a sense of purpose or direction (*Xeper*) that did not exist in the aimless, hedonistic Age of Satan. The Temple of Set would have to be designed to grapple with problems and undertake projects that would have been completely beyond the reach of the Church of Satan, as well as of any previous religious/philosophical group.

And so we faced two general tasks: (1) Creation of the structure of the Temple of Set, and (2) Defining and introducing the direction in which the Temple should be moving.

The groundwork for the first task was laid in July, when the Priesthood worked out and approved a written framework for the Temple consisting of eight Articles of Incorporation and ten By-Laws with 79 sections. These provisions were given the force of law by incorporation of the Temple of Set within the State of California. By October the

Secretary of State formally approved the Temple of Set as a legitimate religious institution, thus granting us full rights as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization.

This was, however, just the beginning. In the Church of Satan the Priesthood had no voice in the running of the organization, and the Council of Nine was merely an informal sounding-board for the High Priest. In the Temple of Set the Priesthood has had to accustom itself to possessing and using a great deal of influence over the entire Temple, and the Council of Nine is now in a position where it holds ultimate responsibility for the administration of the Temple - being distinct from and superior to the office of the High Priest.

Hence there was an urgent need for the high-speed transmission of information throughout the III°+ levels of the Temple. To meet this need I sent out a series of bulletins from my office, keeping the Priesthood advised on moment-to-moment developments. I have also corresponded extensively with our officials, amassing a 12-month file of letters that is about the size of a major city's telephone book! Individual officials have also been communicating just as extensively with one another - something that never happened in the Church of Satan. The effect of this is extremely important, although it may not be automatically apparent to the general membership: It is that every initiate to the Setian Priesthood, whatever his location, possesses a full and reliable understanding of the design of the Temple of Set and its position at a current point in time.

All administrative services of the Temple to the general membership are now being coordinated through a new office - that of Executive Director. Priest William F. Murray, who holds this position, has made it the veritable nerve-center of our operations, controlling and/or coordinating finances, supplies, insignia, special research projects, records, and an endless parade of special-action developments.

Working closely with the Executive Director are a growing number of specialized departments, councils, and commissions across the continent. Data-processing is handled by Magister Grumboski in Michigan. The *Scroll of Set* is edited and published in San Jose, California, by Magistra Wendall. Plans for a research data bank are being developed in San Francisco by Priest R.K. Barrett. Council of Nine operations are being developed by the Chairman, Magister Ethel, in Washington, D.C. Scientific research is being done by Priest Holt in Georgia. Ceremonial and ritual magic matters are coordinated by Priest DeCecco in Massachusetts. Communications systems are being evaluated by Priest Harris in Los Angeles. Long-range financial work is being done by our Treasurer, Magister Seago, in Santa Barbara. Magistra Sinclair, also in Santa Barbara, will be administering our discount/

direct-purchasing book-order system [to be instituted this summer].

The latest special agency of the Temple is the Department of Contingency Planning, headed by Priest Norton in Michigan. The DCP is divided into a number of functional divisions, each concerned with specific matters with which the Temple may have to deal in the future.

What makes these accomplishments all the more impressive is the fact that the Temple is still relatively small in size. At this time last year the mailing list of the Church of Satan contained about 350 names, of which about 100 were either complimentary memberships or non-member subscriptions to the *Cloven Hoof*. Only the 250 regular members were told about the Temple of Set, and then only about fifty of them were accepted into the Temple as qualified initiates. The entire process of notification, information, application, and selection took about the first four or five months, and since then we have grown by about 30 additional Initiates. This is due in large part to our refusal to advertise, employ sensational publicity, or otherwise seek members by any "mass" process. We believe that each new Setian should be introduced to the Temple on an individual basis. Thus the Temple will grow relatively slowly, but the quality and interest of its initiates will be high.

The problems we have encountered fall generally under the heading of "growing pains". On occasion it has not been clear what the extent and limits of a given official's authority are, or what others should be involved, or what standards Initiates of various degrees are expected to observe. There are a few people doing a lot of work and a lot of people doing less. As yet we do not have a system for bringing the Temple of Set to the attention of qualified persons who may not know one of our present Initiates. These are things we must work out as we go along, being careful to avoid over-reaction to any one incident.

I am somewhat cautious in predicting the exact course of events in our second year, because so much has happened in the last twelve months that was far beyond our initial speculations. Yet certain concrete goals can be identified: Our first book-length document, *The Book of Coming Forth by Night: Analysis and Commentary*, is now available to Initiates. By fall we hope to have the initial edition of the *Ruby Tablet of Set*, a cumulative encyclopedia for our Initiates, ready for release. Designed in loose-leaf format, the *Ruby Tablet* will be added to and revised over the years in order to reflect the very latest information at our disposal. Later this summer an expanded and revised reading list will be distributed, and a limited system of book-ordering by mail at a below-retail discount will be attempted.

If it works well, we will gradually expand the system to every available book on our reading list.

Almost all of our informational papers will be revised and updated. High priority will go to increasing the budget of the *Scroll of Set*. Via the *Ruby Tablet* additional material on ritual magic will be circulated. We hope to put out some general guidelines on local financing, regional conclaves, and the rights and responsibilities of the Temple as a tax-exempt religious organization. And, of course, all of the operations that the Temple has begun this year will continue to grow in their own areas.

As a Setian you are welcome to participate in whatever activities of the Temple you find most interesting - or to recommend new ones in which you might like to concentrate your own endeavors. For names and addresses of officials in each area, contact the Priest or Priestess with whom you are working and explain your special interests. But don't sit back and expect the Temple to entertain you "\$15 worth each year", because that is not the way an initiatory religious society works. The initiative for your advancement and education rests with **you**; the Temple is a sort of "institutional accessory" to help you.

One year ago none of us expected that the Temple of Set would come this far in such a short time. What will it be like in another year, another ten years, a hundred years? I can't venture a specific guess, but I can tell you that it will be totally unlike any institution this planet has ever seen before - except for the **first** Temple of Set. *Xeper*.

[2] **Abortion**

- by James Lewis I°

Hail Set!

After reading the May *Scroll* I thought I'd drop a line to express my particular feelings on abortion.

Even though abortion is legally practiced today, it remains a touchy problem in many circles. Until the last *Scroll*, I never thought of it as a Setian.

While training as a scrub nurse in a large midwest city, I had the opportunity to prepare instruments and then observe a graduate assist in an abortion. The psychological impact was terrible. Not yet a Satanist, I had always had respect for life - especially that of the young. All I could think of was the rule of not harming children. It was my first and last experience with surgical abortion.

The pros and cons of abortion are legion. The destruction of an enemy with ritual is one thing; the destruction of the unborn quite another. Suppose the fetus aborted today was to have been the magus of tomorrow?

Which one of us wishes to answer to the Dark Lord for this act?

[3] Temple of Set First Eastern Conclave

We hope to see you at the First Eastern Conclave of the Temple of Set, Washington, D.C. June 19, XI. Please notify Magister Robert Ethel, Falls Church, Virginia if you plan to attend. Reservations should be sent to the Crystal City Marriott Motor Hotel, 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia.

[4] Austin Osman Spare: For Those Artistically Minded

- by Leon Marvell I°

Imagine a canvas upon which strange faces appear from within storms of vibrant color. Around these mysterious visages swirl twisted limbs and grotesque exaggerations of the human form. Perhaps the shapes within are human, perhaps not; one is never sure. The painting might be called erotic, certainly it is unnerving in an indefinable way, and to the unaware it might be classified in dualistic moral terms as "evil."

The painting I have just described is a work by Austin Osman Spare. It is one of many on similar themes and executed for a singular purpose: It is a work in the magical system of a sorcerer who has only very recently received any attention in occult circles.

The son of a City of London policeman, Spare was born at midnight on the last day of 1888. He showed exceptional artistic ability when very young, and in his early teens won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. The great painter John Singer Sargent hailed Spare as a "genius". Spare was not yet 19 years old.

In the early 1930s Professor Mario Praz in his *The Romantic Agony* described Austin Spare as a "Satanic occultist". An impressive title, and Spare was an impressive man.

He was a powerful mystic, having a strong romantic streak as all true sorcerers must have - that refusal to take things at face value, the sense of meaning and purpose. He claimed to be a reincarnation of William Blake and was, perhaps, considerably influenced by his predecessor [although his work, if it resembled any other artist at all, reminds me much more of Hieronymus Bosch].

Spare claimed that at a very early age he was befriended by a "Mrs. Peterson" who was a witch and initiated him into the secrets of magic. From this moment onwards, until he died the death of the poverty-stricken in 1956, Spare never ceased to be

wholly devoted to the Black Arts.

He was for a short time a member of Crowley's Order of the A.'.A.'. However he broke with Crowley, possibly because of a personality clash, but most probably because he disapproved of Crowley's "Hermeticism" and Cabalism. Spare was already developing an intensely powerful and individual system of his own that rejected all time-honored "Rosicrucian" traditions and, in preference, utilized the ideas of Freud and Jung. [I am not sure of the Jungian influence; however, it would have lent support to his ideas of atavisms - the archetypes of the collective unconscious.] Crowley later reproduced some of Spare's drawings in *The Equinox* and his *Manual of Geomancy*.

Spare's magical system evolved through his first important work, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love)*, published privately in 1913, and later in *The Focus of Life*. Two concepts were basic to his philosophy: those of *Zos* and *Kia*.

Zos was the self considered as a whole - that is, the entire life of an individual, a succession of existences or atavisms, many of them bestial and some possibly super-human. [For those Setians who find the idea of reincarnation unacceptable, consider Kenneth Grant's proposition that memories of past stages in the evolutionary cycle could be imprinted in the D.N.A. code.]

Kia was the primal force behind the Universe [like the Black Magical concept of the "ordering" force]: a dynamic - as opposed to static - energy ... like electricity except incalculably more subtle and powerful. Later in his life he considered *Kia* to be primarily sexual in nature. In this he resembled Reich with his "bion" and "orgone" energy. He used several forms of sex-magic to arouse concentrated *Kia* - the medium of his magic. The Setian will recognize the parallel of this idea with that of the Tantric "Kundalini".

Much later in his life, during his "*Zos Kia Cultus*" period, Spare, by some metaphysical juggling, identified *Kia* with the energy that is synonymous with the autonomous self (*Zos*).

His most important magical contribution is his concept of "Sigilization". Its process is basically as follows: He would define his desire in a clear, direct written form, i.e. "This is my wish [he always included this prologue; possibly it was an unwillingness to disregard all magical tradition; that is, the preliminary "invocation" or "statement of dedication"]": to obtain the strength of tigers." He would then sigilize each phrase using the individual letters (and not repeating them). Then he would combine the sigils and simplify them again.

The use of the final sigil consisted of impressing its image on the subconscious mind and then purposely "forgetting" it - the idea being that

the subconscious was the source of all magical power (*Kia*) and that the subconscious would recognize the hidden meaning of the glyph (which the conscious mind had “forgotten”) and fulfill the desire. The crux of the operation, of course, was the conscious dismissal of the significance of the symbol. To impress the sigil on the deeper mind, Spare used techniques of intense concentration, visualizing just the image of the sigil, and several forms of sex-magic [when the ego is “destroyed”].

Another magical practice was the design of practical stelæ. Here Spare would design a stela which had a traceable path throughout the surface, containing, between twisting linkages of line, god-forms [of many cultures, including some of unknown origin], atavistic forms, personal sigils, and esoteric glyphs, all in a continuous line - his pencil never left the surface - and ending [or beginning: his stelæ and literary works relied on the nonlinear concept of Time] like two ends of unknotted string or concluding in some sigil, acting as a “doorway”.

These stelæ and his paintings were magical operations intended to effect “atavistic resurgence”. Spare accomplished much of his magic through the help of “familiar” which he conceived as being forces within the psyche that were memories of bestial and other incarnations. These atavisms were superior to his conscious ego and, for a specific purpose and time, possessed him.

His stelæ and drawings show considerable Egyptian influence. In one particular work, the “Forces of the Sigils”, the image of Set is clearly defined. Spare’s experiments with “atavistic resurgence” probably inclined him to believe that he had discovered the true significance behind bestial-attributed Egyptian gods. It is interesting to note that the ancient Greeks, who had no definite magical tradition [except one, but more of that in a later article!] considered their gods in completely anthropomorphic forms.

Utilizing his stelæ and a sensory deprivation technique he called the “Death Posture” Spare often retired into his sub-conscious mind where he claimed he saw “sidereal perspectives” and strange geometries and landscapes. He despaired that he could never faithfully reproduce these visions, however, the alert observer can see these strange shapes (trapezoids, pyramids and unusual quadrilaterals and planes) lurking behind the main forms in any given work of his.

He incorporated his intensely individual system into the “witch-cult”, and I mean “Wicca” as created by Gerald Gardner. In its time, as one can readily imagine, Gardner’s revealing of the “witch-cult” caused quite a romantic flutter of the heart to those occult dilettantes who had always dreamt of

becoming involved with some ancient and powerful magic cultus. Everybody was in on the act, not the least being Crowley, who wrote all the “original” Wiccan rituals for an appreciable fee. Spare was also influenced by this innovation, and up until the end of his life he apparently had some influence in Wiccan circles.

Kenneth Grant, perhaps Spare’s closest friend, describes his involvement with both Grant’s “New Isis Lodge” and Gardner’s “Coven” as an outside specialist. Both Gardner and Grant relied on his advice and the efficacy of his talismans/sigils.

Through his involvement with the English witch-cult, Spare developed his “*Zos Kia Cultus*”. He elucidated his concept of the witch-cult in his unpublished manuscript “The Zoetic Grimoire of Zos” (1950-1956). His concept of the “primal woman” receives much emphasis. However I believe that the Black Magician of the Temple of Set should not overlook his ideas because they evoke the repugnant memory of the present-day Neopagans. Rather consider that the Hindu Tantrics conceived of Kundalith as being feminine (mysterious?) in nature, although they considered the energy as being created from two opposing forces, positive and negative, male and female: *Ida* and *Pingala*.

In his strange cult Spare advanced the discovery and practice of a “primeval sexualism” (something to do with *Kia*) and the realization of ancient desires (atavisms) which would eventually produce a “whole” self.

I have written this introduction into the methods and influence of Spare because I believe his system is worth further investigation by the Setian. His sigilization technique has worked extremely well for me, and I also believe that the alert Setian will discover some “Setian” implications within his philosophy.

For Further Reading

Kenneth Grant, *The Magical Revival* and, to a lesser extent, *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*.

Nevill Drury and Stephen Skinner, *The Search for Abraxas*.

Man, Myth and Magic, Volumes #2 and #3 under “Atavisms” and “Austin Osman Spare” respectively.

The Book of Pleasure was republished in 1974 C.E. by Gilded Quill Bookshoppe, 39 Patio de Leon, Ft. Myers, Florida.