

The Temple of Set



- by -

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Introduction

In *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (1904) L. Frank Baum had his imperiled hero Tip (the future Princess Ozma) tie together two sofas, palm branches, and the stuffed head of a gump (in Oz an elk-like creature) with rope and clothesline, sprinkle it with magic powder to bring it to life, and then use it to fly away to safety.¹ Nevertheless, as evident from the improvised haste of its assembly, the gump was sorely wanting in aerodynamics, and only barely brought its passengers to a landing before falling apart. Tip granted its wish to be disassembled, though the stuffed head remained alive and continued to startle bypassers with comments throughout, presumably, the rest of the thirteen original Oz books.

The Church of Satan, founded in 1966, was a bit like Baum's gump. It was also thrown together in improvised haste from a variety of vaguely- or un-related concepts and then used to transport its riders on an unpredictably soaring, plunging, and haphazard journey throughout the next nine years until its own catastrophic crash in 1975. Like the gump, it **did** complete the journey; also like the gump, it is something of an amazement that it got off the ground at **all**, much less flew as long and as far as it did.² The story of this "long, strange trip" is told in *The Church of Satan*, my companion history to *The Temple of Set*.

I make this point because the Temple of Set, when **it** was founded in 1975, was an entirely different phenomenon. Organizationally it had the benefit of the entire experience of the Church of Satan upon which to draw: to improve in part, to discard in part, and of course to disregard when building anew. Even more crucially the Temple had from its inception a crystal-clear definition and understanding of its metaphysical authenticity and license. Its evolution over the next quarter-century would see refinements in the organization and increasing exploration and enhancement of the philosophy, but the original bases of both would never change.

The differences between the two organizations will also be mirrored in the contrast between *The Church of Satan* and *The Temple of Set*. The former is a roller-coaster ride of alternately serious, philosophical, humorous, tragic, ironic, heroic, embarrassing, frightening, and startling personalities, concepts, and events. "If I hadn't lived through it myself," more than one old Satanist has remarked to me upon reading *The Church of Satan*, "I would have found it almost too bizarre to believe."

The Temple of Set will not be such a rollicking reading experience, though I daresay it will be a substantially more searching and informative one. Its purpose is first to explain what the Temple is and how it came into being, then to show how its many Initiates have all contributed to the strengthening and refinement of that vision over subsequent years.

Certainly it has not all been a smooth, steady, unified climb to the stars. Both senior and junior Setians have had their flaws and failings as well as their talents and strengths, and as a consequence the Temple has had its share of failures along with its successes. But without exception each difficulty has been honestly confronted as a learning experience; the result has consequently been an institution that much more substantial and resilient.

An additional distinction between the two books is that while the former can indeed claim to embrace the entire history of the Church of Satan, this book could never hope to fulfill a similar goal with regard to the Temple of Set. The Church of Satan was a fairly simple, linear story, to which a relatively small number of individuals made specialized

¹ The gump was included in Walt Disney's 1985 film *Return to Oz*, being a composite of Baum's *Marvelous Land of Oz* and *Ozma of Oz*. In this film Dorothy Gale was substituted for Tip as the gump's creator & rider.

² Arguably its stuffed head - an Anton LaVey fan club using the Church's name - has also remained "alive and commenting" since the authentic Church's 1975 conclusion.

contributions over a brief period of time. The Temple of Set may be more likened to an explosion within the heads of a great many individuals of rich and diverse backgrounds, yielding a mix of ideas that would constantly be shared, reconsidered, and compounded.

The extent of this corpus of knowledge is already staggering, and of course still continues its exponential growth throughout a variety of communications and records systems. Among these are the *Jeweled Tablets of Set* standing reference volumes; the archives and continuing issues of the *Scroll of Set* newsletter; the Temple's Internet public website and private "Intranet"; the documents and periodicals of the Temple's many Orders, Elements, and Pylons; Temple and specialized reading lists, international/regional/local conclave events, and the overwhelming amount of personal and interpersonal workings and dialogues involving individual Setians.

When I undertook to write this *Temple of Set*, therefore, I knew immediately that its focus would need to be more a personal perspective, more an overview of what during the adventure of the Temple to date has seemed to me to be particularly notable: not just because of drama or colorfulness, but because it played some necessary or significant part in the unfolding of the adventure. It will, I think, also be my initiatory testament.

As a comprehensive history, *The Church of Satan* can be read by anyone - Setian, Satanist, or profane - and be expected to reasonably communicate its story in proportion to the intelligence of each such reader.

The Temple of Set presents a somewhat different problem. While I intend that this book be as direct and unambiguous as possible, Setian philosophy requires "initiatory consciousness" - not only an interest in the subject matter but both the intellectual and metaphysical capacity to comprehend it in its ultimate sense. Within the Temple, persons possessing such capacity are referred to as "Elect" and are deemed to have potential for initiation. Those lacking it, best intentions notwithstanding, would find the initiatory experience bewildering, frustrating, and meaningless. Accordingly the Temple endeavors to not admit them, or to disaffiliate them as soon as possible if accidentally admitted.

It is much the same with this book. There are aspects of it that may either enter your mind like flame or just leave you confused and annoyed. My pleasure in the former case; my apologies in the latter.

[Non]finally, *The Temple of Set*, like *The Church of Satan* for many years/editions, will be a "living book", subject to any number of changes, additions, corrections, and updates as various knowledgeable readers comment upon it and/or I refine my own information and opinions. Check "www.xeper.org/maquino" occasionally for updated drafts/editions.

The Church of Satan was not made available as a printed/.pdf ebook until it was a completed project [which took several years]. I have decided to handle *The Temple of Set* a bit differently. It will be uploaded to my webpage in .pdf format in successive piecemeal drafts until the whole thing is finally there. Along the way I will probably be updating, correcting, and revising earlier parts as appropriate. Accordingly I welcome readers' questions, suggestions, and comments - though I must plead in advance that I may not be able to answer each personally. I **can** promise that each will be carefully read, and if appropriate used to improve the next update. Please send comments to me at:

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Chapter I: The Final Conflict

As is detailed in *The Church of Satan*, three tensions and dilemmæ inherent in that institution came to a boiling point by early 1975. Among these:

(1) Was the Church of Satan theistic or atheistic?

(a) Did it believe in Satan and his fellow dæmons as actual intelligent, active, willful entities extant in time and space? Or did it disbelieve in the existence of such beings [along with the Judæo-Christian God], and just use them for spooky window-dressing in rituals that were merely imaginative psychodramas?

(b) In this same vein, was there perhaps a “two-tiered” attitude within the Church, whereby its High Priest and Priesthood indeed privately believed in Satan and other dæmons, while at the same time presenting to the public an attitude of atheistic satire? Per this interpretation, ordinary members of the Church were initially/generally treated much as the public, yet selectively introduced to the deeper, true metaphysics as they might show themselves capable of understanding and accepting it.

(2) The original Church of Satan in San Francisco had been inaugurated, part seriously, part whimsically, by Anton Szandor LaVey in 1966 as largely a personal vehicle for advertisement and profit, based upon his colorful personality, extensive knowledge of the Black Arts and occultism generally, and atmospheric house in which to give lectures, hold meetings, and perform rituals. However, as over the years the Church expanded beyond San Francisco, through individuals and groups having little or no direct exposure to these specific original allures, it began to become more of an impersonal institution united by common beliefs and ideas. Its focus was indeed Satan; Anton was revered as his High Priest and Earthly deputy only. Correspondingly the decentralized Church behaved more like a nonprofit organization than a profitable business.

(3) The more the Church grew, and the more Anton himself became a well-known popular icon, the more withdrawn and private he became. In part this was understandably a reaction to years of being iconized, lionized, media-exploited, and sometimes threatened. He simply became weary of it, exhausted by the demands of having to constantly keep up his Mephistophelian glamor-image. Unfortunately this reclusiveness also extended to the Church of Satan itself beyond his old, familiar entourage in San Francisco. He gradually avoided direct contact with the more distant membership, which had the dual consequence of forcing them to rely more on their initiative and increasing his suspicion of their uncontrolled independence accordingly.

These factors culminated first in Anton’s “Phase IV” policy paper to the Church, in which the formal standing and authority of non-entourage Church officials and groups were weakened in favor of an informal “Movement” whose preferential membership and influence would once again be Anton’s sole decision.³ His next, and as it turned out explosive action was to attempt to destroy the independent significance and structure of the Church’s initiatory degree system, by also making both the definition and the bestowal of such titles merely his personal whim.⁴

³ Appendix #116, *The Church of Satan*.

⁴ Chapter #35, *The Church of Satan*.

In terms of my personal involvement, *The Church of Satan* culminated with my June 10, 1975 letter to Anton and Diane LaVey rejecting what I regarded as their critical corruption of the Church of Satan, and simultaneous letter to the Church membership announcing my disavowal of the organization controlled by them. These were followed by many other Satanists' resignations, either immediately or after days/weeks/months of waiting to see if Anton LaVey could or would explain and/or correct his startling policy decisions and announcements.

As copies of these resignations continued to pour into my mailbox, I realized that I was being looked to to provide some sort of corrective/alternative course of action. Frankly I felt both ill-qualified and ill-disposed to do this.

For the past six years the Church of Satan had seemed not only unique but indeed metaphysically sacred to me. I had never regarded it as "just an organization" alongside which other, similar Satanic churches could just as validly exist. Correspondingly I did not regard Anton LaVey as simply a charismatic individual or even genius, but as the anointed personal deputy of Satan himself. I had now spoken in my Magisterial capacity to deny both of these legitimacies henceforth, but that was not at all the same thing as proposing to personally replace them.

Beyond that I was grappling with intense personal shock and heartbreak. My association with Anton and Diane LaVey had become almost as close as to my own parents, and quite obviously the affection had been mutual. I was bitterly angry and depressed at the circumstances which had now shattered this relationship. I could only hope that at some, probably distant future time the LaVeys might come to understand my plight and decision, and even see it as the most constructive course for the legacy we had all worked so hard those many years to build.

Nevertheless I had to begin thinking about some sort of "reformed Church of Satan" to replace the corrupted one. To other Satanists I referred to the concept as a "Second Church of Satan", although this was only a descriptive term.

And of course the central question remained unanswered. If the Devil had indeed consecrated the original Church of Satan [and its High Priest], how was I or anyone else to conclude that he would now transfer this authority to a successor Church?

During my tenure in the Church I had of course practiced both Lesser and Greater Black Magic⁵, the latter much less frequently but also on at least two occasions - the Workings of the *Diablicon* and the Ninth Solstice Message - quite overwhelmingly. Yet beyond a basic conviction that there was thus something indeed to be said for GBM as a technique, I had by and large not aggressively explored it. Most of my Church time had been taken up with purely-administrative responsibilities. On the magical side of things I had indulged myself only in occasional LBM experiments and some philosophical/historical/theoretical writings in the *Cloven Hoof* and personal correspondence.⁶

In March 1975, however, after being advised of its existence by Priest Robert Ethel of the Washington, D.C. Asmodeus Grotto, I tracked down a copy of Meric Casaubon's *John Dee's Actions With Spirits*, a 1659 facsimile reprint, at a little occult store in San Pedro, California. The book looked just like every magician wants a grimoire to look: big, thick, heavy, and leather-bound. I could hardly wait to "take the original Keys out for a

⁵ **Lesser Black Magic** (LBM) is the influencing of beings, processes, or objects in the objective universe by the application of obscure physical or behavioral laws. **Greater Black Magic** (GBM) is the causing of change to occur in the subjective universe in accordance with the will. This change in the subjective universe may cause a similar and proportionate change in the objective universe. GBM involves the summoning of both intensively rational (*dianoia*) and consequently intuitive (*næsis*) concentration of thought.

⁶ This is fairly extensively documented in *The Church of Satan*.

test drive”, and did so that very evening at one of the old artillery batteries at Fort MacArthur where I had conducted many a Call to Cthulhu during Army Reserve weekends with the infamous 306th Psychological Operations Battalion.⁷ The result was nothing short of astonishing. The following day, March 9th, I jotted down the results:

For the first Working I decided to pronounce the 19th Key, invoking ZIM (the 13th Æthyr). *Cornu* required twice before any response.

Then the result: I recall coming, under hazy circumstances, to a large wooden-beamed hall in which were seated a number of men around a table. I knew them to be the “Secret Chiefs” of the “White” tradition of whom Aleister Crowley and others have spoken.

I suggested that I might be allowed to join them, sensing that they did not immediately perceive my identity as a Magister Templi of the Left-Hand Path. But there was some dissent, as though some of them were wary of me.

Finally I revealed myself as a Magister Templi. They reacted more negatively than before, donning robes of various colors. I responded by donning my own black/blue robe, whereupon there was a reaction by them of even stronger dislike. I responded with anger in turn.

There was a violent conflagration, the hall collapsed, and I recall nothing further.⁸

This was no mere dream, since I did not fall asleep, nor was it the type of hallucination which may follow from fatigue, self-hypnosis, or other “bewilderment” to the mind. It was a rational experience, perfectly clear to my normal senses. It was very “crude”, but then I hardly expected anything polished to come of a first Working with a new magical system. I drew no particular meaning from the sequence itself; what was significant to me was the sharpness and clarity of the entire experience - far more so than Workings conducted with the Crowley Keys in the *Equinox* or the LaVey Keys in the *Satanic Bible*.

I decided not to immediately mention this to Anton LaVey. It was hardly politic to recount such an experiment to the author of the *Satanic Bible*, at least not until I had explored and understood it better. Robert Ethel, who himself possessed a copy of the Casaubon volume, would be a more suitable correspondent. Upon returning to Santa Barbara I wrote him:

In case you thought I passed right over your discovery of the Casaubon reprint mentioned in your December letter, I did not. But it has taken me this long to locate a copy, inspect it for accuracy, and form some preliminary conclusions concerning it.

From what I have read in the book so far - coupled with results I have obtained from an experimental operation with one of the Keys - it is a tremendously powerful text. The secret to its proper use lies, I believe, in the disassociation of its implications from hybrid/Cabalistic jargon. This includes the pronouncing of the Keys themselves (which, from Mathers’ time onward, have been spoken per the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and not according to the simple phonetics implied by each letter in the text).

There are two general points to be considered. The first is that which I brought out in the “Caucus Race” article in the *Hoof*, i.e. that Dee, Kelley, and Casaubon would have been playing with fire [at the stake] had they not bent over backwards to couch their texts in “good Christian” terminology. [One could say much the same for John Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* is an excellent example of such lip service.]

The second point is that Dee and Kelley were themselves necessarily of a Judaic/Christian educational background. They would have been inclined to interpret extraordinary contacts in line with the myths and legends most familiar to them. In going through this reprint of Casaubon, I have attempted to evaluate each “Angelic” incident in a more empirical frame of reference. A pattern is emerging that I find very exciting, but I must proceed further with the correlation before I commit myself to conclusions.⁹

⁷ See Chapter #31 of *The Church of Satan*.

⁸ Aquino, M.A., Working Record, Enochian Keys, March 9, X/1975.

⁹ Letter, M.A. Aquino to Robert Ethel, March 12, X/1975.

I had then relegated Mr. Casaubon to my bookshelf against some presumed future leisure time for such enjoyable explorations. I took him out just once again that spring, to activate a GBM working recorded as *The Sphinx and the Chimæra* (Appendix #1).

This working was quite spectacular as an experiment in formalized rational and intuitive thought. Scholarly research preceded the working; then GBM was used to overlay it with enlightened awareness. [This concept will be discussed at greater length in Chapter #8.]

As the Church of Satan's 1975 crisis began to unfold, I attempted to comprehend and address it reasonably and practically through correspondence and discussion. But as the situation worsened, I felt increasingly the need to seek guidance from the authority of the Church's very existence, Satan himself. It seemed to me that if the Church were authentic - and, for that matter, ultimately so beyond Anton LaVey's current representation of it as merely his personal creation and vehicle - the Prince of Darkness would have to step in. As the senior Master next to Anton himself, I concluded that the responsibility to seek such a GBM resolution fell to me.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of a Master IV^o [as beyond a Priest III^o] in the Church of Satan was Familiarity with [or, as Aleister Crowley might have put it, "Knowledge and Conversation of"] the essential Powers of Darkness themselves, including their primal energizing source, Satan. The Priesthood of Mendes III^o, by contrast, could perceive and represent these Powers, but not consciously meld with them. Perhaps the most famous modern example of the facility of a Master in this regard is Crowley's *Liber 418: The Vision and The Voice*, in which his own initiation at this level is recorded.

I chose the night of June 21-22, X/1975 as an appropriate occasion for the working. The time/events following my June 10th letter to Anton and Diane had suggested to me that an ordinary solution was increasingly improbable, and that evening - as the Summer Solstice and anniversary of my own ordination to the Priesthood five years previously - seemed "traditionally" respectful. I cannot recall the date having any other significance to me at the time than this.

At midnight I was alone in my home at 302 East Calle Laureles, Santa Barbara - save only for my beloved Irish Setter, Brandy. As was my habit with GBM workings, I put a phonograph record on the turntable and set it to endlessly repeat. I chose a selection which I had never used before [and, out of personal regard for the result, have never used since]: Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

My altar was located in the living room of the house. I opened the working in the traditional Satanic Mass, then spoke aloud the First Part of the *Word of Set*.¹⁰

I felt an impulse to enter my study - "the Sanctum" as I nicknamed it - and with Brandy curled up at my feet, sat down at my desk and took up pen and paper. Then, over the next four hours, I wrote down the words of *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

The experience was neither one of "dictation" [as in Aleister Crowley's *Book of the Law* working] or of "automatic writing" after the spiritualist fashion. The thoughts, words, phrases seemed to me indistinct from my own, yet impressed me as both unique and necessary, as though no other sequence would do. Frequently I paused for a time, waiting for what might occur next. Three times I got up from the desk entirely - once to find a small book by Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Language*, and leaf through it until I found the sentence that had gnawed at me, copying its hieroglyphs into my writing; once to trace an exact copy of a scrawled passage from the *Book of the Law* into the narrative; and finally, at its apparent end, to place a small piece of my own artwork (which I had done sometime previously, merely on a meditative whim) as a "seal".

¹⁰ See Appendices #3 and #4 for the text and discussion of the *Word of Set* version of the "Enochian Keys".

By about 4 AM the document was completed, and I was mentally and emotionally exhausted. I did not formally close the working [though I did stop the endlessly-cycling phonograph], and simply fell asleep until the late morning of the 22nd, when I first read through the complete text and tried to collect my thoughts concerning it.

Chapter 2: The North Solstice X Working

The Greater Black Magical working record *The Book of Coming Forth by Night* was not only a revelation to and reorientation of myself personally, but also the founding authority and philosophical cornerstone of the Temple of Set.

Appendix #2 contains the text of the working, followed by my most recent analysis and commentary concerning it in Appendix #3. [As a separate ebook I plan to make available a photofacsimile of the actual original document, which would consume too much memory for practical inclusion in *The Temple of Set*.]

In this chapter, however, I would like to consider the phenomenon of the working *per se*. What was it? What sort of validity, if any, can be assigned to it? Should this be different for others besides myself? Should it be regarded as a time-specific document or as something with “timeless” relevance and application?

In Chapter #1 I said that there was nothing overtly sensational, supernatural, or melodramatic about the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* working. I simply sat down and wrote it. It was not dictated to me by a materialized Egyptian god, nor did the words burn themselves into the pages like the fabled Hebrew Ten Commandments. The thoughts were “comfortable” ones, comprehensible to me within my preexisting frames of reference.

What, then, distinguished the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* from a mere meditation or exercise in creative writing? No more and no less than a sensation I had then, and conviction ever since, that something beyond Michael Aquino was generating it.

In his excellent work *The Psychology of Anomalous Experience*, Graham Reed (Professor of Psychology at York University, Canada) surveys the many types of human thought-experiences beyond the ordinary emotional or rational. “Anomalous,” he begins, “means irregular, distorted, or unusual”.¹¹ He goes on to note that these classifications may be in the individual’s own opinion, or in that of parts or the whole of his surrounding society. While some such experiences may indeed be symptoms of various forms of mental illness, others are quite routinely a function of healthy thinking and are not at all pathological.

We are all familiar with AEs such as dreams/daydreams, “trick of the mind” visual/audible/conceptual illusions [as in stage magic presentations, paradoxes, distortions of perspective, etc.], memory surprises, and *déjà vu*. None of these are cause for concern unless they become unusually frequent or otherwise overwhelm “ordinary” thought.

The area into which *The Book of Coming Forth by Night* falls, however, has to do with what Reed calls “experience of self”. It is:

... fundamental to the whole of the individual’s psychic life. It underlies, determines, and colours all other experiences. Like other critical aspects of mind, we take it for granted and are only aware of it when it is disturbed in some way. It is almost impossible for a person in normal health to imagine what it would feel like **not** to be experiencing oneself as oneself. This is doubtless because imagining, like all other mental activities, normally occurs in the context of self-experience.

Clearly the experience of self is inextricably involved in all other cognitive activities and states because it underlies them and acts as a selector, integrator, and synthesizer. In a sense all the experiences we care to discuss affect, or are affected by, this central experience. So it would be possible to discuss it partially in terms of, for example, attention, registration, memory, thinking, or emotion. Being oneself determines how we attend and to what we pay attention. It is a product of all our stored experiences, and it determines our emotional responses. At the same time the idea “me” is a concept, the development and range of which can be considered like other concepts.¹²

¹¹ Reed, Graham, *The Psychology of Anomalous Experience* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), page #9.

¹² *Ibid.*, page #112.

Reed delineates four different types of anomaly from this normal, comprehensive “me”: (1) inability to distinguish oneself from one’s environment, (2) attribution of personal thoughts/imagery/actions to external forces, (3) experience of a detachment or separation of the self, and (4) concern that one’s experience of self/reality is not in fact valid.

The first - the “blurring of *ego* boundaries”¹³ - is characteristic of clinical schizophrenia, but in a contrasting and even highly-respected sense also encompasses the dissolution of the self into the “higher unity” of the cosmos as, for example, in *nirvana*.

The third - detachment or separation of the self - also takes a variety of forms, from the dream “out of the body” experience to the more elaborate, subtle, and metaphysical concepts of “astral selves”, the Egyptian *ka*, the sinister *Doppelgänger*, and in general the soul/mind/body distinction.

The fourth - doubt of the experience of reality - raises the question in one’s mind whether his entire experience of being, and that which is outside it, is truthful. Most recently this theme was dramatically romanced in the *Matrix* series of movies.

As for the second, it is in many respects both the most extraordinary and the most troublesome of the four. Here we find people who are convinced that they [or others] have been “programmed” by the government or aliens to think or act in certain ways, from sex slaves to “Manchurian Candidates”. Some may feel that their own thoughts are being sucked away by “thought vampires”, or that other people or beings are able to “tune into” their privacy just as on a radio channel.

The second type also embraces, however, metaphysical or religious experiences of a “revelation” nature. These may range [as historically in various religions] from possession or incarnation to prophecy, “channeling”, or simply perceiving one or more Great Truths. Far from being regarded as psychopathic maniacs [although they might well have been in their own day!], such representatives as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, the Buddha, Joan of Arc, the Mahdi, and Joseph Smith are popularly regarded with superstitious awe. Their less-successful competitors throughout the ages, of course, remain recorded as only heretics, weirdos, frauds, or madmen/women.

There are two other interesting features of most “revelations”:

First, as they are presumed to spring from a supernatural, all-knowing source, they are [at least by believers] not subject to the usual sort of factual questioning or analysis. They are to be accepted as an act of faith. Inaccuracies or inadequacies in them are ignored or assumed to be “revealed in their truth and understanding” at some divinely-determined future time.

Secondly, some adherents rely upon a steady stream of such manifestations to keep the belief-system going. Hence the series of Hebrew prophets, the visions and miracles throughout the New Testament, and of course the “Book of Revelation” telling Christians how the whole show is eventually going to climax.

The Book of Coming Forth by Night fits Reed’s definition of an “experience of self/second type/revelation anomaly”, but does not exhibit or depend upon the two sub-features described above. It has been extensively and exhaustively examined, and compared to other perspectives on reality, by many Setians [and nonSetians] over the decades - and again here in Appendix #3. Also it has apparently passed well the test of time as a stand-alone document, requiring neither sequel nor supplement to retain its usefulness and relevance to Setian philosophy.

Now perhaps I may productively return to my own sensation, reaction, and opinion the morning of June 22, 1975.

¹³ Cf. P. Federn, *Ego Psychology and the Psychoses* (NY: Basic Books, 1952).

Frankly I didn't know what to make of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*. It was certainly not at all what I had expected [although I hadn't known **what** to expect the evening before]. Obviously it contained elements of ancient Egypt, Aleister Crowley, and the Church of Satan. But it mingled these in what was to me an odd and unfamiliar way. In some ways it seemed ancient, in other ways futuristic. It seemed to be speaking to me personally, but also to as-yet-unidentified others. It contained cosmology, philosophy, magic, evolution, cryptography, promises, and threats. Summarily it pretty well upset my entire apperception.

I did, however, have two immediate impressions: one, that it was authentic - what it claimed to be - a communication from the Egyptian god Set; two, that I myself must take it wholly and sincerely to heart. Even today, after all these years of examination of and reflection upon the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, I cannot explain or defend these convictions, but simply recall them.

In his "Preliminary Remarks" to his *Book 4*, Part I, Aleister Crowley discussed at some length the ecstatic vision which each founder of a religion seemed at one point in his life to experience:

Finally something happens whose nature may form the subject of a further discussion later on. For the moment let it suffice to say that this consciousness of the ego and the non-ego, the seer and the thing seen, the knower and the thing known, is blotted out.

There is usually an intense light, an intense sound, and a feeling of such overwhelming bliss that the resources of language have been exhausted again and again in the attempt to describe it.

It is an absolute knock-out blow to the mind. It is so vivid and tremendous that those who experience it are in the gravest danger of losing all sense of proportion.

By its light all other events of life are as darkness.¹⁴

For me the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* was something like that. I might try to discuss it theoretically and practically with others, but beyond and beneath any and all such sensible courses of action, the thing had somehow seared me to the heart of my soul. Henceforth visualizing existence without this as its centerpiece would be quite inconceivable.

But on the morning of June 22, I did not pursue such an ominous course of reflection. More important to me at the time was that I had asked questions about the crisis in the Church of Satan, and they had been answered. It was now time to share that answer with others, which led in due course to the [re]founding of the Temple of Set.

It later seemed to me that there might be much more to the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* than just its reading. In this, admittedly, I had the model of Aleister Crowley's attitude towards the *Book of the Law*, which he approached as a complex puzzle to be deciphered and analyzed - and so he did, over the years and in several editions of commentaries.

My first detailed examination of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* was a 10-page letter to the Priesthood of Set III°+ on September 6, 1975. This was eventually followed by a 22-page one the following year and a 26-page one in 1985. That was included for a time in the *Crystal Tablet of Set* (the Setian I°/introductory volume of the *Jeweled Tablets of Set*), and later was moved to the Adept II°+ *Ruby Tablet*. Appendix #3 of this *Temple of Set* marks its first [and possibly final, at least by me] revision since then.

As mentioned at the beginning of Chapter #1, the Church of Satan had struggled for the entire decade of its existence with the central, inevitable issue of the reality of the supernatural, or more precisely the metaphysical. The puerile myths and images of the

¹⁴ Crowley, Aleister, *Magick* (Part I, 1911) (NY: Samuel Weiser, 1973), page #9.

world's conventional religions we had long since dismissed as worthless nonsense - indeed, as pertaining to their devils and demons, the stuff for amusing, spooky psychodrama, sarcastic lampoon, and occasionally Lesser Black Magical control of gullible minds still psychologically enslaved to superstition.

Yet within carefully-crafted magical ritual environments, some Satanists had also sensed a reality beyond that apparent to the ordinary senses. This was an entirely new and positive form of "Satanism" that had almost nothing in common with traditional "Devil worship" except the preliminary seriousness of formal atmospheres. It was a chill that went up one's spine when commencing, then culminating a Black Magical working. We were not just play-acting; we had really opened, or at least begun to open a door which profane humanity had only vaguely imagined to exist. What we would see when we got it fully open we did not know; we only sensed that, for all of its faults and failings, the Church of Satan had somehow managed to discover its key.

For me, the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* was the event that flung that door wide open. I now knew of a certainty that there was a reality beyond the four-dimensional, and that within it existed the actual centers of consciousness which mankind had dimly imagined as "gods". Pythagoras and Plato had come closer to them as Forms or Principles, and the ancient Egyptians closest of all as *neteru*.

This realization forever transformed the core of my own consciousness, of course, as I'm sure it would that of anyone else undergoing the same shock. I knew now that physical extension in time/space was merely part of a much greater whole whose Mysteries awaited beyond.

I simultaneously realized that, as Crowley had observed in *Book 4* above, such an illumination - there is no better word for it - cannot possibly be described or explained to intellects as yet within the purely-material realm of consciousness. It would be futile, even dangerous to try, as in H.G. Wells' famous parable of *The Country of the Blind*.

There was, however, another aspect of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* which **was** both communicable and practical. It pointed the way to a unique path of self-realization and ennoblement that any suitably-intelligent individual could decide to pursue. It was not necessary to comprehend its origin or ultimate implication - just its existence and availability. The Grail was now there to be grasped and drunk from, for any with the awareness, courage, and resolve to do so.

And so it has been these thirty years hence. Many thousands of humans have undertaken the adventure invited by the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* - some with more success than others, but all, I think, awakened and energized by their encounter.

There is, unfortunately, a less-pleasant side to this phenomenon. Some aspirants have found themselves unprepared to step beyond a purely-conventional frame of intellectual existence. In such cases the strengthening of consciousness can evoke, as in the science-fiction film *Forbidden Planet*, "monsters of the *id*" capable of psychological harm to themselves or others. As it has learned more about such dangers over the years, the Temple of Set has endeavored to dissuade such personalities from seeking initiation, or shortstopping an effort that seems to be miscarrying in ominous directions. I daresay this will remain one of the Temple's more important and compassionate responsibilities as long as it exists.

In my essay *Black Magic*, the introduction to the *Crystal Tablet of Set*, I wrote:

This text was so meaningful to me that I have since ordered my life and philosophy by its principles. The other founders of the Temple of Set accorded it a similar trust and respect. Even though they had not participated in the working itself, many remarked, they felt that the text itself carried its own aura of authenticity and conviction. In the years that followed, countless others have been moved by it in a similar fashion.

When I accepted the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, it was in a deliberate, reflective way - with a resolve to undertake the creation and care of the Temple of Set proper, and to patiently allow history to validate or disprove any principles that the Temple might propose or practice. This has remained my attitude ever since that serene and sublime experience.

As for the text itself, I am content to comment upon it as best I can, then let others judge it as they will. For me it is now, as then, a simple, beautiful, and purposeful statement from the sentient being whom mankind has loved, hated, worshipped, cursed, praised, and reviled as the Prince of Darkness. To echo the words of G.B. Shaw in *The Devil's Disciple*: "I promised him my soul, and swore an oath that I would stand up for him in this world and stand by him in the next."

This remains my oath today.

Chapter 3: Khemistry

Confronting Ancient Egypt

The *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, among other things, retired the iconography of Judæo/Christianity in favor of that of ancient Egypt. This resolved the Church of Satan's perennial problem of being cast by others, if increasingly not casting itself, into an image of "anti-J/C" [and presumably the "good" values J/C claims to represent].

A focus upon ancient Egyptian philosophy, religion, and culture, however, presented the fledgling Temple of Set with a different, and equally formidable array of problems.

The topic of ancient Egypt generally has been one of both exhaustive examination by and contentious debate between conventional Egyptologists and independent investigators.

The former group generally agree that Egypt was simply an agricultural society comparable to that of other Mediterranean/Near-Eastern cultures of the time-period. It was notable for its enigmatic hieroglyphic writing system, odd-looking formalized art, peculiar massive building projects, and morbid, animal-totem religious cultism.

The latter group, while differing in the details, see Egypt rather as a remarkable, indeed startling exception to its primitive neighbors. It was uniquely a civilization and repository of great sophistication and wisdom - in some respects so much so, indeed, that the very ability of the Egyptians themselves to have generated such utopian wonders is called into question in favor of Atlanteans, extraterrestrial visitors, and/or incarnated gods.

Each camp routinely ridicules the other. The conventionalists denounce the independents as unscientific dreamers and "pyramidiots". The latter are equally contemptuous of the former, considering them as merely a brittle academic self-protectorate afraid to violate modern taboos.

And there are two taboos in particular which institutional academia does not dare to transgress - or even openly acknowledge as taboos.

First, modern [Western] civilization is assumed to be at the zenith of human sophistication in all respects. It has been steadily improving over the last five thousand years (after recorded history officially began ca. 3000 BCE). Since the passage of time mandates social evolution and improvement, it is heresy to suggest that an ancient civilization, particularly one at the very beginning of this progression, could actually have been superior to its successors, including those today, in some if not all respects.

Secondly, the world today is divided into three major monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. All, even in countries where they have become largely propaganda devices for the control of the lesser-intelligent masses, are as exclusive and intolerant as politically permitted. Despite their doctrinal differences, however, they are all agreed that there exists but **one** God - the Hebraic JHVH. Thus all polytheism, whether new or old, is false and fictitious. It follows that any such fiction cannot possibly be as, much less more sophisticated than Hebraic monotheism [as triple-modified]. Egyptian religion may be studied, exploited for artistic purposes and horror movies, but **never** actually believed in.

The Church of Satan had been accused by its critics of championing the worship of evil. Not so: What it actually did, as exemplified in the *Diabolicon*, was to maintain that "God" was in fact evil and "Satan", as a repudiation of that evil, was truly good. This was a new interpretation of "evil" as human denial of personal responsibility for moral decisions, as well as hypocrisy in the executing of such moral decisions as were ventured. True goodness was accordingly to be found in genuine personal responsibility and full acceptance of the consequences of one's decisions. This is what made the Church of Satan,

despite its bizarre facade, feel so refreshingly virtuous next to the repulsive, corrupt Hebraic monotheism it rejected.

Now the Temple of Set was challenged to take one step beyond. The **entire** Hebraic monotheism, to include even its Satanic reinterpretation as the actual benchmark for evil, would be thrown into the dustbin. JHVH, Satan, Moses, Christ, Mohammed - collectively discarded in **all** of their social, physical, or metaphysical contexts and pretensions.

In their stead would arise not a mere revival of polytheism *per se*, but a polyfaceted divine individualism, in which the energy of each such personal consciousness is realized to derive from a Universal inspiration: Set.

This was a Set far more subtle and complex than the superficial character described by the Egyptologists. Just how much so it would take the Temple of Set many years to discover; in many regards it is still doing so.

The other Egyptian “gods” were also re-perceived. In conventional Egyptology they too, like Set, were merely two-dimensional dolls in a hodge-podge of folktales and parables. Now the individual human consciousness, each as energized by Set, was seen to be capable of seeing past the physical surface of natural phenomena, into the living essence underlying each. These are the Forms described by Plato in his *Dialogues*, and more originally the true *neteru* comprehended by the priesthoods of ancient Egypt.

To the extent it has been noticed by conventional society over the years since its [re]founding, the Temple of Set has occasionally been maligned and attacked on various alarmist pretexts: “Satanism”, “cult”, “political extremism”, “mind control”, etc. All such nonsense serves merely to illustrate how ignorant such critics are of the actual distinction and significance of the Temple as summarized here. It is nothing less than an entirely new way of looking not just at self-conscious humanity, but at the physical and metaphysical realities beyond that humanity,

Egyptian History

Let us now review those aspects of ancient Egypt on which most scholars, the academic and the arcane, might be expected to find some common ground.

The earliest existing evidence of human culture in the Nile valley dates to more than 250,000 BCE, as the remnants of handaxes and other stone tools have been uncovered 50-100’ below the Nile’s silt terrace.

Sometime between 10,000 and 7,000 BCE, according to conventional archæology, a most important event took place - the domestication of the wild African goat and the subsequent freedom to begin cultivation of grain. This effectively heralded the beginning of human civilization, as for the first time primitive man was free to turn his thoughts to matters other than a constant search for food.

By the same consensus, it was in the pre-dynastic Gerzean period (commencing about 3600 BCE) that the first communities of the future Egyptian nation came into existence. A great war of unification commenced in approximately 3400 BCE. After more than two centuries of intermittent conflict between Upper and Lower Egypt, the land was finally united under Menes (or Narmer), the first pharaoh of the I Dynasty.¹⁵

Inhabiting a land characterized by the regularity of the elements (behavior of the winds, the Nile, the climate, the Sun, and the skies), the Egyptians sought perfection in stability, harmony, symmetry, geometry, and a cyclical [as opposed to progressive or linear] concept of time.

¹⁵ Fairservis, Walter A. Jr., *The Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile*. New York: New American Library/Mentor #MY-843, 1962, Chapters #1-2.

In modern culture we take progressive/linear time for granted. It is as inevitable and inexorable as the hands of the wristwatches to which we are gently, yet firmly manacled. We see our lives, and indeed the entire known universe, as a terrible struggle against entropy, ending ultimately in the death, decomposition, and obliteration of each separate person or thing.

It is further this perception, and the fear of it, which has lent Hebraic monotheism a vampiric persistence far past the 17th-18th Century "Enlightenment" which, intellectually at least, exposed it as a sham. For the Christian and Muslim versions, if not the Jewish, promise continuation of the same life after physical death, albeit with dire punishment specifically for not believing in and obeying them now.

The Egyptians, however, envisioned neither themselves nor the world about them to be entrapped in such a fearsome forced-march. They saw the Sun, Moon, and firmament behaving in recurring cycles, as also the rise and fall of the Nile, the regular seasons, plantlife. If humans and other animals were born, lived for a time, and died, it stood to reason that they too participated in an eternal cycling of a more subtle color. Egyptian records would accordingly document specific personalities and events, but without any particular attention to related change or innovation. Harmony with the cycles of things, not defiance of them, was the Egyptian ideal - which explains why the essential character of Egyptian society remained little changed, except to meet external intrusion, for thirty dynasties extending over 3,000 years.¹⁶

Former Director of Cairo's French Oriental Archaeological Institute Serge Sauneron comments:

To understand the attitude of the Egyptians, it is necessary to emphasize the striking contrast between their view of the world and ours. We live in a universe which we know is in perpetual movement; each new problem demands a new solution. But for the Egyptians this notion of time which modifies the current knowledge of the world, of an alteration of factors which forces a change in methods, had no place. In the beginning the divinity created a stable world, fixed, definitive; this world functions as a motor well oiled and well fed. If there are "misfires" - if the motor fades, if one of the parts making it up is worn out or broken - it is replaced and everything starts off again better than before. But this motor would always remain the same; its mechanism, its appearance, its output would always be identical.

If some problem intrigues the mind, therefore - if some serious event arises to disturb the customary order of things - it could not really be new; it was foreseen with the world. Its solution or remedy exists in all eternity, revealed in a kind of universal "manner of use" that the gods defined in creating the universe itself. What is necessary, therefore, is to find in the ancient writings the formula that foresaw such-and-such a case. Before a given event - a physical phenomenon, a catastrophe striking the whole country - the scholar would not seek to discover the actual causes in order to find an appropriate remedy. Rather he would examine with scholarly ardor the volumes of old writings to find out if the event had already occurred in some moment of the past, and what solution had then been applied to it.¹⁷

In accordance with their cyclical perception of reality, therefore, the Egyptians' achievements tended to be in "timeless" areas such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and architecture. These, along with Egyptian religion and art, are often oversimplified in many modern treatments, due in part to the absence of verifiable data in later history until the deciphering of hieroglyphics by Champollion in 1822. Because of the destruction and despoliation of ancient Egyptian records and works of art by religious fanatics of later eras,

¹⁶ The XXX Dynasty is generally considered to be the last native Egyptian one. Subsequently there was a Persian one (XXXI) and a Ptolemaic Greek one (XXXII), ending with the death of Cleopatra VII and Roman rule in 30 BCE.

¹⁷ Sauneron, Serge, *Les pretres de l'ancienne Egypte*. New York: Grove Press, 1980, pages #118-119.

it is estimated that modern archæologists have at their disposal less than 10% of that country's cultural creations from which to reconstruct its values.¹⁸

Egypt was divided into 42 nomes (provinces), each dominated by the priesthood of one or more *neteru*. A particular priesthood might also influence more than one nome. The monarchy was closely controlled by the various orders of priesthood, with the pharaoh acting as an Earthly deputy of and interpreter for the *neteru*.

Governmental, judicial, and political systems were responsible for their ethics to the *neteru*, not to the people. Justice was meted out by viziers (internal roving ambassadors of the pharaoh) and nome governors according to the *neter* of justice, Maat, on an individual-case basis. There was no concept of individual rights against the government, because government was viewed as a system imposed from without by the *neteru*. Similarly each Egyptian, whether high- or low-born, participated in this system. Crime and corruption were of course possible, but inadvisable because of the conviction that viciousness, callousness, or cruelty would be punished severely after Earthly death.¹⁹ [It is of note that such posthumous judgment focused upon individual virtue/vice rather than, as in later Christian/Islamic doctrine, upon mere orthodoxy and obedience to religious institutions.]

Old Kingdom Egypt was largely insulated from foreign invasion or conflict, hence Egypt spent its early years as a peaceful culture with no standing military. Egypt is credited with invention of the alphabet, as well as the use of currency as a medium of exchange. It is noteworthy for having produced the first national (as opposed to city-state) political system, as well as the most enduring one in recorded history (more than 3,000 years). There was no caste, racial, or sexual discrimination; foreigners were considered "less than human (=Egyptian)", but could remedy this misfortune simply by moving to Egypt and adopting Egyptian culture.

Egypt was ultimately destroyed by foreign conquerors (Persia, Macedonia, Rome) and by her inability to adapt to the continuing competition of foreign cultures. Her New Empire of the Setian (XIX-XX) Dynasties was a protectionist backlash rather than an effort to "civilize" or create a permanent empire [after the fashion of Persia, Macedonia, or Rome].

The *Neteru*

The Egyptians perceived the Universe as actively controlled by conscious, natural principles (*neteru*) of which Sir E.A. Wallis Budge remarks:

The word *neter* has been translated "god-like", "holy", "divine", "sacred", "power", "strength", "force", "strong", "fortify", "mighty", "protect"; but it is quite impossible to be certain that any word which we may use represents the meaning of *neter*, because no one knows exactly what idea the ancient Egyptians attached to the word. The truth is that the exact meaning of *neter* was lost at a very early period of Egyptian history, and even the Coptic does not help us to recover it.²⁰

To the Egyptians, all of "nature" (derived from *neter*) was alive and the direct consequence of the wills of the *neteru*. Nature was intelligible not just through inanimate, automatic, general regularities which could be discovered via the "scientific method"; but also through **connections and associations between things and events perceived in**

¹⁸ Cf. Fagan, Brian M., *The Rape of the Nile*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975.

¹⁹ Wilson, John A., "Egypt" in Frankfort, Henri (Ed.), *Before Philosophy*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1946.

²⁰ Budge, E. A. Wallis, *The Book of the Dead*. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960, page #99.

the human mind. There was no distinction between “reality” and “appearance”; anything capable of exerting an effect upon the mind thereby existed. Hence a dream could be considered just as “real” and thus significant as a daytime experience.

Egyptian art, literature, and science looked for beauty and symmetry (felt to be indications of divine perfection), rather than for cause-and-effect relationships. Hence Egyptian thought is sometimes called “geometric” as opposed to the “algebraic” thought of Hellenic and later logicians.

Since impressions and appearances substantiated reality, the Egyptian emphasis on portraits and statues of the *neteru* was not merely decorative, metaphorical, or symbolic. Rather an image was a medium whereby the *neter* in question could make an actual appearance in the material world.²¹

Similarly part of something could substitute for the whole as long as the mind completed the connection. Mental imagery created by viewing the portrait of a dead relative, for example, brought that relative to true life.

Persons unfamiliar with the ancient Egyptian culture often assume that the Egyptian religion, like those of later Mediterranean civilizations, consisted of a single, integrated pantheon of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses. It is rather the case that the earliest Egyptian *neteru* were provincial, being patrons of individual cities and districts (nomes). Nor, despite their famous human/beast composite appearances, were they mere “supernatural persons” in the later Greek, Mesopotamian, or Roman mold. While popular stories were woven about them - presumably for popular consumption - the hieroglyphic treatment of the Egyptian *neteru* suggests that they actually represented various aspects of existence - the “Forms” or “First Principles” discussed by Pythagoras and Plato in a more abstract manner.²²

Intriguingly the *neteru* may have had a physical presence as well. The 30-Dynasty dating system most archaeologists use for ancient Egypt comes from Manetho, an Egyptian priest at Sebennytos in the Nile Delta ca. 280 BCE. Manetho’s dynastic list extends backward before Menes and the I Dynasty date of 3100 BCE: 350 years Thinites; 1,790 years other Memphite kings; 1,817 years other kings; 1,255 years “Heroes”; and before that 13,900 years in which the *neteru* reigned physically on Earth.

Obviously this chronology would conflict with the “accepted” prehistory of Egypt as summarized at the beginning of this chapter. Conventional Egyptologists are comfortable only with a “civilization began suddenly in 3100 BCE” scenario, hence Manetho is relied upon very strongly **after** that date, but swept under the rug **prior** to it.²³

Commerce, protective alliances, cultural contact, and finally the unification of the entire nation ca. 3100 BCE resulted in the gradual incorporation of local *neteru* into regional groups, and then into a loosely-knit national pantheon. Local and regional cult centers continued to hold their respective patrons in especial regard, however, and so the character and role of a specific *neter* might vary remarkably from place to place. Individual dynasties also tended to be oriented to particular cult centers, and so the *neteru* in question would be elevated - at least for a time - to the status of national patrons.²⁴

²¹ Cf. Schaefer, Heinrich, *Principles of Egyptian Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974. Contrast Egyptian statuary with Greek, Roman, or later European. The “living presence” in the former will be dramatically evident.

²² Cf. Winspear, Alban D., *The Genesis of Plato’s Thought*. New York: S.A. Russell, 1940. Also Cf. Aquino, M.A., “The Sphinx and the Chimæra” (Appendix #1).

²³ Hoffman, Michael A., *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979. Fix, Wm. R., *Pyramid Odyssey*. New York: Mayflower Books, 1978.

²⁴ Ions, Veronica, *Egyptian Mythology*. New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1968, pages #11-13.

The information concerning these cults which is available to modern Egyptologists is both sparse and confusing. Since a given *neter* could be portrayed in a number of different ways, identifying the “core *neter*” is difficult. The images and inscriptions concerning a *neter* were often altered or appropriated by cultists of rival *neteru*. In Christian and Islamic times all “old gods” were considered blasphemous, and monuments to them were regularly defaced and destroyed. By the end of the fifth century CE, knowledge of hieroglyphics had died out, not to reappear until the nineteenth century; meanwhile many “useless” records perished through neglect.

For two reasons the cult of Osiris (*Asar*) and Isis (*Asa*) has been emphasized in modern literature: First, it was the last cult to dominate the entire Egyptian nation. Thus it was in a position to do a “final editing” of non-Osirian manuscripts and monuments. Secondly it was described in detail by Plutarch, permitting its study long after the hieroglyphic records of the other cults had become unreadable.²⁵

Set

No records of the ancient Priesthood of Set survived first the Osirian-dynastic persecution and later the more general vandalism of the Christian/Islamic eras. We know of it only by its reflection, both in the character of Set as he was portrayed symbolically and mythologically and in the nature of Egyptian priesthoods in general. Three significant facts are known about the Priesthood of Set:

(1) Together with the Priesthood of Horus [the Elder], it was the oldest of the Egyptian priesthoods. If we date it to the earliest predynastic images of Set found by archaeologists, we can establish an origin of at least 3200 BCE. Working with the Egyptians’ own astronomically-based records, we may approximate 5000 BCE.²⁶ If we are to assume the final eclipse of the Priesthood at the end of the XIX-XX [Setian] Dynasties ca. 1085 BCE, we are looking at an institution which existed at least two thousand and possibly as many as four thousand years. “In the early dynasties,” observes Budge:

Set was a beneficent god, and one whose favor was sought after by the living and by the dead, and so late as the XIX Dynasty kings delighted to call themselves “Beloved of Set”. After the cult of Osiris was firmly established and this god was the “great god” of all Egypt, it became the fashion to regard Set as the origin of all evil, and his statues and images were so effectively destroyed that only a few which have escaped by accident have come down to us.²⁷

One may note that Set was by no means the only “fabulous” creature ever portrayed by Egyptian artists. But he was the only one represented as a principal *neter*, as opposed to a purely-animalistic monster of the *Tuat*.

(2) Set was the *neter* who was “different” from all of the others. Too often this is simplified into his being the “evil” slayer of Osiris, hence the personification of “evil”; yet any but the most cursory study of Egyptian religious symbolism is sufficient to dispel this caricature. He was rather a *neter* “against the *neteru*”: the entity who symbolized that which is **not** of nature.

²⁵ Budge, *Egyptian Language*. New York: Dover Publications, 1971, page #15. Ions, *op.cit.*, pages #50-55. Fagan, *op.cit.*, pages #34-36. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, Volume V in *Moralia* (14 volumes), F.C. Babbitt (Ed. & Trans.). London: Loeb Classical Library, 1936.

²⁶ Lockyer, J. Norman, *The Dawn of Astronomy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1964, page #215.

²⁷ Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, page #181.

This is a very curious role for a *neter* in Egyptian cosmology: to be a presence and force which alone could not be apprehended by perceptions of the natural senses. Set thus represents the nameless “thing” whose existence we know of by the shadow it casts on things apprehended and things perceived by it: the non-natural “presence of self” in individual intelligent life.

We have generalized the vehicle by which this presence is manifest as the *ba*, spirit, *psyche*, or soul, but increased precision is possible. We must subtract from the *psyche* what is “life force”, and focus our attention on that which remains: **the very awareness of self**. In doing so we have in one sense retraced the path of Descartes to the *cogito ergo sum* proposition. Unlike Descartes, however, we see this phenomenon to be a “thing **totally** apart” which is not an extension of “God” or anything else. Set is the conceptualizer of this principle: the designer. To rewrite the crucial sentence in the above quote from the point of view of a *neter*: “A thing created in the mind thereby exists.”

This is delicate ground to tread, so much more so for an ancient Egyptian civilization whose entire “natural” cosmology was based upon the perfection and harmony of the Universe.

(3) Despite this unique and disturbing image, or perhaps because of it, Set became the patron of the two most powerful dynasties in Egypt’s long history, the XIX and XX. Herein there is an interesting “theological succession”:

The early XVIII Dynasty (ca. 1580-1372) was that of the great Amenhoteps, during whose reigns the Priesthood of Amon at Thebes was preeminent. The dynasty disintegrated during the “Amarna period” (ca. 1372-1343) of Akhenaten, during which the solar disk of Aton was considered supreme if not indeed all-inclusive of the *neteru*. When the new XIX Dynasty arose under Rameses I and Seti I, the state role of Amon was restored - but the pharaohs directed much of their efforts towards Set. Recounts Sauneron:

The new dynasty in power, careful to appear to be “restoring everything to order”, had many reasons for mistrusting the Amonian priesthood. Descendants of a military family of the eastern delta, the new pharaohs were traditionally devoted to a god little esteemed by the masses because of the role that he had been assigned in the death of Osiris. But they preserved nevertheless, here and there, the temples and priesthoods of the god Set.

The Amarnian experience had demonstrated the cost of too abrupt a break with the beliefs central to the entire nation, and of entering into open warfare against a priesthood practically as powerful as the throne itself. Thus the politics of Seti I (1312-1301) and of Rameses II (1301-1235) were infinitely more subtle than those of their predecessors. There was no rupture with Thebes; the constructions continued, and magnificent edifices were raised to the glory of Amon at Karnak, Gurna, and Ramesseum. But it was from the [Osirian] center of Abydos that Rameses appointed the High Priest of Amon. Then he installed two of his sons, Merytum and Khamuast, as the High Priests of Ra at Heliopolis and Ptah at Memphis, and demonstrated by further monuments and political favors his public support of these gods. But finally, wearied of Thebes and its ambitious priests, he departed to build a new capital, Pi-Rameses, in the eastern delta - where he could quietly worship the god dearest to him, with Amon occupying a secondary prominence.

The provincial cities where Set had been worshipped from all eternity - among them Ombos, Tjebu, and Sepermeru - gained new preeminence from the favor accorded by the Ramesside leaders to the god of the Eastern Delta. Above all, Pi-Rameses, the new capital, brilliantly restored the worship that Set had formerly received in the Avaris of the Hyksos.²⁸

During the Setian Dynasties - most probably during the reign of Merenptah - the revolt and “exodus” of a number of nomads (hieroglyphic *habiru*) living in Egypt’s Goshen province occurred - or at least did so in Jewish legend. Although “Old Testament” lore states that the original Hebrews were a unified, foreign culture which entered Egypt during

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pages #183-184.

the time of Rameses I, there are no Egyptian records substantiating this. It is more probable that the actual participants in any “exodus” were people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.²⁹ Possibly the Hebrews’ hated “Satan” derives from one of the honorific titles (*Set-hen* = Eternal Set) accorded the state deity of the regime they were fleeing.

Following the passing of the two Setian dynasties, the increasing influence of a priesthood not courted by the Ramesside pharaohs - that of Osiris - boded ill for the Priesthood of Set. The Osirians recast Set as Osiris’ treacherous brother and mortal enemy of Osiris’ son - for whom they appropriated the *neter* Horus. Not content with attacking Set personally, they further appropriated his consort and son from the original triad of his cult - Nephthys and Anubis - whom they now described respectively as a concubine of Osiris and a son of Osiris by Nephthys. Comments E.A. Wallis Budge:

Between the XXII and the XXV Dynasties, a violent reaction set in against this god [Set]; his statues and figures were smashed; his effigy was hammered out from the bas-reliefs and stelæ in which it appeared.³⁰

Various reasons for this reaction have been proposed by Egyptologists. It is been suggested that Set fell into disrepute through being associated in the popular mind with the *Sutekh* of the invading Hyksos. Possible, but improbable, as the Hyksos invasion occurred prior to the XIX-XX Dynasties when Set was preeminently in favor - and the presiding *neter* over Egypt’s greatest period of imperial glory.

Set’s eclipse may well have been due to a more subtle, yet pervasive sentiment sweeping Egypt. As Sauneron and many other Egyptologists have acknowledged, Egyptian philosophy was based upon a millennia-old conviction of the absolute presence and influence of the *neteru*, and in the virtue of a social system in which the preservation of cyclical harmony was all-important. While the New Empire of the XIX-XX Dynasties extended Egypt’s influence to Palestine and Mesopotamia, it also made the Egyptians aware that there were many other functioning cultures in which the *neteru* were unknown [at least by their Egyptian names]. Moreover the concept of Egypt as just one among a number of nation-states competing for power and influence in the Mediterranean, rather than as the one civilization at the center of existence, must have been a most unsettling one to this ancient culture - which previously had been able to discount its neighbors as mere uncultured, barbarian tribes.

Egypt’s solution to this problem was to turn gradually away from a glorification of this life and towards an orientation on the afterlife, where such disturbing dilemmas could be assumed not to exist. This would explain the growing influence and popularity of the Osiris cult during the post-XX Dynasty Egyptian decadence, as Osiris was a *neter* of the afterlife.

As the Osiris cult portrayed Set as Osiris’ nemesis rather than an independent and pre-existing *neter* with no particular interest in Osiris, this would also explain the simultaneous wave of Setian persecution described by Budge. It was characteristic of ancient Egypt that each new dynasty, in an attempt to establish its own “timelessness”, often doctored monuments and records to eliminate inconvenient inconsistencies. Presumably the Osirian dynasties followed suit, defacing or rewriting all references to Set that did not support their portrayal of him as a “Devil”.³¹ And that was the distortion of Set which survived in later Mediterranean legend - principally through Plutarch, who described it in some detail in his

²⁹ Romer, John, *Testament*. New York: Henry Holt, 1988, page #58

³⁰ Budge, *The Mummy*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973, page #276.

³¹ Ions, *op.cit.*, pages #72-78. The Osirian legends on this subject are treated comprehensively in J. Gwyn Griffith’s *The Conflict of Horus and Seth* (Chicago: Argonaut Publishers, 1969).

Moralia.³²

Commencing in 1975, therefore, the Temple of Set sought to return to an original, undistorted apprehension of Set. In keeping with our modern levels of knowledge, of course, this image has been both enhanced and refined. Enhanced in that we now understand better than the ancient Egyptians how the material universe functions, refined to exclude those facets of the human personality that are natural, externally-controlled functions.

At the same time, contemporary civilization's impatience and superficiality - its restless inability to study anything metaphysical in any depth - have tended to condense the delicate, complex study of Egyptian cosmology into a crude caricature capable of being digested by modern minds in a few hours at most. Initiates of the Temple of Set must resolve to take the time to apprehend and appreciate Set - and the other Egyptian *neteru* - in the same contemplative, reflective, and above all unhurried fashion that their ancient predecessors did. Only then will the magnificence, subtlety, and depth of this metaphysical system be realized and appreciated. Only then can its principles be applied meaningfully within our current environment.

In the first few years of the young Temple of Set, we weren't quite so clear about this. We duly plunged into many works of conventional Egyptology, some of the more useful of which are still included in the Egypt/Historical and Egypt/Philosophical categories of our Reading List. Various Setians contributed some research articles of this genre to the *Scroll*, *Ruby Tablet*, and *Order & Element* publications. But it soon became clear to us that, absent an **empathy** for Egypt - a sensation of its innate soul, as it were - all such studies were sterile and lifeless exercises.

The greatest breakthrough for us came in our encounter with the writings of René Schwaller de Lubicz and his wife Isha. Indeed the lion's - I should say lioness' - share of the credit goes to her, because much of René's work is highly technical. Isha was able to synthesize its elemental themes into her highly-readable "novel" *Her-Bak*, being the story of a young Egyptian's journey from ordinary peasant to initiated priest.³³ For many Setians, once they were exposed to the basic structure of René's thought through *Her-Bak*, his more complex works were soon unlocked.

And suddenly ancient Egypt came wonderfully, vibrantly to life before us. Now, knowing what to look for and what to do with it once we found it, the Temple of Set discovered no end of wonders over the years, as of course we continue to do today.

René's initial realization came from his study of hieroglyphs: that in addition to their convenience for mere alphabets, they embodied symbolic principles apprehensible to both the rational and the suprarational intelligence. [His methodology is thus often termed "Symbolism".] Gradually he extended his awareness of this key to Egyptian culture into its architecture (as in his *magnum opus* examination of the Luxor temple complex, *Le Temple de L'Homme*) and pre-Pythagoreanism.

Of the various works examining René's ideas in the Temple's Reading List, I think I would recommend John Anthony West's *Serpent in the Sky* as the most "immediately-intelligible" introduction.³⁴ It is at least better-suited to the impatient modern reader than the *Her-Bak* we earliest Setians strolled patiently, if pleasantly through!

Another very capable presentation is *Egyptian Mysteries* by Lucie Lamy, René's

³² Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, Volume V in *Moralia*

³³ Schwaller de Lubicz, Isha, *Her-Bak*. New York: Inner Traditions, 1954 (two volumes).

³⁴ West, Anthony, *Serpent in the Sky: The High Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Julian Press, Inc., 1987.

longtime student and the talented illustrator for both his works and Isha's.³⁵

Beyond these two introductory works [and of course *Her-Bak* if you have a peaceful disposition and plenty of contemplation-time], I need say nothing. Once the door opens for you, you will see, well, "wonderful things"!

You will suddenly understand the Pyramids. You will suddenly understand the Temples.

And of course you will meet the *neteru*. Not the two-dimensional, comic-book simpletons cherished by profane Egyptologists, enmeshed in tawdry tales of sex, violence, and meaningless ritual. But the beautiful, wonderful weavers of the most delicate webs of the Objective Universe itself. In their presence, severally and collectively, the awakened Initiate will confront an eternity of discovery and synthetic creativity.

And yet the most difficult *neter* to meet is Set. Because to apprehend all of the others one need only look **outward**, through the lenses you have learned to fashion for your enlightened vision.

But where are you going to place your lever, direct your lens, focus your attention, to see **into** the nucleus, the central fire, of the thing that is your own conscious self?

For that is the mirror through which Set will gradually become more and more distinct, to those with the intelligence, discipline, determination, and initiation to see him. And when and if you achieve this, you will simultaneously - and necessarily - experience a wonder equally as sublime: you will behold your own true, complete, ultimate divinity.

In the original *Stargate* motion picture, the Great Pyramid of Giza was revealed to be nothing more than a crude, ritualistic imitation by fearful protodynastic Egyptians of the gigantic, pyramidal starships in which creatures beyond their comprehension had come to Earth; the stone coffer in the "King's Chamber" a similar rough image of the wondrous machine in the starships with the power to literally bring dead bodies back to life.

In that film, as well as the elegant television series it subsequently inspired, the alien "gods" were not quite the *neteru* they pretended to be - simply an advanced species using "divine" imagery as a means of psychological domination of others as well as for their own exotic pleasures]. Nevertheless these *Goa'uld* almost uncannily demonstrated the relationship which ordinary humanity has with its perceived "God/gods" - and why it is quite fulfilled by such a relationship, false and oppressive as it may be.

In world after world, civilization after civilization, it is ever the same; and when a *Goa'uld* is exposed or killed, the result is always chaos and uncertainty, with the "liberated" peoples slipping down into aimless, tedious tribalism. The wanton terrors of the *Goa'uld* are gone - but so are the great, gleaming Pyramidal starships, the technology to instantly heal all injuries and even restore bodily life itself, and the ecstatic experience of interacting with the "gods" face-to-face. It is now, again, the Fourth Age of Middle-earth.

Stargate leaves its audience with an even more tantalizing mystery. If the *Goa'uld* borrow their *persona* from **real** *neteru* whom they have used advanced technology to imitate, how did they originally come to know them?

"Which leads to my central question about the ancient Egyptians: Why didn't their culture 'develop'? I believe that the evidence shows that their arts, sciences, mathematics, technology, techniques of warfare are all there complete from the beginning. What I want to argue here today is that the Egyptians of the pre-Old Kingdom era somehow 'inherited' all these arts and sciences. Then after a short 'getting acquainted' period, we see the full flowering of what we call ancient Egypt ..."

- Lecture, Daniel Jackson, Ph.D.
Scottish Rite Temple, 4357 Wilshire Boulevard,
Los Angeles, California, December 1992

³⁵ Lamy, Lucie, *Egyptian Mysteries*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.

Chapter 4: 22nd and Kansas

After the results of the North Solstice Working had been made known to all persons with an interest in continuing and rebuilding past the 1975 Church of Satan crisis, I proposed a general concept for the Temple of Set and invited William Murray to become its first Executive Director. He came to San Francisco from his home in Nevada, and we discussed this while driving randomly around San Francisco, and at the obscure intersection of 22nd & Kansas Streets he agreed, and we parked and began to brainstorm the design of the new Temple of Set.

This chapter will explore the design features of the Temple, why they were included, how effective they have been throughout the Temple's history, how some of them have changed and why.

Chapter 5: Camelot

For its first few years the Temple of Set enjoyed a “honeymoon” period of seemingly utopian success. Everyone cooperated, nothing went wrong, problems were very minor and positively solved.

To some extent this reflected an “escapist”, idealist, fantasy-oriented external society, with such exotic inspirational models as the High Frontier, L5, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Battlestar Galactica*, the Jefferson Starship, etc. Underlying this were assumptions that humanity was very close to being able to “jump to a new level of its future”, and that both civil society and new technology were helping to make this possible.

The Temple of Set itself dabbled in some of these exotic ideas, as to be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 6: The King in Yellow

On the Ides of March 1979 I came into being as an Ipsissimus VI°. This chapter discusses the rationale and significance of that initiation & formalized degree, as well as the changes to my interest in, attitude towards, participation within, and obligations to the Temple & Æon of Set subsequently and consequently.

Chapter 7: Night of the Jackal

In 1979 I retired from the High Priesthood of Set in favor of Magus Ronald K. Barrett, who served as High Priest until 1982. This chapter discusses the personality and history of RKB, his initiatory growth within the Church of Satan & Temple of Set, the IAM Working, his Utterance of *Xem*, the *Xem* Keys, the XemSet mountaintop retreat, the Anubis Pylon and Order, and the way in which he approached the High Priesthood. Both the successes and the difficulties of his administration will be examined. The chapter closes with his surprise resignation from the Temple prior to the Set-IV Conclave in 1982, and the intrigues swirling around that Conclave.

There will also be a discussion of *Xem*, and how its influence has affected the Temple of Set since Set-IV.

Chapter 8: Remanifestation

After Set-IV I returned to the High Priesthood with the intent that it would be a “temporary/caretaker” office while I worked to rebuild the Temple, adjust its structures to preclude repeat of past problems, and take its philosophical grounding to a somewhat more serious and methodical firmness, for example the *Crystal Tablet* and its various keystone reference, design, and communication components.

There will be discussion of the new sophistication of the other *Jeweled Tablets* as well.

Chapter 9: The Wewelsburg Working

In 1982 I traveled to Germany and performed a GBM working at the Wewelsburg Castle in Westphalia which resulted in the rebirth and redesign of the Order of the Trapezoid. This chapter discusses that in detail, and its influence on the Temple of Set and its Orders system generally.

Also to be discussed here is the work and influence of Stephen Flowers on & within the Temple of Set and the Order of the Trapezoid. Work and influence of other Knights and Dames of the Order throughout the years, the tragedy of Mitchell Wade, subsequent Grand Masters and the evolutionary changes they brought about.

Also the significance and influence of Nazi German occult research upon the Order and the Temple generally, and discussion of the suspicious, antagonistic, and hysterical reactions by critics and some sensationalist media over the years.

Chapter 10: The Orders and the Elements

A survey of the various Orders of the Temple of Set since its founding: Who founded each & why, what its principles were originally & developed into. [As the Order of the Trapezoid is to be treated in Chapter 9, it will not be here.] Portraits of the Masters of the Temple who founded them, what their backgrounds & ideas were that led them to such Order concepts. What they have done as Grand Masters, and since [if the Order is no longer in existence].

A survey of the Elements over the years, such as the First Foundation, CATE-II/Metamind, Arkte, Guild of University Students, War, etc.

How has the concept of Orders, Elements, and possibly in this chapter Pylons as well, affected the overall design, flexibility, and usefulness to individual Initiates of the Temple?

What might the future of various Orders be, within or without the Temple of Set?

Chapter II: The Magi

The work and Utterances of those Setians Recognized to the V^o: Ronald K. Barrett, James Lewis, Stephen Flowers, Don Webb, Robert Robinson, Lilith Aquino. Why RKB and RR succumbed to the Curse of the Magus. Why Lewis and Webb came to attain VI^o Recognition.

The significance of the V^o within the Temple, and to the Æon of Set [and beyond].

Chapter 12: Beyond the Seas

Interest in and development of the Temple of Set in countries other than the United States, and the continuing internationalization of the Temple.

Chapter 13: A Tree in the North

The “Satanic crime” urban myths and hysteria of the 1980s in the United States and elsewhere.

The impact of this climate upon the Temple of Set, its public posture, Initiates, and observers/critics.

The Presidio of San Francisco “Satanic ritual abuse” scam against Lilith and myself, including the resultant investigations, lawsuits, media treatment, and after-effects.

Legacy of the witch-hunts generally upon the viability and public nature of Left-Hand Path religion in this and other countries.

Chapter 14: The Cybertemple of Set

The introduction, growth, and eventual extensive use of computers, cyberspace, and the Internet by the Temple of Set and individual Setians & groups.

Glinda, my 1976 PolyMorphic 8813, who would later Remanifest as the Temple's ten-year BBS system during the 1990s.

Magister Michael Grumboski's original use of mainframes to keep Temple membership records.

Magistra Wendall's early computer work and chip-creation during her original *Scroll* Editorship.

Electronic, artificial music, and "mad lab" experiments by Magister Whitaker & others. *Die Elektrischen Vorspieles* raised to new heights of voltage, wattage, and mania.

Entrance of the Temple into the jungle of the Internet and websites, guided by Magister Robert Menschel, Priest John Youril, Magister Douglas Pridgen, Magister Eric Kauschen, Magistra Patty Hardy, and other mad scientists.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Is the Temple of Set in danger of being sucked into an electronic mode of existence, a la *Tron*? Will this augment or harm its initiatory function? Should lines be drawn, and if so where?

Chapter 15: A Passing-By

In 1996 I finally laid down my High Priesthood of Set, whereupon Set entrusted it to Magus Don Webb.

In this chapter I will summarize, as did Joseph Curwen in his journal, “*of Whither He Voyag’d, Where He Stay’d, Whom He Sawe, and What He Learnt*”. What has my long journey through initiation done to and for me, and to others? What have I discovered concerning my identity? What have I been here to do, and how well have I done it? What do others think of me for good or ill, and why? How may I be remembered or forgotten?

Also in this chapter my unique relationship with Lilith: how we have come to know and to regard one another over the years, and what our future together portends.

I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth
And laid them away in a box of gold,
where long will claim the lips of the moth,
I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth.

I hide no hate, I’m not even wroth
Who found the Earth’s breath so keen and cold,
I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth
And laid them away in a box of gold.

- Countee Cullen, *Epitaph for a Poet*

Chapter 16: Uncle Setnakt

An overview of the Temple of Set during the High Priesthood of Magus Don Webb 1996-2002. While I could undertake to write this chapter myself, it may be co-written with Ipsissimus Webb, or even solely by him. We'll see what he thinks as this book begins to come together, whether his time/interests permit, and so on.

How did the Temple change and why from its 1975-96 posture? Successes? Failures? Surprises?

How did the experience of being High Priest affect Don Webb personally and initiatoryly? His Recognition as Ipsissimus VI°.

What are the legacies of the Webb years that will most strongly endure into the future of the Temple and the Æon?

Chapter 17: Zeena

In 2002 Magistra Zeena Schreck was chosen by the Council of Nine to be the next High Priestess of Set, to formally take office at the International Conclave in 2002. Unfortunately a short time later she resigned the office and departed from the Temple.

This chapter will treat her personal Odyssey to this highest office of the Left-Hand Path, including her Satanic Baptism by Anton LaVey, rise to be the eventual public representative of the post-1975 Church of Satan, rejection of the Church, independent work with Radio Werewolf, the Werewolf Order, Wolfslair, Hell House, etc.

Her encounter and relationship with Magister Nikolas Schreck, and his interests and influence within the Temple.

Her and Nikolas' international travels, influence, and interests.

How she came ultimately to be selected by the Council for the High Priesthood [and the first High Priestess] of Set.

Why this failed.

As with Chapter 16, this chapter may be co-written with Zeena or written by me, depending upon time/interest, etc. We'll see when we get there!

Chapter 18: Starry Wisdom

Following the departure of Zeena Schreck in 2002, the Council of Nine selected Magistra Patty Hardy to be the High Priestess of Set, assuming office in 2004.

Magistra Hardy brought to the Temple of Set not only a comprehensive grasp of Setian initiation generally, but exceptional personal experience in, and wisdom concerning the archaeoastronomical bases of ancient Egyptian metaphysics. Her High Priesthood promises to develop such concepts to unprecedented levels of sophistication.

This chapter - which will **necessarily** have to be written with her tolerant oversight! - will introduce her adventures, explorations, and theories to date. I find it both pleasing and exciting that it will, probably through all future editions of *The Temple of Set*, remain “unfinished”.

Epilogue: *Sic Itur Ad Astra*

After its “long, strange trip” of 30 years “and counting”, what shall we say of the Temple of Set? What has it meant to the thousands of persons whose lives have touched upon it over the years? Is it beneficial to external society? To itself internally? Has it successfully avoided the trap of becoming “a bureaucracy for its own sake” and managed instead to focus on the enhancement of each individual Initiate’s experience?

Where best has it succeeded and why?

Where has it failed and why, and has it learned from those failures?

Can it survive amidst the world’s current and apparent future social climates?

To what if any extent can it, and should it, attempt to compensate for failings in society, as for instance inadequate education, courtesy, etc. of individuals who approach it?

What are valid reasons and qualifications for persons coming to the Temple?

Why should others not be?

What should we envision for the Æon of Set? Should we see it as finite, and if so with what theoretical boundaries or eventualities? Will there be a subsequent æon, and how might we [or others] conceptualize it?

What of the eventuality of the Order of Horus becoming a Temple of Horus, and a new *sam-taui* of Set and Horus returning to Earth?

What?

Who?

When?

How?

Why?

To what beginning?

Appendix I: The Sphinx and the Chimæra

- a conversation recorded & annotated by Michael A. Aquino IV^o
May 30, 1975

In this Greater Black Magic working, a sphinx and a chimæra were evoked to manifestation in order to explore certain magical implications of the Dialogues of Plato. Placed upon the altar: The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Hamilton & Cairns (Ed.), Princeton University Press, 1961 CE.

The Sphinx: I think it essential to preface any discussion of a single Platonic dialogue with two major qualifications. The first is that, to be treated without distortion, Plato's philosophy must be appreciated in its entirety. Emphasis upon any single dialogue or group of dialogues carries with it a certain unfairness to the author.

The Chimæra: Yet our span of materialization is limited, and we cannot hope to treat the entire range of Plato's thought in the time available to us.

The Sphinx: True, and so let us focus first upon *The Sophist*, which illustrates many of the points most important to this investigation.

The Chimæra: But what is your second qualification?

The Sphinx: There is the problem of understanding what Plato "really meant". This is an issue against which I am powerless to defend myself. I am of Khem and not of Hellas; I am bilingual only in English and hence must depend upon my understanding of Plato as he is translated into the English language. The dialogues center much of their discussion around terms whose final definitions are elusive at best, even in conversations carried out at intellectual planes below that of Plato. Then, too, there is always the spectre of imprecise translation from the Greek to the English. And Plato himself could not anticipate this.

The Chimæra: Your qualifications are entirely acceptable. Proceed.

The Sphinx: The initial question raised by *The Sophist* is its *raison d'être*. Why should Plato have felt it necessary to include such a dialogue as this in his philosophy at all? Was it truly because the included lines of argument required exposure? Or did Plato intend the document rather as a gauntlet of sorts to be flung before the Sophists themselves?

The Chimæra: I sense that the editors of this book ventured one explanation. *Grasping it with a forepaw, he turns to page #958*. Yes, here it is:

The argument is hung on the figure of the Sophist quite arbitrarily. No real picture is given of the men who were the professional instructors of Greece for many years. All Plato does is ascribe to them every notion he disapproves. He detested the whole band of Sophists. To him they were shallow-minded, pretentious, superficial, mercenary - they were really doing what Socrates was charged with, corrupting the minds of the young.

And this appears to be reinforced by the dialogue's concluding statement, which seems to be little more than an outright vilification of Sophistry. *He turns to page #1016 and quotes:*

The art of contradiction-making, descended from an insincere kind of conceited mimicry, of the semblance-making breed, derive from imagemaking, distinguished as a portion, not divine but human, of production, that presents a shadowy play of words - such are the blood and lineage which can, with perfect truth, be assigned to the authentic Sophist.

The Sphinx: Obviously that is not an objective philosophical statement. It is a deliberate insult reached through a dialectical process which, in retrospect, seems a transparent parody of Plato's more serious argumentative style. In most of the Platonic dialogues one feels that Socrates is not "managing" the conversation towards an end that he has conceptualized beforehand. But every twist and turn of *The Sophist* is designed only to channel the conversation into providing a part of that final statement.

The Chimæra: But how would you have Plato compose such a definition, save by a summary of the component arguments preceding it?

The Sphinx: I quarrel not with the final assembly process, but rather with the fashion in which the components themselves were forged. For, you see, there are many ways along which each of those component arguments could have proceeded. Each, however, consistently follows a path derogatory to the Sophists. If the Sophists were in fact personifications of all that is erroneous and destructive in teaching, all possible paths would lead to the same conclusion, i.e. one derogatory to the Sophists. But this is not the case at all. See - *He takes the book from the Chimæra and turns to page #973:*

STRANGER: They cross-examine a man's words, when he thinks that he is saying something and is really saying nothing, and easily convict him of inconsistencies in his opinions; these they then collect by the dialectic process, and, placing them side by side, show that they contradict one another about the same things, in relation to the same things, and in the same respect. He, seeing this, is angry with himself, and grows gentle towards others, and thus is entirely delivered from greater prejudices and harsh notions, in a way which is most amusing to the hearer, and produces the most lasting good effect on the person who is the subject of the operation. For as the physician considers that the body will receive no benefit from taking food until the internal obstacles have been removed, so the purifier of the soul is conscious that his patient will receive no benefit from the application of knowledge until he is refuted, and from refutation learns modesty; he must be purged of his prejudices first and made to think that he knows only what he knows, and no more.

THEÆTETUS: That is certainly the best and wisest state of mind.

STRANGER: For all these reasons, Theætetus, we must admit that refutation is the greatest and chiefest of purifications, and he who has not been refuted, though he be the Great King himself, is in an awful state of impurity; he is uninstructed and deformed in those things in which he who would be truly blessed ought to be fairest and purest.

THEÆTETUS: Very true.

STRANGER: Well, what name shall we give to the practitioners of this art? For my part I shrink from calling them Sophists.

THEÆTETUS: Why so?

STRANGER: For fear of ascribing to them too high a function.

THEÆTETUS: And yet your description has some resemblance to that type (the Sophist).

STRANGER: So has the dog to the wolf - the fiercest of animals to the tamest. But a cautious man should above all be on his guard against resemblances; they are a very slippery sort of thing.

Now let me rewrite the latter part of the dialogue. In doing so I shall move to eliminate the stranger's instinctive or preconceived notion of what Sophists actually are. *The Sphinx gestures at the page, and the wording changes:*

STRANGER: Well, what name shall we give to the practitioners of this art?

THEÆTETUS: The characteristics you have enumerated are those the Sophists use to describe themselves.

STRANGER: But I fear this ascribes too high a function to them.

THEÆTETUS: To say that individual Sophists may not achieve the standards they have set for themselves does not disprove the nobility of their goal, nor their right to claim it as a standard and hence an identifying characteristic of their profession.

STRANGER: I cannot find fault with that. But let us examine the Sophist from some other vantage-points.

The wording reverts to normal, and the Sphinx closes the book.

I do not say that the dialogue should have proceeded in a different direction. I merely demonstrate that it would have been possible. This fact - that it is possible - testifies to the looseness of Plato's logic in this instance. Rather than refining the definition of the Sophist by the careful elimination of inconsistent characteristics, Plato simply ignores implications which do not support his preconceived notions.

The Chimæra: I'm beginning to see what you mean.

The Sphinx: There are other examples which I could take from the text. But I think this demonstration sufficient proof of the principle involved. The entire dialogue is not an attempt to understand what a Sophist is. It is an attempt to denigrate Sophists. As such it is of no value as an exercise in logic or in the true process of reduction.

The Chimæra: But now we are back where we started, enriched only by an irony of Socratic logic: We know what *The Sophist* is **not**, but we don't know what it **is**. So we must consider why Plato felt it necessary to attack the Sophists at all. Why did he not feel it possible merely to coexist with them in friendly competition for men's minds?

The Sphinx: Here we must depart from the dialogue as a universe in itself. We must try to place it in context amidst a larger and more complex universe. The reason for doing this is that, viewed in isolation, *The Sophist* is logically invalid; this we have

just proven. Seen against a larger background, however, it may indeed be significant. We attempt, like Archimedes, to move a world. For a place to stand we have the existence of *The Sophist*; for a lever we have its bias. The world need move only a little, and we who push against the lever may count ourselves satisfied.

The Chimæra: I follow you, but beware of unsubstantiated speculation

The Sphinx: The proponent of a viewpoint who feels secure in his position will not find it necessary to attack the mere existence of opponents. He may point out the fallacies in their arguments in an effort to hasten their understanding of his “correct interpretation”. But he will not see their “incorrect” views as a threat to the truth of his own. An attack against the very existence of competition is mounted when one is uncertain of the invulnerability of one’s own position. Permitted to exist, competition might pose a mortal challenge. Hence it must be destroyed without delay. Such a preemptory strike is justified by the rationalization that, while one has glimpsed an ultimate truth, more time is needed to refine the ideas to a form which may be understood by those of lesser intellectual acumen.

The Chimæra: You are suggesting, then, that Plato may not have felt secure in his philosophy - that he feared the axioms upon which he based his logic to be false?

The Sphinx: Let us not say that he feared them to be false. It is enough to say that he may not have been completely certain of their truth. Had he been, he would have ignored the Sophists.

The Chimæra: Why should Plato have attacked the Sophists in particular? Was it simply because they were his only Athenian competition? That would make his motives rather materialistic.

The Sphinx: Here we should bear in mind that we have no precise catalogue of individuals whom Plato considered Sophists. At various times he took issue with the ideas of Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, and Protagoras, to name but a few theorists. Whether he considered the Sophists as comprising only specific individuals, or whether he considered Sophism more broadly to be composed of all challengers to his own philosophy, is an issue we cannot decide. If we are to look through Plato’s eyes via *The Sophist*, we can establish only that the Sophists were guilty of teaching according to methods too close to those of Plato himself.

The Chimæra: You mean, I take it, by the process of cross-examination described by the stranger in the passage we considered earlier?

The Sphinx: Precisely. I ask you to consider both the praise that the stranger accords the system itself and his unsubstantiated reluctance to credit that system to the Sophists. History contains many examples pointing to the fact that the most dangerous threats are those akin to the favored philosophy in all ways save one - which is considered to be crucial. Wars have been fought simply because men were unable to agree upon one name for the same god, or, later, because they could not agree upon the same meanings for words such as “freedom”, “democracy”, and “equality”.

The Chimæra: Only two wars that I recall strike me as having made any sense: the Trojan War, which was fought for sex, and the Carthaginian Wars, which were fought for money.

The Sphinx: Very funny. But to return to the issue at hand, we have the evidence of that passage in *The Sophist* to substantiate this point. Plato regarded the process of teaching through cross-examination to be a standard of excellence in itself. Its use to teach anything other than pure philosophy, accordingly, would have been intolerable to him. Hence his extraordinary anger at the Sophists.

The Chimæra: But we do know more about the Sophists than that. Even if we limit our scope to the school of Protagoras, we know that Sophistic thinking disavowed absolute knowledge. Despairing of attaining such knowledge, they regarded even its pursuit as worthless. So they taught a sort of relativistic pragmatism as the only sound basis for human affairs. Hence Protagoras' famous statement that man is the measure of all things.

The Sphinx: That is right. And we know that Plato was firmly opposed to this view. Perhaps our most convincing evidence of this is the inscription above the entrance to his Academy: **Let no one ignorant of mathematics enter here.**

The Chimæra: I thought it was "geometry".

The Sphinx: Unfortunately for purists it has been recorded both ways. But either serves to illustrate the point. Plato saw in mathematics unshakable evidence that there was an absolute standard for the Universe. And where one such standard existed, it was logical to assume that there were others. Today humans regard mathematics principally as an applied science, but in Plato's time it was considered by the Pythagoreans to be "pure", having nothing to do with the gross and imperfect everyday world.

The Chimæra: I presume that Plato would have been somewhat upset to learn of the Theory of Relativity, which is inconsistent with the notion that mathematics adhere to a fixed standard. But do I understand you to say that Plato was a Pythagorean?

The Sphinx: Not in the sense that he had any connections with one of the Pythagorean schools as such. He was born in Athens in 427 BCE, and he was a disciple of Socrates from 409 to 399. Following Socrates' execution in that year, Plato traveled abroad, absorbing Pythagorean doctrines in many of the Greek cities located in Italy and Africa. It was not until 387 that he returned to Athens to found his Academy.

The Chimæra: That is interesting, but it does not constitute evidence that Plato endorsed the views of the Pythagoreans.

The Sphinx: No, and for that one must turn to the *Timæus*, wherein Plato presents his concept of the Universe. Here he describes the five possible regular solids - that is, those with equivalent faces and with all lines and angles equal. Four of those represented the four elements, he said, while the dodecahedron represented the Universe as a whole. He also postulated that the various stellar/planetary bodies

move in exact circles (the perfect curve) along with the crystalline spheres (the perfect solid) holding them in place. All of these theories were originally Pythagorean, as one may see from the writings of Philolaus and other avowed Pythagoreans. But we wander too far afield. Let us return to Plato's conviction that the Universe was based upon absolute, not relative standards.

The Chimæra: I presume that the Sophists did not consider mathematics as an invalidation of their relativism.

The Sphinx: Whether the issue centered around mathematics or not is something we cannot know. We do know that the Sophists considered whatever evidence Plato offered insufficient to dislodge them from their position. From their point of view, the Sophists were champions of logic. They based their arguments upon what they understood to be "obvious" realities. And they drew "common sense" conclusions. What so antagonized Plato was not that they held different views than his concerning the primal forces of the Universe. Rather it was the intolerable insult - in Plato's eyes - that they were not interested in that topic as a field for rational inquiry. Plato must have felt somewhat akin to Noah building his Ark in the midst of an ignorant and unconcerned society.

The Chimæra: The Noah legend is not in our myth-cycle, if you please.

The Sphinx: My apologies.

The Chimæra: And so Plato wished to identify the primal forces of the Universe. This resulted in his famous Theory of the Forms, if I am correct. But I sense a weak point here. Plato was a finite being, and yet he desired to comprehend Universal absolutes. As perfect standards they would necessarily be infinite, since any measure of perfection must extend in all dimensions without limitation. It would be possible for a finite entity like Plato to comprehend the infinite without distortion only if the infinite reveals aspects of itself to and through the finite. But the finite must have faith or trust that the aspects are undistorted in their presentation.

The Sphinx: Precisely, and now we are getting to the *crux ansata* of the matter. For, you see, assumptions based upon faith or trust are logically indefensible, otherwise there would be no need to base them upon faith or trust to begin with. Plato, being a man of no mean intellect, was certainly aware of this. He feared that an intelligent Sophist might see it as well and proceed to attack the foundations of his entire philosophy as illogical. And so, in the dialogues, he constructed a very elaborate defense of his concepts according, apparently, to the most rigorous standards of the cross-examination system of the Sophists.

The Chimæra: Statements like that are liable to get you into a great deal of trouble, I hope you know.

The Sphinx: Only with those who underestimate Plato and interpret this as a slur against him. Quite the contrary, it is all the more indicative of his brilliance. The entire process of "logical reasoning" is ultimately circular. What humans loosely term "cause and effect" relationships are not really that at all. They are rather

observations of phenomena believed to occur consistently under identical environments. But logic cannot explain why electrons circle protons, or why the color red and the color blue are distinct, or why the Universe exists at all. Yet every one of our senses tells us that these things are so, and if we, as Descartes, deny the validity of our sensory input, we resign ourselves to insanity. Plato's faith derives from no greater and no lesser observation that things are what they seem to be. Once that consistency is granted, all else follows.

The Chimæra: If that is so, why should Plato have gone through all the trouble to create the dialogues? Merely as a blind for Sophist critics who might have interfered with his Academy or accused him personally of being irrational or illogical?

The Sphinx: Again the explanation is not that simple. The dialogues may indeed have served as a blind for the Sophists, inasmuch as they defend Platonic principles according, apparently, to Sophistic logical criteria. But the dialogues would thus serve only a negative function, and that hardly seems to justify the obvious effort of their preparation. Plato was first and foremost a teacher, and he would have designed the dialogues to teach.

The Chimæra: That appears to run afoul of your previous statement that faith and reason are mutually exclusive. If Platonic students studied the dialogues only to become skilled at the Sophistic argumentative procedures employed therein, they would complete the Academy only as skilled Sophists.

The Sphinx: We are at something of an impasse. I confess that I cannot resolve this evident inconsistency. Let us seek fresh counsel.

Quite suddenly there materializes a Gryphon.

The Gryphon: The dilemma can be resolved, but it is so constructed that it defies resolution by Sophistic logic. And that is precisely the trap into which the two of you have fallen. Indeed the dialogues are there to teach, but the student must put forth the effort to see past the Sophistic teachings to those of Plato himself.

The Chimæra: But the argumentative pattern of the dialogues is Sophistic, and any connection between Sophistic logic and Platonic faith cannot exist. Do you think to pursue me?

The Gryphon: The key to Plato rests in the *Meno*. Here - *He turns to page #364:*

SOCRATES: Those who tell it are priests and priestesses of the sort who make it their business to be able to account for the functions which they perform. Pindar speaks of it too, and many another of the poets who are divinely inspired. What they say is this - see whether you think they are speaking the truth. They say that the soul of a man is immortal. At one time it comes to an end - that which is called death - and at another is born again, but is never finally exterminated. On these grounds a man must live all his days as righteously as possible.

For those from whom
Persephone receives requittal for ancient doom
In the ninth year she restores again
Their souls to the Sun above
From whom rise noble kings
And the swift in strength and greatest in wisdom,
And for the rest of time
They are called heroes and sanctified by men.

Thus the soul, since it is immortal and has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in the other world, has learned everything there is. So we need not be surprised if it can recall the knowledge of virtue or anything else which, as we see, it once possessed. All nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, so that when a man has recalled a single piece of knowledge - learned it, in ordinary language - there is no reason why he should not find out all the rest, if he keeps a stout heart and does not grow weary of the search, for seeking and learning are in fact nothing but recollection.

The Chimæra: You imply, then, that it is not the object of the dialogues to “teach” at all - but rather to expose Plato’s students to demanding mental gymnastics which will inspire them to recollect knowledge of the Forms.

The Gryphon: You have recollected admirably. *The Gryphon dematerializes.*

The Sphinx: Is it not interesting that the example given by Socrates in the *Meno* employs mathematics and geometry? That ties in rather neatly with the inscription over the entrance to the Academy. To the Platonic philosopher, then, that inscription would have meant something more than mere ability to calculate areas of triangles. In effect it would say: “Let no one ignorant of the recollective basis of knowledge leave here.”

The Chimæra: Harking back to what you said concerning Plato’s exposure to Pythagorean concepts, it is quite appropriate. Mathematical consistency was Plato’s “foot in the door”, so to speak, where the Forms were concerned. Yet, in view of relativity, does not that door slam shut upon us?

The Sphinx: That’s the Hades of it; it doesn’t. Or rather it does, but another one opens simultaneously.

The Chimæra: Do you mean that relativity provides access to another Form similar to mathematical consistency, upon which a modern Plato could base a Theory of the Forms?

The Sphinx: No, not really. But what relativity has done has been to turn the *Meno* inside-out. Look here: Socrates proves the immortality of the soul by demonstrating its intrinsic grasp of mathematics, which he considered a Form. Pause here and consider: What, precisely, is immortality?

The Chimæra: I should say the continuous existence of the mind or soul.

The Sphinx: That would be the case if there were no such thing as relativity. But there is. So let us say rather that immortality is the ability of the mind or the soul to exist unbounded by time, i.e. the fourth dimension. Mortality is measured according to the notion that time is a constant. But relativity disproves this, showing that time may be retarded, hastened, stopped altogether, or, presumably, raised to infinity. Thus the prison of a so-called temporal span of existence is no real prison at all. It is only imagined as such by a mind untrained in fourth-dimensional movement. The mind that is immortal is one that breaks free of time, not one that merely plods along within it as it ticks off the æons.

The Chimæra: And so the same principles of relativity that destroy Plato's first-known Form now open the door to the very immortality which he sought through knowledge of the Forms. Fascinating.

The Sphinx: Now we must consider the implications of this as applied to the notion of recollection of knowledge. When Socrates used the term in the passage cited by the gryphon, he meant it of course in terms of a fixed fourth dimension. He visualized the soul as plodding along through the æons, "seeing all things" along the way. Thus, by the time it reached incarnation in Greece circa 400 BCE, it had completed some 9.5 to 10.5 billion years' "sightseeing" since the last Universal concentration of radiation underwent transformation into matter and antimatter, making it possible for existence to displace vacuum.

The Chimæra: Just out of curiosity, how do you come up with ten billion years?

The Sphinx: Simply by dividing the distances of the known galaxies from the calculated metagalactic center of this expansion cycle by their speeds according to the Red Shifts, then taking an average. But we digress again. We must still work out the nature of the acquisition of knowledge.

The Chimæra: If the invalidation of time as a constant has been shown, then the mind or soul could not have acquired knowledge via an æonic sightseeing trip such as Socrates describes. But the mind possesses the capability to cast itself forward and backward through time, since time is not fixed.

The Sphinx: Correct. The process is to imagination what directed thinking is to unconscious dreaming. It is something like the *Raja-Yoga* technique of uniting the mind to a single idea through force of will, or like corresponding ceremonial magic techniques.

The Chimæra: But I thought that the object of Yoga is to break the cycle of birth-death-rebirth through union of the soul or mind with the whole of existence. To one who achieves the eighth stage, *samadhi*, the concept of knowledge - itself a relative measurement of that which is known versus that which is not known - would be meaningless. All would be known, or, to use a more precise term, realized. Nothing would remain to be "learned".

The Sphinx: Indeed.

The Chimaera: I think I am beginning to see your point. There is an identity between the state of *samadhi* and the innate condition of the mind or soul as Plato perceived it. Both exist in a state of absolute awareness, including, presumably, the freedom to move through all dimensions including that of time. Thus they break the bonds of both a finite period and a finite path of existence, achieving true immortality. Earthly incarnation becomes a prison in terms of both time and space, and it is the incarnated mind's ability to travel within time that allows it to break free from this prison. The ambition of Plato, like that of the Yogi, was to regain the freedom of mental movement through all dimensions of existence - which, of course, would provide access to knowledge of the Forms.

The Sphinx: That is right. And the final proof of this is that Adepts in all cultures and all ages have inclined towards this same realization, no matter what exploratory methods they may have used and what linguistic terminology they may have employed. "Proof" in the scientific sense is the achievement of identical results under identical circumstances by independent researchers. Our comparison of just two initiatory systems - that of Plato and that of Yoga - meets these criteria exactly, given that the "identical circumstance" in this case is Earthly incarnation.

The Chimæra: Similar evidence could be obtained from additional case studies of other initiatory systems. But one substantiation suffices for our discussion.

The Sphinx: And now, I think, we are finally in a position to understand Plato's distinction of the work of a true philosopher from that of a sophist. Let us return to *The Sophist*. *He turns to page #998:*

STRANGER: Well, now that we have agreed that the kinds stand toward one another in the same way as regards blending, is not some science needed as a guide on the voyage of discourse, if one is to succeed in pointing out which kinds are consonant, and which are incompatible with one another - also, whether there are certain kinds that pervade them all and connect them so that they can blend, and again, where there are divisions [separations], whether there are certain others that traverse wholes and are responsible for the division? ... And the man who can do that discerns clearly one form everywhere extended throughout many, where each one lies apart, and many forms, different from one another, embraced from without by one form, and again one form connected in a unity through many wholes, and many forms, entirely marked off apart. That means knowing how to distinguish, kind by kind, in what ways the several kinds can or cannot combine.

The Chimæra: I am well satisfied. Now that we have resolved the questions raised by *The Sophist*, it seems necessary to consider *The Statesman* as well.

The Sphinx: We know that *The Statesman* was written as a sequel to *The Sophist* - that Plato intended his ideal statesman to be antithetical to the "worst possible kind" of Sophist. Observe: *He turns to page #1074.*

STRANGER: Therefore all who take part in one of these governments - apart from the one based upon real knowledge - are to be distinguished from the true statesman. They are not statesmen; they are party leaders, leaders of bogus governments and themselves as bogus as their systems. The supreme imitators and tricksters, they are of all Sophists the arch-Sophists.

YOUNG SOCRATES: It seems to me that the wheel has come full circle, now that the title of Sophist goes to those who most deserve it, to the men who get themselves called political leaders.

The Chimæra: That may be nothing more than another of Plato's invectives against the Sophists in general - a bit of name-calling without real substance. Such seems to be the opinion of academic critics, who are prone to ignore this exchange. But let us reexamine Plato's alienation from the Sophists. As I said earlier:

Even if we limit our scope to the school of Protagoras, we know that Sophistic thinking disavowed absolute knowledge. Despairing of attaining such knowledge, they regarded even its pursuit as worthless. So they taught a sort of relativistic pragmatism as the only sound basis for human affairs. Hence Protagoras' famous statement that man is the measure of all things.

The Sphinx: We then considered the Pythagorean precedents for Plato's conviction that the Universe adheres to absolute and not relative standards. But how does this tie in with *The Statesman*?

The Chimæra: The connection seems to be that Plato considers statesmanship also to be absolute and not relative. Observe the following key passage: *He turns to pages #1051-2.*

STRANGER: Must we not do now what we had to do when discussing the Sophist? We had to insist then on the admission of an additional postulate, that "what is 'not x' nevertheless exists". We had to introduce this postulate because the only alternative to asserting it which our argument left us was to allow the Sophist to escape definition altogether. In our present discussion too there is an additional postulate on which we must insist, and it is this: "Excess and deficiency are measurable not only in relative terms but also in respect of attainment of a norm or due measure." For if we cannot first gain assent to this postulate, we are bound to fail if we advance the claim that a man possesses statecraft, or indeed that a man possesses any other of the special forms of knowledge that function in human society.

YOUNG SOCRATES: In that case we must certainly follow the precedent and admit the additional postulate in our present discussion too.

STRANGER: Our present task is greater than our previous one, Socrates, and we can hardly have forgotten what a very long time that took us. However, while discussing these problems, there is one thing to be said at the outset that it is perfectly right and proper to say here.

YOUNG SOCRATES: What is this?

STRANGER: That when one day we come to give a full exposition of true accuracy in dialectic method, we shall find the need of this postulate concerning the due measure which we have just enunciated. However, the statement in the form we have made it and with the demonstration - adequate for present purposes - which we have given of it, is a very great help to us, or so it seems to me. For it shows that two propositions stand or fall together. The first is that the arts exist; the second is that excess and deficiency are measurable not only relatively but in terms of the realization of a norm or due measure. Thus if measure in this second sense exists, so do the arts, and, conversely, if there are arts, then there is this second kind of measurement. To deny either is to deny both.

The Sphinx: That “existence of ‘not x’ postulate”, as I recall, left something to be desired in terms of logical integrity. The point hinged upon things that were not themselves “existence” being able to exist. In distinguishing them from “existence”, Plato treats “existence” as an **entity**. But, when saying that certain things “exist”, he treats “exist” as a **quality**. That is inconsistent and hence inconclusive. *He glances at page #1003 indignantly, then turns to pages #1050-1.* And what sort of demonstration of this second postulate does he offer?

STRANGER: On the other hand, will we not also be ready to assert that we do in fact hear words spoken and see acts done which at one time exceed the essentially right measure and at another time fall short of it? Is it not just this matter of attaining the due measure which marks off good men from bad in human society?

The Chimæra: That’s not much of a proof. The words or actions that impress one observer as ideal may strike another as excessive or inadequate. Similarly “good” and “bad” are subjective terms. Plato is guilty of a *non sequitur*.

The Sphinx: True. If the stranger had been talking with someone like Protagoras instead of the docile young Socrates, *The Statesman* would have floundered [and foundered] right there.

The Chimæra: Note that, immediately after making that statement, Plato tries to reinforce it by denying that statecraft - or any other art - can exist without it. Thus he assumes that statecraft has already been proved to be an absolute standard, when in fact it has not. Two unproved statements cannot be used to prove each other, and so Plato is guilty of a second logical fallacy, generally known as *interdependence*.

The Sphinx: Since the rest of *The Statesman* hinges upon young Socrates’ blind disregard of these two fallacies, is there a point in our discussing it further? What we have uncovered here is not some relatively-unimportant digression. The subsequent structure of *The Statesman* is one of peeling away inadequate manifestations of statesmanship, leaving, theoretically, the Form itself at the core. If there is not an agreed-upon Form, then the peeling-away process is pointless.

The Chimæra: To be fair to Plato, let us examine his idea of the Form of statesmanship. *He turns to page #1077.*

STRANGER: If you will view the three arts we have spoken of as a group with a common character, you will be bound to see that none of them has turned out to be itself the art of statesmanship. This is because it is not the province of the real kingly art to act for itself, but rather to control the work of the arts which instruct us in the methods of action. The kingly art controls them according to its power to perceive the right occasions for undertaking and setting in motion the great enterprises of state. The other arts must do what they are told to do by the kingly art ... It is a universal art, and so we call it by a name of universal scope. That name is one which I believe to belong to this art and this alone, the name of “statesmanship”.

The Sphinx: On the whole, that’s not a bad definition. And, I might add, there is nothing in it which necessitates the existence of an absolute standard for statesmanship. A statesman can simply be a person who is relatively skilled at emphasizing, directing, and applying the various arts and sciences of a state or community.

The Chimæra: So it would seem. In view of Plato's attack on "arch-Sophists" as being the leaders of all but the perfect [Form] government, one might suspect that he insisted upon an absolute standard of government just so that he could attribute everything less than that to Sophistry. Having delivered such an uncomplimentary blow to both Sophists and politicians, Plato could quietly abandon the notion of an absolute governmental standard. In fact, the definition that I just quoted is thoroughly relativistic and cannot be applied in terms of absolute standards.

The Sphinx: And just how do you draw that conclusion?

The Chimæra: If each subordinate art in a community possesses its own standard of absolute perfection, a raising or lowering of the application of that art by the statesman would cause excess or deficiency in the art itself. For example, the military art involves winning battles and wars. If the statesman, for the good of the entire community, prevents the military from conducting battles or wars, the military art itself experiences a deficiency. At a later date, if the military does go to war, that deficiency will be evident as inexperience in combat. Similarly, if the statesman orders the military to fight too many battles or wars, excess will occur. The military will become inefficient through demoralization and attrition. To permit the military to function at an ideal level, a statesman would have to allow a level of continuous or intermittent warfare. This, obviously, would not be ideal for the state as a whole.

The Sphinx: Your point being that the ideal level of a subordinate art as a thing in itself is at odds with its ideal application by the statesman's art.

The Chimæra: Yes, and there's more to it than that. If there is an ideal standard or level for both component arts and the statesman's art, then the maintenance of that standard or level over a period of time should ensure continuous and ideal prosperity for the state as a whole, correct?

The Sphinx: Theoretically, yes.

The Chimæra: But conditions outside that state will vary. A neighboring state may go to war against it, for example.

The Sphinx: That would necessitate an alteration of certain component arts - such as materiel production, resource allocation, and military activity - by the statesman, if he is to perform his ideal role.

The Chimæra: But this means exceeding or falling below the ideal standards of the individual component arts. In other words, the ideal standards of a component art by itself and the ideal level of that art as a factor in the overall community do not coincide. Therefore, if Plato insists upon absolute standards, he places his statesman in the position of having to continuously violate the absolute standards of component arts for the sake of his own art.

The Sphinx: I suppose Plato would argue that the ideal standards of the component arts would include consideration for the proper level of those arts within the community as a whole.

The Chimæra: That still begs the question. The posture of the community must change as its external environment changes. Therefore the component arts will be subject to continuous revision of their levels of activity and emphasis. They become factors relative to the community, just as the community becomes a factor relative to its external environment. Q.E.D.

The Sphinx: So Plato's definition of statesmanship is valid only if both that art and the subordinate arts are assumed to be variable and relativistic. How intriguingly Sophistic!

The Chimæra: ... All of which brings us back to the basic "relativity vs. absolutism" issue between [what Plato would call] Sophistry and Philosophy respectively. In a purely practical sense we cannot continue to use those terms as Plato did, because "sophistry" now conveys the image of charlatanism, while "philosophy" embraces relativistic as well as absolutist theories.

The Sphinx: True. The basic issue still remains, but the old labels are no longer accurate. Why do you suppose Plato felt so strongly that absolute standards (Forms) existed?

The Chimæra: It probably started with what he believed to be common sense. Our senses seem to tell us that the world around us is made up of reliable and permanent phenomena. A chair can be counted upon to remain a chair, a desk a desk. The Sun and the planets behave regularly. Relativism carried to its logical conclusion would deny these things. How could the Sophists say that "man is the measure of all things" as they walked about on the solid and permanent ground of Greece? Man cannot decide that the ground will be there one minute and transmute into water the next. Plato must have felt that he was arguing a case for the way things actually are, even if he encountered difficulties in justifying that position logically.

The Sphinx: To be quite precise, a chair does **not** remain a chair or a desk a desk. Both are undergoing continuous molecular breakdown, which is not apparent to humans because they normally experience sensory input at a relatively swifter rate. Nor are astronomical bodies truly constant; they only seem that way, again because of the relative differences in their rates of change and in human perceptive powers. At the other end of the scale, there are phenomena that occur too swiftly for human senses to register them. So they seem "instantaneous". So how dependable is Plato's "actual world"?

The Chimæra: I am tempted to say that, relatively speaking [from the human point of view], the world appears to adhere to absolute laws.

The Sphinx: Now that is an interesting statement! You mean that the human ability to perceive relative change exists in a comparatively small range, and that phenomena changing at rates beneath or above that range appear to be instantaneous or permanent, as the case may be.

The Chimæra: I suppose so.

The Sphinx: Can we not identify anything that is truly permanent? That is in fact absolute and not relative?

The Chimæra: That was Einstein's problem. He was able to postulate only one thing that was absolute - the speed of light. But in that he was wrong.

The Sphinx: Wrong? Kindly explain!

The Chimæra: We run the risk of straying rather far from *The Statesman*.

The Sphinx: But not from our ultimate topic. Remember that we are trying to get a grip on true conceptual analysis, and to do that we had better resolve this relative/absolute issue once and for all. According to the Platonic school of thought, political science has an absolute standard, just as physical laws do. That is the argument of *The Statesman*. So now we have said that Einstein reduced physics to only one absolute - the speed of light - and you dispute even that. I for one consider a resolution of this germane. If you destroy absolutism in the physical world, then the basis for attempting to parallel the "absolute physical world" with an "absolute political world" disappears altogether. So proceed.

The Chimæra: All right. According to Einstein's second fundamental postulate of the Special Theory of Relativity, the velocity of light is always constant relative to an observer, no matter how fast the observer and the light source may be separating or converging. A derived equation states that, when an object is moving with respect to an observer, the mass of the object becomes greater, the amount of increase depending upon the relative velocity of object and observer. As the mass of the object increases, its length along the axis of its direction will decrease. At the speed of light, the object's mass becomes infinite, and its length shrinks to zero. Since an infinite-plus amount of energy would be required to raise the speed of an infinite mass beyond the speed of light, such hyper-light speed is not possible.

The Sphinx: So states the Special Theory.

The Chimæra: Now, internally the Special Theory is consistent, because it treats the speed of light as a **constant** and incorporates a series of equations which rely upon that constant and are consistent with one another. As the Special Theory applies to phenomena which are substantially below the speed of light, it is practical. The interrelationship of mass and energy relative to 186,000 miles per second (the Einstein speed of light constant) has been formulated as $E=mc^2$ and put into practice through nuclear fission.

The Sphinx: Where, then, lies the fault?

The Chimæra: The Achilles' Heel of the Special Theory is that, while applying the principle of relativity to everything else except the speed of light, it thereby treats the speed of light as an **exception** to the rule. An exception to a rule of physics is an indication that the rule is inadequate to cover all known phenomena. Einstein's

decision to treat the speed of light as a constant was based upon the difference between the speed of light and non-light-wave-related phenomena being so vast as to make sub-186,000 mps light speed impossible to detect; and also upon the inability of science to **detect** anything traveling faster than 186,000 mps.

The Sphinx: Why this emphasis upon the word “detect”?

The Chimæra: Detection and existence are two different things, and that difference is crucial to my argument. Now consider this hypothesis: If light waves from a stationary source travel at 186,000 mps, and those light waves are the only means an observer located elsewhere has for detection of that source, what would happen if the source were to begin moving away from the observer at 186,001 mps? Those light waves that are the sole source of the observer’s information would no longer reach that observer. The waves are now receding from him at 1 mps. As far as the observer can detect, the light-source vanished when its speed exceeded the speed of light. But did the source in fact cease to exist? It did not. [And its presence may be detectable by observing warps in radiation waves and emissions affected by it - a possible explanation of the “black hole” phenomenon.]

The Sphinx: What about light-sources that are proceeding in directions other than diametrically away from an observer?

The Chimæra: As for an object approaching an observer at 186,000+ mps, it would arrive before it could be detected at any distance as a moving object, because humans do not possess instruments that can identify approaching light speeds in excess of 186,000 mps - which would be the only means of identifying the object’s approach. If the source were to proceed at a tangent to an observer, it will seem to compress as it approaches the speed of light. The explanation for this illusion is more complex, but I may approximate it by saying that the lateral movement/oscillation of the emitted light waves is less detectable as the lateral speed of the object approaches 186,000 mps. At 186,000 mps the waves are no longer detectable as waves - merely as radiation; hence the illusion that the source has transmuted from matter to energy.

The Sphinx: In fact, then, the Special Theory contains its own invalidation. It states that everything is relative, but it cannot exist as a formula without at least one absolute constant - which, upon examination, proves to be relative itself. Which leaves only one question: If it is wrong, why does $E=mc^2$ work?

The Chimæra: Because the values which are plugged into that formula are so far below 186,000 mps that the speed of light might as well be treated as a constant. For equations that include values closer to 186,000 mps, the formula becomes increasingly less accurate. Hence the preposterous calculation that a mass at 186,000 mps becomes infinite. That is simply the result of the formula’s intrinsic distortion.

The Sphinx: This is all very unsettling. So everything is relative?

The Chimæra: Let’s not jump to conclusions. Remember what we decided concerning Plato’s own proof of absolute Forms?

The Sphinx: Yes. I referred to the Platonic Academy's inscription Let no one ignorant of mathematics enter here, and then I said:

Plato saw in mathematics unshakable evidence that there was an absolute standard for the Universe. And where one such standard existed, it was logical to assume that there were others. Today humans regard mathematics principally as an applied science, but in Plato's time it was considered by the Pythagoreans to be "pure", having nothing to do with the gross and imperfect everyday world.

The Chimæra: Would you care to elaborate upon that?

The Sphinx: The best thing to do is to quote directly from Thomas Stanley's 1687 account of the Pythagorean doctrines, which draws its material from Porphyry, Iamblicus, Strabo, etc. *The Stanley text materializes, and the Sphinx turns to Part IX page #522.* Consider the following: [sic]

The mind being purify'd [by Discipline] ought to be applied to things that are beneficial; these he procured by some contrived ways, bringing it by degrees to the contemplation of eternal incorporeal things, which are ever in the same state; beginning orderly from the most minute, lest by the suddenness of the change it should be diverted, and withdrew itself through its great and long pravity of nutriment.

To this end, he first used the Mathematical Sciences, and those Speculations which are intermediate betwixt Corporeals and Incorporeals, (for they have a Threefold Dimension, like Bodies, but they are impassible like Incorporeals) as Degrees of Preparation to the Contemplation of the things that are; diverting, by an artificial Reason, the Eyes of the Mind from corporeal things (which never are permanent in the same manner and estate) never so little to a desire of aliment; by means whereof, introducing the contemplation of things that are, he rendered men truly happy. This use he made of the Mathematical Sciences.

These Sciences were first termed Μαθηματικά by Pythagoras upon consideration that all Mathesis (discipline) is Reminiscence, which comes not extrinsically to souls as the phantasies which are formed by sensible objects in the Phantasie; nor are they an advantageous adscititious knowledg, like that which is placed in Opinion; but it is excited from Phænomena's, and perfected intrinsically by the cogitation converted into it self.

The Chimæra: How very interesting. It would seem that the recollective basis of knowledge, heretofore assumed to be a Platonic concept, is in fact Pythagorean.

The Sphinx: And the use of mathematics as a key to this particular sort of knowledge, i.e. of the Forms.

The Chimæra: Who is this Stanley, and how reliable can he be considered to be?

The Sphinx: Thomas Stanley graduated from Cambridge at age 16 as a Master of Arts. He practiced law; was fluent in French, Italian, Spanish, and the Classical languages; and issued the first volume of his famous *History of Philosophy* when he was only 30. The three paragraphs cited above are all footnoted to original Greek sources.

The Chimæra: So Plato used mathematics as a "place to stand", in an effort to make the Universe intelligible by reason alone. And Platonists tend to emphasize this, shielding Plato from the despised title of "mystic". See here: *He indicates page #xv in the*

Collected Dialogues.

[Huntington Cairns:] But the difference between Plato and the mysticism that has attached itself to his philosophy is essential. Plato's aim is to take the reader by steps, with as severe a logic as the conversational method permits, to an insight into the ultimate necessity of Reason. And he never hesitates to submit his own ideas to the harshest critical scrutiny; he carried this procedure so far in the *Parmenides* that some commentators have held that his own doubts in this dialogue prevail over his affirmations. But the beliefs of mystics are not products of critical examination and logical clarification; they are, on the contrary, a series of apprehensions, flashes, based on feeling, denying the rational order. The mystic's reports of his experiences are beyond discussion inasmuch as they are subjective and emotional; they must be accepted, by one who wishes to believe them, as a matter of faith, not knowledge. Plato's view of the world is that of an intelligible system that man can know by disciplined intellect alone. He was, in fact, the founder of logic, a logician and a poet, but he was not a mystic, he never exalted feeling above reason.

The Sphinx: Well, well. What do you think Cairns would say to the following quote from *The Statesman*? He turns to page #1082.

STRANGER: When there arises in the soul of men a right opinion concerning what is good, just, and profitable, and what is the opposite of these - an opinion based on absolute truth and settled as an unshakable conviction - I declare that such a conviction is a manifestation of the divine occurring in a race which is in truth of supernatural lineage.

YOUNG SOCRATES: It could not be more suitably described.

The Chimæra: (dryly) He would probably say that, since sphinxes and chimæras do not really exist, nothing we say is to be taken seriously.

The Sphinx: So, where Plato is concerned, a great deal hinges upon the basis for mathematics itself. Is it acquired through reason or through mystical vision, so to speak?

The Chimæra: This is rather curious. Plato actually sets his dialectic process in **contrast** to mathematics, almost as though the object of the *Dialogues* is to arrive at a Form greater than that of mathematics. He turns to page #746.

I understand, he said, not fully, for it is no slight task that you appear to have in mind, but I do understand that you mean to distinguish the aspect of reality and the intelligible, which is contemplated by the power of dialectic, as something truer and more exact than the object of the so-called arts and sciences whose assumptions are arbitrary starting points. And though it is true that those who contemplate them are compelled to use their understanding and not their senses, yet because they do not go back to the beginning in the study of them but start from assumptions you do not think they possess true intelligence about them although the things themselves are intelligibles when apprehended in conjunction with a first principle. And I think you call the mental habit of geometers and their like mind or understanding and not reason because you regard understanding as something intermediate between opinion and reason.

The Sphinx: It's all very well for Plato to say that, and I'm sure that dialecticians are not displeased to consider themselves more intellectual than mathematicians. Yet we have found, in both *The Sophist* and *The Statesman*, that Plato cannot proceed with his arguments unless he assumes the divinely-inspired ability to perceive not only

greater, but absolute perfection when he is confronted with it. That is not **reason**; it is **revelation**. Plato does mathematics an injustice: While mathematicians openly admit that their conclusions are originally based upon assumptions (axioms), Plato pretends that his are **not**. And of course they **are**. Just as Einstein required a concrete assumption - a constant speed of light - upon which to build his mathematical philosophy, so Plato must have an assumption - the ability to recognize absolute perfection - upon which to build his dialectic philosophy.

The Chimæra: Plato seems to be caught in a trap between the relativistic Sophists on one hand - who denied the reliability of intuitive assumptions - and the Pythagoreans on the other - who permitted original assumptions via revelation/intuition. Plato rejects the notion that axioms are necessary for reason, yet he cannot reason without them. No wonder he was so touchy about the Sophists.

The Sphinx: Note the very precise manner in which the Pythagoreans discussed the original assumptions of mathematics: *Again he indicates page #522 of the Stanley text.*

The whole science of Mathematicks, the Pythagoreans divided into four parts, attributing one to Multitude, another to Magnitude; and subdividing each of these into two. For Multitude either subsists by it self, or is consider'd with respect to another; Magnitude either stands still, or is moved. Arithmetick contemplates Multitude in it self: Musick with respect to another: Geometry, unmoveable magnitude; Sphaerick, moveable.

These Sciences consider not Multitude and Magnitude simply, but in each of these that which is determinate: for Sciences consider this abstracted from infinite, that they may not (in vain) attempt in each of these that which is infinite. When therefore the wise persons say thus, we conceive it is not to be understood of that multitude which is in the sensible things themselves, nor of that magnitude which we perceive in bodies, for the contemplation of these I think pertains to Physick, not to Mathematick. But because the Maker of all things took Union and Division, and Identity, and Alterity, and Station and Motion to compleat the soul, and framed it of these kinds, as *Timæus* teacheth, we must conceive that the Intellect, consisting according to the diversity thereof, and the division of proportions and multitude, and knowing it self to be both one and many, proposeth numbers to it self, and produceth them and the Arithmetical knowledg of them. According to the union of multitude and communication with it self, and colligation, it acquireth to it self Musick: for which reason Arithmetick excels Musick in antiquity, the soul it self being first divided by the Maker, then collected by proportions. And again establishing the operation within it self, according to its station, it produceth Geometry out of it self, and one figure, and the principles of all figures, but according to its motion, Sphaerick: for she is moved by circles, but consists always in the same manner according to the causes of those circles, the straight and the circular: and for this reason likewise Geometry is precedent to Sphaerick, as Station is to Motion.

But forasmuch as the Soul produced these Sciences, not looking on the excitation of Ideas, which is of infinite power, but upon the boundure of that which is limited in their several kinds, therefore they say that they take infinite from multitude and magnitude, and are conversant only about finite: for the mind hath placed in her self all principles both of multitude and magnitude, because being wholly of like parts within her self, and being one and indivisible, and again divisible, and producing the world of Ideas, it doth participate essential finiteness and infiniteness from the things which it doth understand: But it understands according to that which is finite in them, and not according to the infiniteness of its life. This is the opinion of the Pythagoreans, and their division of the four Sciences. Hitherto Proclus.

The Chimæra: In the final analysis, whether Cairns would enjoy the idea or not, Plato must be classed with the Pythagoreans as a “mystic”, in that he assumed that humans possess a supernatural power beyond reason to recognize perfection/absolute Forms.

The Sphinx: Yes. The Sophists were the only ones who could claim to be “non-mystics”, because they would not admit to revealed accuracy of any sort. Plato tried to strike a balance between the Sophists and the Pythagoreans, but there is just no halfway position that holds water. The Pythagoreans would have been amused by Plato’s laborious argumentative process, holding it to be a waste of time, in that the final answer to a given problem could be known only by revelation/recollection. As for the Sophists, they would have faulted Plato’s arguments by denying the primary assumptions/revelations in them.

The Chimæra: All of which leaves us where?

The Sphinx: Well, I think we have pretty well finished with *The Statesman*. But our discussion concerning the Pythagorean aspects of “Plato’s” philosophy raises yet another question: To what extent was Plato an original thinker?

The Chimæra: On that thorny little problem I will let you take the lead.

The Sphinx: I think we would be wise to start with some observations about time - not just the way most humans regard it, but the way Plato himself perceived it. I recall a pertinent comment of G.J. Whitrow’s in his book *The Nature of Time*:

The first question to consider is the origin of the idea that time is a kind of linear progression measured by the clock and the calendar. In modern civilization this conception of time so dominates our lives that it seems to be an inescapable necessity of thought. But this is far from true ... Most civilizations, prior to our own of the last two or three hundred years, have tended to regard time as essentially cyclic in nature. In the light of history, our conception of time is as exceptional as our rejection of magic.³⁶

The Chimæra: Well said. Modern academicians are conditioned to an essentially Newtonian attitude towards time. They regard it as a simple progression of events. The past may be referred to, and visions of the future may be projected, but neither past nor future has any intrinsic effect upon the present - nor do they exist objectively at all.

The Sphinx: In a cyclical system of time, by contrast, past, present, and future would all be part of a single continuum. This wouldn’t necessarily mean that “history repeats itself” either. Rather the components of fourth-dimensional existence would continue to exist, although they might be undergoing periodic rearrangement and recomposition. One might draw an analogy to the interchangeability of matter and energy; a seemingly-endless variety of transmutation takes place, but the “sum of the whole” remains the same.

³⁶ Whitrow, G.J., *The Nature of Time*, pages 7-8.

The Chimæra: Take the Platonic notion of the transmigration of souls. It wouldn't make much sense if entirely new souls could come into being "out of nothing", would it? Yet the transmigration theory has been ridiculed on the grounds that (a) world population is expanding, and (b) past incarnations have not been recalled to standards of scientific proof. If "the stuff of which souls are made" can transmute from other components of a unified time-continuum, then the first objection disappears. And limited recomposition [short of transmutation] would account for the second.

The Sphinx: And this would put the concept of the recollective basis of knowledge in a new light as well. Instead of knowledge being cumulative or progressive [again a purely-linear concept] with the linear "passage" of time, it can be considered "circular" - rearrangements and recombinations of certain all-inclusive principles which are part of the cyclical continuum, i.e. "timeless".

The Chimæra: A provocative way of approaching the Theory of the Forms

The Sphinx: Let us try to "clear the air" of modern presuppositions and place ourselves in the time-environment that Plato himself perceived. As he looked at the world around him and observed changes taking place, wouldn't linear time have seemed obvious to him? Within the scope of his own consciousness, for example, he could tell that things "weren't the way they used to be" and that new events were regularly taking place.

The Chimæra: On a small scale, yes. But, seen at the "Forms level", various events could be viewed as modifications of a single Form of political behavior or as more complex combinations involving more than one Form. Thus the conquest of Athens by Sparta or the conquest of Sparta by Athens were essentially variations on the same Form [of conquest], distinguished by variable applications of other Forms [such as economic pressures, military power, political imperialism, etc.]. Viewed in this context, events could indeed be considered cyclical.

The Sphinx: Well, have we justification to presume that Plato truly thought in that context? After all, it is a perspective so broad that it could have been attacked as useless for concrete applications. In point of fact this was the basic Sophist criticism of Plato - that his philosophy, while it might be true on a macrocosmic scale - was of no help to people who were trying to solve immediate problems. So the Sophists advocated problem-solving techniques that ignored macrocosmic Forms.

The Chimæra: In the *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Statesman* we have three attempts by Plato to make his political philosophy relevant. But it would be a mistake to say that he merely attempted to "scale down" this Form or that Form to a problem-solving level, in order to compete with the Sophists. A Form is not that sort of "thing"; it is not an axiom which can be applied to various problems. Rather it is a sort of sum-total of identifying characteristics in various phenomena which relate them, as sphinxes and chimæras are variations of the Form "mythical beast".

The Sphinx: Speak for yourself. But we have now reached a point where we can explore the development of Forms-theory **prior** to Plato's time ... excuse me, Plato's point of focus in the continuum. Because the Forms - and especially the ones that were applicable to statesmanship - weren't all that nebulous. In fact they were the guiding principles of the most ancient civilization in the Mediterranean -and the one with the most highly-developed political system as well. I am talking, of course, about Egypt.

The Chimæra: The most highly-developed political system? You're going to get some objections on that score. The accepted impression of Egypt is that it was a simple military monarchy, reinforced by a death-obsessed religion, which cared nothing for philosophy. I quote Bertrand Russell:

Philosophy begins with Thales, who, fortunately, can be dated by the fact that he predicted an eclipse which, according to the astronomers, occurred in the year 585 B.C. Philosophy and science - which were not originally separate - were therefore born together at the beginning of the sixth century.³⁷

The Sphinx: Bertrand Russell was ever quaint. "Sixth century" my claw! For thirty recorded centuries before Thales, Egypt had existed as a national system - not a mere city-state or even federation of city-states. It was older to the Greeks than the Greeks are to present-day humans. Scientifically it developed architecture to a precision unapproached again until the present century [and in some aspects still unequalled].³⁸ It developed elaborate, codified medical skills [including that of open-skull brain surgery] which were used with a high measure of success.³⁹ It possessed the only accurate calendar in the entire Mediterranean until the time of Julius Cæsar [when Cæsar introduced a modified Egyptian calendar to the Roman Empire]; the Egyptians' own records date back to 4241 BCE!⁴⁰ And what of the hieroglyphic alphabet, introduced more than seven thousand years ago?⁴¹

The Chimæra: I expect that part of the problem lies in the fact that the alphabet you just mentioned was so very hard to read. Indeed it was almost a sort of cipher used exclusively among the Egyptian intelligentsia. Training of a scribe took about twelve years, and even then a scribe was not in a position to understand the significance of most of the philosophical material he was recording. By Plato's time other, less complex linguistic systems had come into use for both reading and writing, and probably no one in Athens could read hieroglyphic, let alone gain access to philosophical texts hoarded by the Egyptian priesthoods. So it is not so very surprising that Egyptian philosophy was not discussed by the Greeks, except for tourist-type accounts such as that of Herodotus and the Egyptian passage of Plato's own *Timæus*.

³⁷ Russell, Bertrand, *A History of Western Philosophy*, page 3.

³⁸ Stecchini, Livio, "Notes on the Relation of Ancient Measures to the Great Pyramid" in Tompkins, Peter, *Secrets of the Great Pyramid*, pages 287-382.

³⁹ Cottrell, Leonard, *Life Under the Pharaohs*, pages 189-191.

⁴⁰ Casson, Lionel, *Ancient Egypt*, page 146.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, page 141.

The Sphinx: The last known use of hieroglyphic writing even in Egypt itself was in 394 CE [on the Temple of Isis at Philæ].⁴² Thereafter all knowledge of the language vanished from human knowledge until Champollion decoded the Rosetta Stone in 1822 CE. And only a small number of Egyptian texts have been translated today - by a smaller handful of people who can read the language. So perhaps Russell's statement can be partially excused, if not condoned.

The Chimæra: Then, too, Egypt has suffered a savage pillaging over the centuries. As a symbol of "heathen paganism" it was viciously despoiled by the early Christians and their Moslem successors. Countless ancient temples were either appropriated or razed by the Catholics, and thousands of statues and inscriptions were disfigured. In 389 CE a Christian mob, acting on the orders of the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius, burned the great library of Alexandria to the ground.⁴³ Even so, millions of book-rolls were rescued or gathered together from other repositories and the library was reestablished - until 636. In that year Alexandria was taken by Omar, the Third Caliph of Islam, who decreed: "The contents of these books are in conformity with the *Koran* or they are not. If they are, the *Koran* is sufficient without them; if not, they are pernicious. Therefore let them be destroyed." They were burned as fuel to heat the city's baths; it took six months for all of them to be consumed.⁴⁴ So it is not too surprising that modern researchers have only a pitiful few scraps of information from previously-undiscovered tombs or overlooked monuments.

The Sphinx: Before we explore the links between the Egyptians and Plato, it may help if we bring out some of the salient characteristics of the Egyptian political system. To begin with, it was cyclic rather than linear. Individual pharaohs and dynasties came and went, but the social system and political structure remained constant. Each successive pharaoh, for example, was merely the momentary personification of a permanent, semi-divine entity that governed Egypt in the name of the gods. The nation itself was not viewed as merely one in a series of political units located in northeast Africa; it had existed as a divine creation before recorded history, and it would continue to exist indefinitely. Various natural cycles and human lifetimes would impact upon it, but the essence of Egypt would remain untouched by [linear] time.⁴⁵ Consider, for example, the following hieroglyphic inscription accompanying an image of the scarab-beetle *Xepera*, principle of cyclical regeneration and immortality:

I was the spirit in the Primeval Waters. He who had no companion when his name Came Into Being. The most ancient form in which I Came Into Being was as a drowned one. I was he who Came Into Being as a circle. He who was the Dweller in his Egg. I was the one who began everything, the Dweller in the Primeval Waters. First the Wind emerged for me, and then I began to move. I created my limbs in my glory. I was the maker of myself; I formed myself according to my desire and in accord with my heart.⁴⁶

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Tompkins, *op. cit.*, pages 3-4.

⁴⁴ Berlitz, Charles, *Mysteries from Forgotten Worlds*, page 36.

⁴⁵ Compare this to the Chinese view of China as the "Middle Kingdom" (*Chung kuo*), the "focus" of civilization and creativity.

⁴⁶ Clark, R.T., *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, page 74.

The Chimæra: If each pharaoh were held to be divinely-appointed, what was the actual selection procedure? And how could a human-supervised selection procedure retain credibility as a divine process?

The Sphinx: It compares rather intriguingly with the system for selection of philosopher-kings in the *Republic*. During stable dynasties new pharaohs were selected from among the male offspring of the late pharaoh. There was more latitude in this process than one might think, because (a) pharaohs generally had many wives and concubines, resulting in scores of children, and (b) the education and selection of pharaohs were handled by colleges of priests, themselves detached from the secular government but exercising a sort of guardianship over it. Unsuitable princes were either diverted to harmless careers or simply assassinated. With the exception of a few temporary puppet-kings or usurpers, then, Egyptian monarchs were generally priest-kings [an intentional reference to the Atlantean tern in the *Critias*] of exceptional calibre. Incumbent pharaohs who began to behave in maverick fashion [such as Akhenaten, the monotheist mystic of the XVIII Dynasty] were also assassinated with the tacit consent of the priesthood. This method of “impeachment” does not seem to have been abused, because an attack on the divine pharaoh for purely-partisan motives would have been thought extremely ill-omened. Only for an obvious betrayal of the pharaoh’s sacred trust - as determined by the priesthood - could assassination be contemplated.

The Chimæra: What sort of legal system did the Egyptians have?

The Sphinx: Now we enter some particularly interesting territory from a Platonic standpoint. As far as can be deduced from surviving records, bureaucratic and judicial affairs were not conducted according to a centralized legal code superior to the judgment of individual officials. Such officials were given a more-or-less free hand within their respective areas of responsibility - contingent, of course, upon the maintenance of order, payment of taxes, and general preservation of a harmonious attitude among the people. There were no legislated standards of good and evil/right and wrong. Justice was meted out *ad hoc* according to each supervisory official’s concept of fairness and equity. The Egyptians prized this system very highly; it was personified by the goddess *Maat*. When an Egyptian died, a feather from *Maat*’s crown would be weighed against his heart to determine whether he would be granted a pleasant repose in Amenti or be torn limb from limb by monsters from the *Tuat*. I expect that would-be crooks were inhibited accordingly, since the Egyptian religion was taken quite literally. Consider the following inscription, dating from one of the earliest Old Kingdom dynasties of Egypt [and compare it to the concept of *Tao*]:

If thou art a leader who directs the affairs of a multitude, strive after every excellence until there be no fault in thy nature. *Maat* is good, and its worth is lasting. It has not been disturbed since the day of its creator, whereas he who transgresses its ordinances is punished. It lies as a path even in front of him who knows nothing. Wrongdoing has never yet brought its venture to port. It is true that evil may gain wealth, but the strength of truth is that it lasts; a man can say, “It was the property of my father.”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Frankfort, Henri, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, page 62.

The Chimæra: A rather interesting contrast to the governments of Mesopotamia, Persia, and Greece, all of which laid stress upon codified law. I expect you are leading up to a comparison to the *Republic* and *Statesman*, wherein Plato argues for specially-trained or specially-gifted rulers above the law. Are you going to suggest that Plato took the Egyptian system as an ideal governmental model?

The Sphinx: Let's not jump the spear on this. I have a few other points to make concerning the Egyptian system proper; then we'll look into the matter of its actual links with Plato. Again bearing the recommendations of the *Republic* in mind, consider the following: Almost uniquely within the ancient world, Egypt was free from hereditary caste, racial, or sexual discrimination in political affairs. A social aristocracy was created by property-inheritance, but a scion of poor or even unknown parentage might just as easily rise to high office upon demonstrating suitable prowess. At various times the throne was held by Negroes, Persians, Mesopotamians, Greeks, and assorted Asians without racial objections being raised. Women enjoyed the same "citizenship" status as men, including choice of mate and inheritance of property. Queens such as Nefertiti and Ty wielded as much or more power than their consorts, and female pharaohs such as Hatshepsut and Cleopatra ruled Egypt as decisively and with as much popular sport as did male pharaohs. Even in the Egyptian religious pantheon, gods and goddesses enjoyed equal prestige.

The Chimæra: To an observer this extraordinary flexibility and tolerance might well account for the staying-power of the Egyptian system, in spite of the occasional invasions, occupations, and even civil wars that took place there. When the dust cleared, so to speak, the political and social institutions remained intact.

The Sphinx: Precisely. Egypt was no more a utopia than any other human-run society was, is, or will be. There were power-struggles, epidemics of corruption, popular revolts, and all the rest. During the Middle Kingdom (2150-1792 BCE) a pessimistic Pharaoh Amenemhet I advised Crown Prince Senwosret:

Harken to that which I say to thee,
That thou mayest be king of the earth,
That thou mayest be ruler of the lands,
That thou mayest increase good.
Harden thyself against all subordinates.
The people give heed to him who terrorizes them;
Approach them not alone.
Fill not thy heart with a brother,
Know not a friend,
Nor make for thyself intimates,
Wherein there is no end.
When thou sleepest, guard for thyself thine own heart;
For a man has no people in the day of evil.
I gave to the beggar, I nourished the orphan;
I admitted the insignificant, as well as him who was of great account.
But he who ate my food made insurrection;
He to whom I gave my hand aroused fear in my heart.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Fairservis, Walter A., *The Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile*, pages 98-99.

The Chimæra: But the institutions survived, and on the whole Egyptians were able to boast of a far more stable, prosperous, and inspiring society than those of the other Mediterranean countries. That is your point?

The Sphinx: Yes. By contrast the Greece of Plato's time was in pretty sorry shape. The various city-states couldn't even maintain stable governments of their own, much less get along with each other. Elitist systems such as that of Sparta were vulnerable to tyranny by strongmen; democratic Athens suffered from demagoguery and dictatorships. The much-vaunted philosophers were tolerated only as long as they were not thought to be actual threats. When they were inconvenient, as Plato and Aristotle had occasion to observe, hemlock or banishment awaited. Great principles of religion and/or philosophy were ridiculed in favor of Sophistic opportunism. Yet - and I think this is an important point - the Greeks had demonstrated that they were quite capable of high intellectual achievement. They had produced a number of noteworthy philosophers, artists, statesmen, architects, and military leaders. What they had **not** produced was a stable cultural environment in which such talent could be nurtured. In his politically-oriented dialogues, therefore, Plato sought a system of government that could achieve this stability without being as dictatorial as, say, the Persian or Assyrian monarchies. In Egypt, if in fact he realized it, he had a near-exact functioning model of his Republic - and one which was working quite well.

The Chimæra: ... **If** he realized it! So the problem is now to discover what connections, if any, Plato had with Egypt. Are the *Dialogues* of any help?

The Sphinx: No, they aren't. There are a very few passing references to Egypt, but nothing of any substance. It would be discouraging if it were not for the fact that the Pythagoreans are similarly ignored. That makes the situation a bit suspect. If Plato's links with Egypt are tenuous, his links with the Pythagoreans are beyond doubt. The geometric passages in the *Timæus* are virtually pure Pythagorean doctrine. And, from a political point of view, the Pythagoreans represented the extreme of initiated elitism that Plato juxtaposed to Sophistry. To the Sophists, human values were purely relative to custom, convention, and practical necessity; to the Pythagoreans, values were eternal, unchanging, and universal - the "Platonic" Forms. How is it that the Pythagoreans came to hold this point of view? Let us look to Pythagoras himself for the answer.

The Chimæra: Back to the Stanley text. I see that most of its biographical entries concerning Pythagoras are footnoted to Iamblicus, a fourth-century CE Neoplatonist, and from Diogenes Laertius, writing about a century earlier. Specific passages dealing with Pythagoras' stay in Egypt are footnoted to Porphyry and Clemens Alexandrinus as well. In Chapter III "How he travelled to Phœnicia" we read:

He made a voyage to Sidon, as well out of a natural desire to the place itself, esteeming it his country, as conceiving that he might more easily pass from thence into Egypt.

Here he conferred with the Prophets, successors of Mocus the Physiologist, and with others, and with the Phœnician Priests, and was initiated into all the mysteries of Byblus, and Tyre, and sundry of the principal sacred institutions in divers other parts of Syria, not undergoing these things out of Superstition, as may be imagined; but out of love to knowledg, and a fear,

lest any thing worthy to be known, which was preserved amongst them, in the miracles or mysteries of the gods, might escape him. Withal, not being ignorant, that the rites of those places were deduced from the Egyptian ceremonies, by means whereof he hoped to participate of the more sublime and divine mysteries in Egypt, which he pursued with admiration, as his Master Thales had advised him.⁴⁹

The Sphinx: Two rather intriguing points - first that Mesopotamian initiatory priesthods were thought to be corruptions or derivations of their Egyptian counterparts, and secondly that Pythagoras undertook this quest on the advice of Thales. Thales was reputed to have been born of a Phœnician mother, and it is more-or-less reliably established that he studied the science of geometry in Egypt.⁵⁰ But please continue

The Chimæra: Here are some extracts from Chapter IV “How he travell’d to Egypt”:

Antiphon, in his Book concerning such as were eminent for virtue, extolleth his perceiverance when he was in Egypt, saying, Pythagoras designing to become acquainted with the institution of the Egyptian Priests, and diligently endeavoring to participate thereof, desired Polycrates the Tyrant to write to Amasis King of Egypt, with whom he had friendship (as appears also by Herodotus) and hospitality, (formerly) that he might be admitted to the aforesaid Doctrine. Coming to Amasis, Amasis gave him Letters to the Priests, and going first to those of Heliopolis, they sent him to the Priest of Memphis, as the more ancient, which was indeed but a pretence of the Heliopolitans: [For the Egyptians imparted not their mysteries to every one, nor committed the knowledg of Divine things to profane persons, but to those only who were to inherit the Kingdom; and, of Priests, to those who were adjudged to excel the rest in education, learning, and descent.] From Memphis, upon the same pretence, he was sent to Thebes. They not daring, for fear of the King, to pretend excuses; but thinking, that by reason of the greatness and difficulty thereof, he would desist from the design, enjoyned him very hard precepts, wholly different from the institution of the Grecians, which he readily performed, to their so great admiration, that they gave him power to sacrifice to the gods, and to acquaint himself with all their studies, which was never known to have been granted to any forraigner besides. Clemens Alexandrinus relates particularly, that he was disciple to Sonchedes, an Egyptian Arch-prophet.⁵¹

The Sphinx: Again something catches my eye - that comment about Egyptian initiation normally being reserved for the pharaoh and the priesthood alone. In the *Statesman* Plato writes:

For the priest and the diviner have great social standing and a keen sense of their own importance. They win veneration and respect because of the high tasks they undertake. This is shown in the fact that in Egypt none can be king unless he belongs to the priestly caste, and if a man of some other caste succeeds in forcing his way to the throne, he must then be made a priest by special ordination.⁵²

The Chimæra: Now how would Plato come to know that bit of information, unless he were party to policies within the Egyptian priesthods?

⁴⁹ Stanley, Thomas, *The History of Philosophy*, page 494.

⁵⁰ Asimov, Isaac, *Asimov’s Biographical Encyclopædia of Science and Technology*, page 2.

⁵¹ Stanley, *op. cit.*, page 94.

⁵² Plato, *Collected Dialogues*, page 1059.

The Sphinx: It is always possible that he heard it from the Pythagoreans, although it seems only incidental to the sort of doctrines that Pythagoreans would be inclined to discuss. So here we may have a link directly between Plato and the Egyptian initiatory orders. Continue with the material from Stanley.

The Chimæra:

Diogenes saith, that whilst he lived with these Priests, he was instructed in the Learning and Language (as Antiphon also affirms) of the Egyptians, and in their three kinds of writing, Epistolick, Hieroglyphick, and Symbolick; whereof one imitates the common way of speaking; the rest allegorical, by Ænigms. They who are taught by the Egyptians, learn first the method of all the Egyptian Letters, which is called Epistilographick; the second, Hieratick, used by those who write of sacred things; the last and most perfect Hieroglyphick, whereof one is Curiologick, the other, Symbolick. Of the Symbolick, one is properly spoken by imitation, another is written as it were Tropicallly; another on the contrary doth allegorize by Ænigms. For instance, in the Kyriologick way, to express the Sun, they make a Circle; the Moon a Crescent. Tropicallly they do properly traduce, and transfer, and express by exchanging some things, and variously transfiguring others. Thus when they deliver the praises of Kings, in Theological Fables, they write by Anaglyphicks. Of the third kind, by Ænigms, let this be an example: All other Stars, by reason of their oblique course, they likened to the bodies of serpents, but the Sun to that of a Beetle, because having formed a ball of Cow-dung, and lying upon its back, it rolls it about (from claw to claw.)⁵³

The Sphinx: Once again there is more here than meets the eye. It is possible that Iamblicus or one of the other sources could have made up the other details of a trip by Pythagoras to Egypt, but here we seem to have conclusive proof - both of the trip itself and of Pythagoras' initiation. For the description given of the Egyptian linguistic system is in complete agreement with what has come to light with the discoveries of Champollion and Young.⁵⁴ Stanley could not have known this, and it is highly improbable that Iamblicus or any of the other biographers could have known it either. Hieroglyphic writing was a closely-guarded skill in Egypt, and, as we noted earlier, its teaching required many years of study. Pythagoras' initiation seems all the more probable.

The Chimæra: Here is the concluding passage from the chapter:

Thus being acquainted with the learning of that Nation, and enquiring into the Commentaries of the priests of former times, he knew the observations of innumerable Ages, as Valerius Maximus saith. And living admir'd and belov'd of all the priests and prophets with whom he conversed, he informed himself by their means accurately, concerning every thing; not omitting any person, eminent at that time for learning, or any kind of religious rites; nor leaving any place unseen, by going into which he conceived, that he might find something extraordinary. [For he went into the Adyta of the Egyptians, (and, as Clemens saith, permitted himself to that end to be circumcised) and learned things not to be communicated concerning the gods, mystick Philosophy.] He travelled to all the Priests, and was instructed by every one, in that wherein they were particularly learned. In Egypt he lived twenty two years, in their private sacred places, studying Astronomy and Geometry, and was initiated (not cursorily or casually) into all the religious mysteries of the gods. Lærtius saith, He made three Cups of silver, and presented them to each [Society] of the Egyptian Priests; which, as we said, were three, of Heliopolis, Memphis, and Thebes.⁵⁵

⁵³ Stanley, *op. cit.*, pages 494-495.

⁵⁴ Budge, Sir E.A. Wallis, *Egyptian Language*, pages 13-42.

⁵⁵ Stanley, *op. cit.*, page 495.

The Sphinx: It is perhaps worthy of note that the sources cited by Stanley lived at points of time when the bulk of the material from the library at Alexandria still existed. It is not unreasonable to assume that they would have either taken or verified their accounts from such records as they could read [in Greek if not in hieroglyphic] from that institution. At the time its prominence was unparalleled by any other literary repository in the Mediterranean, and it is hard to imagine scholars - particularly ones dealing with such a subject as this - bypassing it.

The Chimæra: The highly-selective “clubs” or schools which Pythagoras established in Sicily and southern Italy seem to align more closely to the fashion of the Egyptian priesthoods than to schools of the Greek tradition. Stanley, quoting Iamblicus, makes this point and hints that Pythagoras’ exacting methods were not well-received:

His country summoned him to some publick employment, that he might benefit the generality, and communicate his knowledge: which he not refusing, endeavored to instruct them in the symbolical way of learning, altogether resembling that of the Egyptians, in which he himself had been instituted. But the Samians not affecting this way, did not apply themselves to him.⁵⁶

The Sphinx: I think we have satisfactorily established the links between Pythagoras and the Egyptian priesthoods. Now we must determine to what extent the Egyptian doctrines reached Plato, either directly or through the Pythagoreans.

The Chimæra: Stanley quotes the following passage from Porphyry:

Moderatus saith, That this (Pythagorick Philosophy) came at last to be extinguished, first, because it was aenigmatical; next, because their Writings were in the Dorick Dialect, which is obscure, by which means, the Doctrines delivered in it were not understood, being spurious and misapprehended, because (moreover) they who publish’d them were not Pythagoreans. Besides, Plato, Aristotle, Speusippus, Aristoxenus, and Xenocrates, as the Pythagoreans affirm, vented the best of them, as their own, changing only some few things in them; but the more vulgar and trivial, and whatsoever was afterwards invented by envious and calumnious persons, to cast a contempt upon the Pythagorean School, they collected and delivered as proper to that sect.⁵⁷

The Sphinx: That certainly doesn’t appear to be too complimentary to Plato. Yet the fact remains that the cosmological philosophy in the *Timæus* is indisputably Pythagorean, yet is nowhere credited by Plato to the Pythagoreans or to Pythagoras himself. What of the Pythagoreans’ political doctrines?

The Chimæra: In *The Genesis of Plato’s Thought*, Alban D. Winspear summarizes them succinctly, if less exhaustively than Stanley:

It is true that Pythagoras himself seems to have held no elective office in any Greek state. His function was rather to organize political clubs which busied themselves with practical political affairs and developed a general intellectual apologia for aristocratic rule.

[Quoting Iamblicus] The Pythagoreans met in caucuses and gave counsel about political affairs. With the passage of time, it came about that the young men not only took the lead in domestic matters but in public too; they came to govern the city,

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, page 496.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, page 508.

forming a great political club. For they were more than three hundred in number.

It is in this connection not without significance that Pythagoras himself held (according to one authority) [Stobæus] that all income should come from agriculture. Here we have a hint of that same prejudice against the merchants and the democracy, that defense of the position of the landed proprietor which so constantly recurs in Greek idealistic thinkers.

Once this point is understood, the philosophical teachings of the Pythagoreans become intelligible. A passage in Iamblicus (which goes back to Aristoxenus) gives their point of view very clearly, and we must connect it with our previous discussion about the importance of the problem of justice:

Pythagoras thought that the most efficacious device for the establishment of justice was the rule of the gods, and beginning with that he established the state and the laws, justice and the just.

In this interesting passage we have a long step forward in the theologizing of the concept of justice. The contemplation of divine things, thought the Pythagoreans, instructed by Pythagoras himself, was useful for mankind. The reason was that we need a master, some ruling principle against which we do not dare to rise in rebellion, and this is provided by the divinity. Our animal nature, he argued, is subject to *hybris* and is diverse and chaotic, subject to control by a variety of impulses, desires, and passions. There must be a power which by its superiority and its “threatening eminence (*epanastasis*)” will introduce prudence and order into chaos.⁵⁸

The Sphinx: Compare this notion of justice as a divine standard to the Egyptian concept of *Maat* which we discussed earlier. Here we find evidence of a Form discussed virtually identically by first the Egyptians, then Pythagoras, then Plato. It is something higher than law, higher than human reason or learned wisdom - it is a “god” itself.

The Chimæra: The actual characteristics of what are generally known as the “Egyptian gods” are far closer to the notion of Forms than they are to the later pantheons of pagan cultures such as Greece, Rome, and Scandinavia. A reading of Egyptian texts translated directly from the hieroglyphic will substantiate this. In only a very few legends [such as that of the death and rebirth of Osiris] do the gods assume human behavioral characteristics. In the vast bulk of the existing texts they are far more abstract, having “personalities” that seem to overlap one another and symbolic attributes that are difficult to identify in terms of purely-human desires. Consider the following inscription from the tomb of Rameses VI in this light, noticing the overlap between Truth (*Maat*) and Ra:

Adoration to Truth. Salutation to thee, this Eye of Ra through which he lives every day! They who are behind the chapel fear her, the Brilliant One, She who comes out from the head of him who made her. On the Head Serpent, who comes out in front of him! Thou art the brilliant eye who leads him, the word of judgment of the One Whose Name Is Hidden, the victorious one before the Ennead, Lady of Fear, great of respect, Truth, through whom Ra is glorified, she who appeases for him the Two Lands by her decrees, she who speaks to the gods and chases away evil, whose abomination is sin, she who appeases the hearts of the gods! Thou art the balance of the Lord of the Two Banks, whose face is beautiful when Ra comes to his Truth, being glorious through her. Those in Busiris praise him through her, litanies are sung to him by the great gods while she adores the powers of the Two Chapels. He is glorious through her, more than the gods, in this her name of the Brilliant One. Thoth

⁵⁸ Winspear, Alban D., *The Genesis of Plato's Thought*, pages 81-82.

brought her and reckoned her, the Established One, the Brilliant, the Reckoned One, in this her name of the Ipet Serpent. He made her live as a Uræus in this her name of Opener of the Ways, She who leads him on the ways of the horizon, in this her name of Leader of Men. He erected her on his head in this her name of Very Great Crown.⁵⁹

The Sphinx: A passage such as this is quite impossible to explain in terms of ordinary human conventions and values. It certainly bears scant resemblance to the light, allegorical adventures of later Mediterranean gods and goddesses. Yet to one versed in the language of the Egyptian priesthoods, its meanings are quite clear. If Plato were an Egyptian initiate, one can see why he would dismiss conventional means of reductionist logic as a means for comprehending the Forms.

The Chimæra: We have seen definite evidence of Pythagorean doctrine in the Platonic writings, and at the beginning of this discussion we recounted Plato's visit to the Pythagorean centers in Italy and Africa from 399 to 387 BCE. But are there any grounds to suppose that Plato received direct initiation at the hands of an Egyptian priesthood?

The Sphinx: There are at least two indications that he did. First there is the following passage from the Prefaces of St. Jerome [circa 340-420 CE], placed by order of Popes Sixtus V [1585-1590] and Clement VIII [1592-1605] as introduction to the *Bible*:

Pythagoras and Plato, those masters of the genius of Greece, visited as pilgrims seeking after knowledge and as humble disciples the sacerdotal college of the soothsayers at Memphis [*Memphiticos vates*], preferring to be initiated with respect to the ancient doctrines of that distant land, rather than impose on their country the yoke of their own ideas.⁶⁰

The Chimæra: At the risk of belaboring the point, I again note that this passage was written prior to the final destruction of the Alexandrian library and [possibly] such references to the matter as it may have contained for scholars of the time.

The Sphinx: For that matter, there may have been other sources available to St. Jerome which, for one reason or another, have not survived to the present day. Our second bit of evidence comes from Proclus, who states that Plato was initiated in Egypt over a thirteen-year period by the priests Patheneitb, Ochoaps, Sechnouphis, and Etymon of Sebennithis.⁶¹

The Chimæra: Again we can indulge in a little detective-work. The names of the first three priests can be rendered precisely in hieroglyphics; that argues for their authenticity. [The fourth can be rendered only approximately and thus is not conclusive.] The "thirteen-year period" happens to coincide with the normal training time for an Egyptian scribe [to achieve full fluency in the hieroglyphic language]. As for Sebennithis, it was the seat of the Egyptian government from 378

⁵⁹ Piankoff, Alexandre (Ed.), *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, page 321.

⁶⁰ "Taceo de philosophis, astronomis, astrologis, quorum scientia mortalibus utilissima est, et in tres partes scinditur. το δογμα τηνμεθοδον, την εμπειριαν. Ad minores artes veniam," etc. [A. Hyeronimi, Prologus galateatus, in *Bibl. saer.*].

⁶¹ Proclus, quoted in Christian, Paul, *Histoire de la Magie, du Monde Surnaturel et de la Fatalité à travers les Temps et les Peuples*, page 88.

to 360 BCE under Nekht-Hor-heb I, first pharaoh of the XXX Dynasty. Hence it would have been both relatively secure from a political standpoint and a logical place for Plato to seek Egyptian initiation.⁶²

The Sphinx: Talk about last-minute timing! In 340 BCE, after more than four thousand years of native national rule, Egypt finally fell to a Persian army [which in turn fell to Alexander the Great in 332]. How sophisticated the Egyptian initiatory systems remained under purely-occupational governments is open to question - as would be the willingness of Egyptian priests to initiate foreigners under such circumstances. Even Pythagoras' initiation many years earlier seems to have occurred only after some arm-twisting by Amasis, himself a native Egyptian pharaoh and thus an initiate in his own right. A Persian or a Ptolemaic ruler would not have had such leverage over the native priesthods, nor the knowledge to judge whether forced-instruction were in fact genuine. After Pythagoras and Plato the link with the Egyptian priesthods was broken. [This may very well account for the sharp distinctions between the Pythagorean/Platonic doctrines - with their apparent sophistication and seeming uniqueness - and the decidedly-diluted commentaries (such as those of Aristotle) which trailed along after them.]

The Chimæra: Having come this far, what may we conclude concerning Plato's legacy?

The Sphinx: He left two memorials: his writings and his Academy. The former contain discussions of Forms [or Egyptian "gods", if you will!] on an initiatory level, although they are also useful as exercises in ordinary logic. The latter was, in effect, a Pythagorean school minus the strict personal and psychological discipline that Pythagoras thought important [and which contributed directly to the burning of Crotona and the slaying of Pythagoras himself - by outraged ex-students who had failed to withstand the pressure]. Evidently Plato thought that he could transmit the doctrines in an environment more suited to Greece than to Egypt. And he was successful, at least to the extent that the Academy enjoyed a long and productive existence - and to the extent that his own writings were preserved for our consideration at this point in the time-continuum. He may have failed to provide the Greece of his own day with the sort of enlightened government that he might have preferred, but he had seen Pythagorean domination of Sicily and Italy come to grief. So perhaps he was not so anxious as some might suppose to duplicate the Pythagorean experiment in Greece itself. Whereas Pythagoras died a violent death and left none of his personal works for posterity, Plato lived a full life and left a rich heritage for scholars - and Initiates - of the future. That, certainly, is testimony to his wisdom.

The Chimæra: "The secret worship of the Logos in the cosmos, the divine spark in every human form."⁶³

⁶² Brugsch-Bey, Heinrich, *Egypt Under the Pharaohs*, pages 450-451.

⁶³ Incantation, Raghavan Iyer to M.A. Aquino, 1975.

Epilogue

Poor men, most admirable, most pitiable,
With all their changes all their great Creeds change
For Man, this alien in my family,
Is alien most in this, to cherish dreams
And brood on visions of eternity,
And build religions in his brooding brain
And in the dark depths awe-full of his soul.
My other children live their little lives,
Are born and reach their prime and slowly fail,
And all their little lives are self-fulfilled;
They die and are no more, content with age
And weary with infirmity. But Man
Has fear and hope and phantasy and awe,
And wistful yearnings and unsated loves,
That strain beyond the limits of his life,
And therefore Gods and Demons, Heaven and Hell:
This Man, the admirable, the pitiable.

- James Thomson
A Voice from the Nile

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Appendix 2: The Book of Coming Forth by Night

The Book
of
Coming Forth
by
Night

North Solstice



The Equinox has succumbed to my Solstice, and I, Set, am revealed in my Majesty.

The time of the Purification is past. The fate of my Gifted race rests in balance, and I shall not recant my Word, spoken to my High Priest MehenPetTha in old Khem and now again to you. Proclaim the nineteen Parts of the Word, and vanquish thus the feeble and corrupt Keys of Enoch, which were but a shadow of my true Word and now are an affront to me.

I am the ageless Intelligence of this Universe. I created HarWer that I might define my Self. All other gods of all other times and nations have been created by men. This you know from the first Part of my Word, and from my manifest semblance, which alone is not of Earth.

Known as the Hebrew Satan, I chose to bring forth a Magus, according to the fashion of my Word. He was charged to form a Church of Satan, that I might easily touch the minds of men in this image they had cast for me.

In the fifth year of the Church of Satan, I gave to this Magus my Diabolicon, that he might know the truth of my ancient Gift to mankind, clothed though it might be in the myths of the Hebrews.

Even you, who delivered the Diabolicon from Asia, did not know it for what it was. But he that I had fashioned a Magus knew, and he thought often of the Diabolicon as he guided the Church of Satan.

Upon the ninth Solstice, therefore, I destroyed my pact with Anton Szandor LaVey, and I raised him to the Will of a Daimon, unbounded by the material dimensions. And so I thought to honor him beyond other men. But it may have been this act of mine that ordained his fall.

Were I my Self to displace the Cosmic Inertia, I should be forced to become a new measure of consistency. I would cease to be One, for I should become All.

To make of man a Daimon, then, may be to break his Self- reference to the bounds in which his semblance must exist.

I cannot undo the hurt that has come of this, but I shall restore to Anton Szandor LaVey his human aspect and his degree of Magus in my Order. Thus all may understand that he is dearly held by me, and that the end of the Church of Satan is not a thing of shame to him. But a new Aeon is now to begin, and the work of Anton Szandor LaVey is done. Let him be at ease, for no other man has ever seen with his eyes.



In April of the common year 1904, I came forth in Africa as my Opposite Self and brought into being an Aeon to end the horrors of the stasis of the death-gods of men. This new Aeon was a Purification, to prepare men for that which would follow it.

And Aleister Crowley received the Book of the Law, and my Opposite Self declared him Magus of the Aeon.

But HarWer, my Opposite Self, is a strange and fitful presence. I, Set, am my Self distinct from the Order of the Cosmos, yet am ordered in and of my Self. HarWer I was when I was once part of the Cosmos and could achieve identity only by becoming what the Cosmic order was not. By HarWer I cancelled the imbalance, leaving a Void in which true Creation could take form as Set.

But, as I have said, I cannot destroy the Cosmic Inertia without having to assume its place. And so HarWer must exist while Set exists.

The Aeon of HarWer endured until the Equinox of the common year 1966, when HarWer and Set were fused as one composite being. And so commenced the time of Set- HarWer - known as the Age of Satan - which was to bridge the expiring Aeon of HarWer and the forthcoming Aeon of Set.

Truth there was in the words of my Opposite Self, but a truth ever tinged with the inconsistency and irrationality of which I have spoken. And so the Book of the Law was confusion to all who came upon it, and the creative brilliance of the Magus Aleister Crowley was ever flawed by mindless destructiveness. He himself could never understand this, for he perceived HarWer as a unified Self. And so he was perplexed by a mystery he could not identify.

And I, Set, spoke too in the Book of the Law - Aye! listen to the numbers and the words -

4638 AB Π 2 9 ALGMORZY
x 24 89 RASTORAL

- What meaneth this, o prophet? Thou knowest not; nor shalt thou know ever. There cometh one to follow thee: he shall expound it.

And many of the Aeon of HarWer sought to read this but could not. Nor could the Magus himself, though he guessed rightly at its simplicity. It was said that every number is infinite - hence each number or sum of joined numbers became merely the corresponding letter.

Even so the sequence remained unknown - and so, after its issue, to me as well. For, while I may pass free of the boundaries of time, memory of the future cannot exist.

Now it has come to pass, and the Book of the Law is laid bare -

Destined First Century heir - Aquino - breaking Keys by doctrines Anton Lalvey - great Magus of reconsecration coming Year Xeper - founding his rightful Priesthood - Set - true origin Volume AL.

Michael Aquino, you are become Magus V of the Aeon of Set.

I, Set, am come again to my friends among mankind - Let my great nobles be brought to me.

In Khem I remain no longer, for I am forgotten there, and my house at PalMat-et is dust. I shall roam this world, and I shall come to those who seek me.

Magus of my Aeon - Manifest the Will of Set.

Reconsecrate my Temple and my Order in the true name of Set. No longer will I accept the bastard title of a Hebrew fiend.

When I came first to this world, I gave to you my great pentagram, timeless measure of beauty through proportion. And it was shown inverse, that creation and change be exalted above rest and preservation.

With the years my pentagram was corrupted, yet time has not the power to destroy it.

Its position was restored by the Church of Satan, but its essence was dimmed with a Moorish name, and the perverse letters of the Hebrews, and the goat of decadent Khar. During the Age of Satan I allowed this curious corruption, for it was meant to do me honor as I was then perceived.

But this is now my Aeon, and my pentagram is again to be pure in its splendor. Cast aside the corruptions, that the pentagram of Set may shine forth. Let all who seek me be never without it, openly and with pride, for by it I shall know them.

Let the one who aspires to my knowledge be called by the name Setian.

I seek my Elect and none other, for mankind now hastens toward an annihilation which none but the Elect may hope to avoid. And alone I cannot preserve my Elect, but I would teach them and strengthen their Will against the coming peril, that they and their blood may endure. To do this I must give further of my own Essence to my Elect, and, should they fail, the Majesty of Set shall fade and be ended.

Behold, it is I who call you, because you are the guardians of the Aeon of Set, zealous in what you do.

The Satanist thought to approach Satan through ritual. Now let the Setian shun all recitation, for the text of another is an affront to the Self. Speak rather to me as to a friend, gently and without fear, and I shall hear as a friend. Do not bend your knee nor drop your eye, for such things were not done in my house at PalMat-et. But speak to me at night, for the sky then becomes an entrance and not a barrier. And those who call me the Prince of Darkness do me no dishonor.

The Setian need conjure neither curse nor kindness from me, for by the magic of my great pentagram I shall see with his eyes. And then the strength that is mine shall be the strength of the Setian, and against the Will of Set no creature of the Universe may stand. And I think not of those who think not of me.

The years of the Aeon of HarWer were confused, and I do not wish to think of them save as curiosities. But I wish to remember the Church of Satan and the Magus of that Age. Therefore let the years of my Aeon be counted from the conception of the Church of Satan.

And now, having looked upon the past with affection and reverence, we shall turn our gaze to the times before us. Think carefully of the Word of Set, for it is given in witness to my Bond.

Behold, O West, I have established my Aeon. I punish the enemies who are in it, placed in the Place of Destruction. I deliver them to the examiners from whose guard there is no escape. Lo, I pass near to thee, I pass near to thee!

Affix now my image as it was given to you, so that all who read of these matters may now look upon the likeness of Set.

The Word of the Aeon of Set is

Xeper -  - Become



Appendix 3: The Book of Coming Forth by Night - Analysis and Commentary

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°
The Ides of March XL ÆS

Introduction

From 1966 to 1975 CE there existed in the United States of America a most singular organization known as the Church of Satan. Founded by Anton Szandor LaVey in the city of San Francisco, it espoused the social doctrine of “Indulgence”, challenging all creeds, cultures, and codes that seek virtue through abstinence from the pleasures of mortal existence.

In its formative years the Church of Satan took an essentially metaphorical approach towards the being from whom it took its name. “Satan” was a term representing, it was thought, simply the principle of carnality. Such rituals and ceremonies as the Church first celebrated, therefore, were conceived as illustrative, inspirational, and allegorical. That, at least, is the way it all began.

“When he is called,” Eliphaz Levi once observed, “the Devil comes and is seen.” And in that prosaic statement lies a truth whose implications challenge the rational constructs of the most exacting intellects. The one common feature to all the gods of all the nations of history, it may be said, is that they do **not** come and are **not** seen.

Satan, however, **did** come to the Church of Satan - first as the faintest of atmospheres in its ceremonies, and ultimately as a metaphysical presence whose expression of being was awesome, exhilarating - the very fire of life to those who took his name as a part of their own and called themselves Satanists.

The full history of the Church of Satan is documented in *The Church of Satan*, which account culminates on the North Solstice of the Satanic Year Ten, the evening of June 21-22, 1975. For the Church of Satan had fallen in ruins, Anton LaVey having corrupted the Priesthood; and it seemed to me, at that time Magister Templi IV° and successor by default to the Satanic High Priesthood, that only direct intervention by the Prince of Darkness himself could provide us with a basis for a viable *raison d'être*.

Alone that night I called upon him, and he came forth - through a sequence of realizations within my mind that, in a few short hours, I recorded in written text as *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

In its most immediate sense this text brought the Church of Satan to a final, dignified terminus, superseding it with a new initiatory institution - the Temple of Set - whose history to date may be found in its various administrative papers, newsletters, and the *Jeweled Tablets of Set*. Yet the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* was to prove a far deeper and richer mine, as again and again I strove to explore its depths. My first comment - a single page (Appendix #4) - was written on the morning of June 23, X. Over the following decades gradually-expanding ones were to follow, and finally this one.

Since 1975 the Temple of Set has attained a far richer awareness of its identity. I myself grew to comprehend the full meaning of the Word whereby I came into being as a Magus V°. In doing so I aided others to attune their magical wills to ever more powerful sources of energy and inspiration that had lain dormant within them. Having fulfilled that which was set forth for me to do upon the Earth as a Magus, I myself came into being on the Ides of March XIV as an Ipsissimus VI°.

This, then, is an examination of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* from a VI° perspective, encompassing the key magical texts of two Æons and their intervening Age. The *Book of Coming Forth by Night* is no longer just a call to arms and a charge to the fellowship of the Prince of Darkness; it is a principle which has woven itself into the fabric of existence so thoroughly that it has become an immortal element of mankind's higher potential. It remains for those who seek the path to that towards which it shows the way to train themselves and refine their states of being until this Grail appears in its truth before them. This commentary is a foretaste of the elixir of the Grail; it is to say that *Xeper* is also no mere illusion - it too comes and is seen.

To what extent does the text lend itself to objective interpretation? At first reading it is both straightforward and unambiguous. Many of the words and phrases, however, are evidently used in an emphatically precise or unique sense. A magician and philosopher will consider them with corresponding care. Moreover the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* is not simply a compendium of abstract generalizations; its appearance was keyed to specific circumstances, and many of its passages address them. Thus background information is important, particularly for those unfamiliar with the events and subjects in question.

While the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* is sufficiently integral to be read and considered as a whole, its statements are best treated in sequence. Hence I begin as the text itself began: with its name.

Xeper.



The Book of Coming Forth by Night (title)

In hieroglyphics this would be *Sat Per Em Kerh*. It is an evident negation of the name of the *Book of Coming Forth by Day*, the Osirian funerary text that is popularly known as the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*.

Persons unfamiliar with the ancient Egyptian culture often assume that the Egyptian religion, like those of later Mediterranean civilizations, consisted of a single, integrated pantheon of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses. It is rather the case that the earliest Egyptian god-figures were provincial, being patrons of individual cities and districts (*Nomes*). Nor, despite their famous human/beast composite appearances, were they mere “supernatural persons” after the Greek, Mesopotamian, or Roman fashion. While popular stories were woven about them - presumably for popular consumption - the hieroglyphic treatment of these entities suggests that they actually represented various aspects of existence - the “Forms” or “First Principles” discussed by Pythagoras and Plato in a more abstract manner.

The hieroglyphic term for “god” is *neter*, of which Sir E.A. Wallis Budge remarks:

This word has been translated “god-like”, “holy”, “divine”, “sacred”, “power”, “strength”, “force”, “strong”, “fortify”, “mighty”, “protect”; but it is quite impossible to be certain that any word which we may use represents the meaning of *neter*, because no one knows exactly what idea the ancient Egyptians attached to the word. The truth is that the exact meaning of *neter* was lost at a very early period of Egyptian history, and even the Coptic does not help us to recover it.⁶⁴

Commerce, protective alliances, cultural contact, and finally the unification of the entire nation ca. 3200 BCE resulted in the gradual incorporation of local gods into regional groups, and then into a loosely-knit national pantheon. Local and regional cult centers continued to hold their respective patrons in especial regard, however, and so the character and role of a specific god might vary remarkably from place to place. Individual dynasties also tended to be oriented to particular cult centers, and so the gods in question would be elevated - at least for a time - to the status of national patrons.⁶⁵

The information concerning these cults which is available to modern Egyptologists is both sparse and confusing. Since a given god could be portrayed in a number of different ways, identifying the “core god” is difficult. The images and inscriptions concerning a god were often altered or appropriated by cultists of rival gods.

In Christian and Moslem times the old gods were considered blasphemous, and monuments to them were regularly defaced and destroyed. By the end of the fifth century CE, knowledge of hieroglyphics had died out, not to reappear until the nineteenth century; meanwhile many “useless” records perished through neglect.

For two reasons the cult of Osiris (*Asar*) and Isis (*Asa*) has been emphasized in modern literature: First, it was the last cult to dominate the entire Egyptian nation. Thus it was in a position to do a “final editing” of non-Osirian manuscripts and monuments. Secondly it was described in detail by Plutarch, permitting its study

⁶⁴ Budge, Sir E.A. Wallis, *The Book of the Dead*. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960, page #99.

⁶⁵ Ions, Veronica, *Egyptian Mythology*. New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1968, pages #11-13.

long after the hieroglyphic records of the other cults had become unreadable.⁶⁶
“In the early dynasties,” observes Budge:

Set was a beneficent god, and one whose favor was sought after by the living and by the dead, and so late as the XIX Dynasty kings delighted to call themselves “Beloved of Set”. After the cult of Osiris was firmly established and this god was the “great god” of all Egypt, it became the fashion to regard Set as the origin of all evil, and his statues and images were so effectively destroyed that only a few which have escaped by accident have come down to us.⁶⁷

The Osirians recast Set as Osiris’ treacherous brother and mortal enemy of Osiris’ son - for whom they appropriated the god Horus. Not content with attacking Set personally, they further appropriated his consort and son from the original triad of his cult - Nephthys and Anubis - whom they now described respectively as a concubine of Osiris and a son of Osiris by Nephthys.

When the Osirian cult came to dominate Egypt after the XX Dynasty, all traces of the Set cult were practically obliterated. “Between the XXII and the XXV Dynasties,” comments Budge, “a violent reaction set in against this god; his statues and figures were smashed; his effigy was hammered out from the bas-reliefs and stelæ in which it appeared.”⁶⁸ We know of the Set cult through a few archaeological finds that managed to survive both the Osirian influence and the more general vandalism of the Christian/ Moslem eras. Hence it is no small irony that the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* plays upon the title of the Osirian “bible”.

It is also of note that the Osirian cult in particular glorified life-after-death above life-before-death. The *Book of Coming Forth by Day* is essentially a selection of spells and incantations designed to aid a newly-dead person through the perils of the underworld. This preoccupation with death is conspicuously absent from the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, which is ultimately an incitement to and a challenge for the enhancement of conscious life.

North Solstice *Xeper*

The *Book of Coming Forth by Night* was written during the night of the North Solstice (June 21-22) 1975 (the year X of the Age of Satan, according to the Church of Satan). Here the year is given the hieroglyphic name *Xeper*, symbolized by *Xepera*, the scarab beetle who represents the principle of the Sun’s “immortality” via its transition through the darkness towards another dawn.

As a god of darkness and night, Set was the complement to Horus (*Hor* - god of the Sun and daylight) in predynastic times. So integral was this relationship that the heads of the two gods were frequently shown on a single body (hieroglyphic name: *Hrwyfy* “He with the Two Faces”). With regard to the annual cycle, Horus was thought to govern the waxing of the Sun from the South Solstice, while Set governed the waning of the Sun from the North Solstice.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Budge, *Egyptian Language*. New York: Dover Publications, 1971, page #15.
Ions, *op. cit.*, pages #50-55.

Fagan, Brian M., *The Rape of the Nile*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975, pages #34-36.

⁶⁷ Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, page #181.

⁶⁸ Budge, *The Mummy*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973, page #276.

⁶⁹ Carus, Paul, *The History of the Devil*. New York: Land’s End Press, 1969, page #17.

In *The Dawn of Astronomy* Sir Norman Lockyer suggests that “‘Set’ seems to have been a generic name applied to the northern (? circumpolar) constellations, perhaps because *Set* = darkness, and these stars, being always visible in the night, may have in time typified it.⁷⁰ Since the northern constellations were symbolized by the name of Set, the god of darkness, we should take Set-Horus to mean that the stars in the Dragon (*Draco*) were rising at sunrise.”⁷¹ To support his theory, Lockyer cites the following inscription from royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings:

The constellation of the Thigh appears at the late rising. When this constellation is in the middle of the heavens, having come to the south where [the constellation Orion] lies, the other stars are proceeding to the western horizon. Regarding the Thigh: It is the Thigh of Set; while it is seen in the northern heavens, there is a band [constellation] to the two in the shape of a great bronze chain.⁷²

Lockyer concludes that the constellation *Draco*, and in particular the star at its head (*Gamma Draconis*), represented Set. If indeed a single star were so regarded, it was probably *Alpha Draconis* (or *Thuban*), the Polar Star at the beginning of the Egyptian civilization.

Due to the Precession of the Equinoxes, *Alpha Draconis* will return to the celestial pole at approximately 24000 CE. Since its last appearance there ca. 3000 BCE coincided with the unification and development of the world’s first advanced human culture, related calculations based upon the Precession Circle may yield interesting results.⁷³

The Equinox has succumbed to my Solstice, and I, Set, am revealed in my Majesty.

The apparent reference is to the North Solstice, as explained above. There may be a second implication: Aleister Crowley identified the events surrounding the inception of the Æon of Horus in 1904 CE as the “Equinox of the Gods”. The *Book of Coming Forth by Night* heralds the eclipse of that æon in favor of the Æon of Set.

My evocation - an effort to interpret the surprising downfall of the Church of Satan - was addressed to “Satan” (which I believed the proper name of the Prince of Darkness). Immediately, however, he corrects this name to that of Set. The term “Majesty” is also significant; in Egypt this honorific title was accorded only two gods - Set and Ra. In hieroglyphics it is the suffix *-hen*. A possible phonetic origin of the Hebrew term *Satan* is thus apparent.⁷⁴

The time of the Purification is past.

This period is not conclusively identified. It may refer to the Age of Satan (Set/HarWer), when all of the Osirian death-worship and posthumous salvation cults have undergone a more-or-less final archæological exposure and discrediting, despite

⁷⁰ Lockyer, J. Norman, *The Dawn of Astronomy*. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964, page #302.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, page #149.

⁷² *Ibid.*, page #147.

⁷³ Moore, Patrick, *The Atlas of the Universe*. New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1970, pages #216-217.

⁷⁴ Ions, *op. cit.*, page #65.

lingering emotional enslavement to them of primitive intellects. Or it may refer to the Æon of Horus (HarWer), during which time the grip of the old cults on the human mind was gradually broken. Or it may indicate the entire passage of time since the Osirian death-worship cult gained supremacy in Egypt and either absorbed or outlawed the life-oriented cults.

The fate of my Gifted race rests in balance, and I shall not recant my Word, spoken to my High Priest MehenPetTha in old Khem and now again to you.

The emphasized term “Gift” refers to the non-natural expansion of human intellectual capacity that occurred in prehistoric times, as discussed in *Black Magic* and *The Temple of Set*. “Word” refers to the *Word of Set*, discussed below.

There are no records of the ancient Priesthood of Set through which “High Priest MehenPetTha” might be identified, but the name can be rendered in hieroglyphics. Ipsissimus Don Webb has observed:

Mehen is the serpent-goddess whose “hidden” faces are those of Horus and Set. For information on this, see my *The Seven Faces of Darkness*.⁷⁵ She was around from predynastic times, but was only used in personal names during the Setian Renaissance according to George Hart, when her cult gained a status among the tomb workers at *S*t Maat* - an area known for its Set chaplains and its special devotion to *Set Aaphate* (“Set Strong of Foreleg”).⁷⁶

Mehen shows up in the funerary decorations of people like Rameses VI and Seti I. Dr. Aquino pointed out to me that she shows up in the *Book of Gates* after the Slaying of Apep.

The other nouns in the name are a bound genitive (they mean “of”), which is common in a nominative utterance. *Pet* is pretty simple: Heaven. There are several words that sound like *tha*. Of the nouns I choose “fire”. My reasons are magical; pursuing Rev. 13:13 will suggest them to you.⁷⁷

So I would say “Mehen of Celestial Fire” is the name.⁷⁸

“Khem” is a phonetic rendition of the hieroglyphic *Xem*, one of the many titles of the ancient Egyptian nation.

Proclaim the nineteen Parts of the Word, and vanquish thus the feeble and corrupt Keys of Enoch, which were but a shadow of my true Word and now are an affront to me.

On April 13, 1584 CE John Dee, mathematician and magician to the court of Queen Elizabeth I, undertook a series of Workings in Cracow, Poland. With the assistance of Edward Kelley, he wrote into his diaries a series of nineteen magical incantations in what he called the “Enochian or Angelic language”. With each incantation or Key Dee provided an English translation, also communicated by the angels to Kelley. In 1659 the Dee diaries containing the Keys were published by Meric. Casaubon as *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Yeers*

⁷⁵ Webb, Don, *The Seven Faces of Darkness*. Smithville, Texas: Rûna-Raven Press, 1996, pages #31-32.

⁷⁶ Hart, George, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

⁷⁷ “And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on earth in the sight of men.”

⁷⁸ Webb, Don, letter to an Adept II°, December 23, 1998.

*between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits.*⁷⁹

The attribution of the Keys or language to Enoch is interesting insofar as he is a remarkable individual in legend. Described in the Old Testament as the seventh master of the world after Adam, Enoch is the Hebrew equivalent of the Phœnician Cadmus, the Greek Hermes, and the Egyptian Thoth. As such he is the reputed author of the Tarot, the Cabala, the *Emerald Tablet of Thoth*, and the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*. He receives only a brief mention in “Genesis”, where the fifth chapter recounts:

And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

The *Book of Enoch* comprises a part of what is generally called Apocalyptic literature. The Apocalyptists were a school of pre-Rabbinical Hebrews who believed that the world was in such a hopeless mess as to be incurable by any of man’s efforts. The name “Apocalyptist” means “revealer”, and this sect maintained that human progress was rigidly mapped by God and was not subject to human will at all. In this the Apocalyptists differed from the other major Hebraic branch, Pharisaism.

The Apocalyptic literature is generally fixed to the period 200-150 BCE, and the *Book of Enoch* is generally regarded as the oldest such work. It seems to have been written by a number of authors, the earliest being a Hebrew from the Land of Dan in northern Palestine. The original text was probably written in Hebrew or Aramaic, later translated into Greek and Latin. These translations did not directly survive the decline of the Holy Roman Empire. The Greek version had been translated into Ethiopian, however, and an explorer named Bruce brought back a copy of it from Abyssinia in 1773 CE.

The *Book of Enoch* is sometimes referred to as *I Enoch* to distinguish it from *II Enoch* (or *The Secrets of Enoch*), a later work executed in Slavonic. The *Book of Enoch* contains six sections: The Book of Enoch, the Parables, the Book of the Courses of the Heavenly Luminaries, the Dream-Visions, the Conclusion, and the Noah Fragments. Most are restatements of traditional Hebraic doctrine, but the first section - the Book of Enoch - includes accounts of Enoch’s visits to certain areas of Earth and Sheol, including the following descriptions of the Palace of the Prince of Darkness:

And I went in until I drew nigh to a wall which is built of crystals and surrounded by tongues of fire, and it began to affright me. And I went into the tongues of fire and drew nigh to a large house which was built of crystals. The walls of the house were like a tessellated floor of crystals, and its groundwork was of crystal. Its ceiling was like the path of the stars and the lightnings, and between them were fiery Cherubim amidst a background of water. A blazing fire surrounded the walls, and its portals were covered with fire. And I entered into that house, and it was as hot as fire yet as cold as ice. There were no delights of life therein. Fear covered me, and trembling gat hold of me. And I quaked and trembled and fell down upon my face.

⁷⁹ Deacon, Richard, *John Dee*. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1968, pages #138-156.
Casaubon, Meric., *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*. London: Askin Publishers, 1974, Introduction.

Shortly thereafter Enoch beholds the Black Flame:

From thence I went to another place to the west of the ends of the Earth. And I saw a burning fire which ran without resting, and paused not from its course day or night but blazed without respite. And I asked, saying, "What is this flame which burns unceasingly?" Then Raguel, one of the holy Angels who was with me, said, "This is the Dark Fire in the West which persecutes all the luminaries of Heaven."

In the "Conclusion" the coming of a new kingdom is predicted - not in an afterlife, but here on Earth. The destruction of the existing Earth and Heaven is foretold, followed by the institution of a "new Heaven". The relevance of this *Book of Enoch* material to the deciphered "Enochian Keys" will become apparent.

In the late nineteenth century the Casaubon text of the Enochian Keys was adopted into the magical inventory of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a London-based Rosicrucian society. The Golden Dawn altered and augmented the Keys in order to align them with its own emphasis on the Hebrew Cabala, and its publications assert a mastery of the Enochian language by the leaders of the Order.⁸⁰ Aleister Crowley later incorporated the Golden Dawn edition of the Keys into his A.'.A.'. , again claiming fluency in Enochian and constructing rituals from Enochian words and phrases.⁸¹

The Keys next appeared in 1969 CE, when Anton LaVey took the Cabalistic version from Crowley's *Equinox*, replaced references to the Judaic/Christian God with references to Satan, and included the result in his *Satanic Bible*.⁸² The general sensation caused by this book, together with a considerable amount of indignation on the part of old-line Cabalists, eventually inspired a revival of interest in John Dee and his magical diaries.⁸³ In 1974 CE Stephen Skinner brought out a second (facsimile) edition of *A True and Faithful Relation*, a copy of which I acquired in March of the following year.

Upon comparing the facsimile Casaubon to the Golden Dawn, Crowley, and LaVey Keys, I realized the extent of the distortion that had taken place. Being familiar with language and cipher construction, I set out to unravel the original Keys to determine their linguistic lineage. After some weeks of work, I concluded that Enochian is not a true language. Rather it is an artificial jargon, i.e. arbitrary words placed together in roughly consistent sequences to simulate a true language. It is so cleverly done that it can fool non-linguists fairly easily:

"... We have here fragmentary pieces of a very ancient tongue - a language which is far older even than the Sanskrit." - Regardie, *Golden Dawn*, Volume II, page #266. Immediately after admitting that he is no philologist and is "without the least scientific knowledge of comparative languages", Regardie offers the above statement about Enochian - which may be discounted accordingly.

The story continues, however: Aleister Crowley included virtually the same sentence in his *Confessions* (page #612), again with no supporting evidence whatever.

Then Anton LaVey, assuming that both Regardie and Crowley must have known what they were talking about, included virtually the same sentence in his *Satanic Bible* (page #155).

⁸⁰ Regardie, Israel, *The Golden Dawn*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1970, Volume II, pages #260-269.

⁸¹ Crowley, Aleister, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1969, page #612.

⁸² LaVey, Anton Szandor, *The Satanic Bible*. New York: Avon Books, 1969, pages #155-272.

⁸³ Regardie (Ed.) in Crowley, Aleister, *The Vision and the Voice*. Dallas: Sangreal Foundation, 1972, page #10.

Later attempts to validate Enochian as a language or to place it historically - Donald C. Laycock's *The Complete Enochian Dictionary* (London: Askin, 1978) and Geoffrey James' *The Enochian Evocation of Dr. John Dee* (Berkeley Heights, NJ: Heptangle Books, 1984) - have met with similar failure. James, following Laycock, reaches the conclusion that the unpronounceable words and random letter arrangements of Enochian indicate that it was designed for non-material entities [lacking vocal cords]!

The last word was written by Hans Holzer in his *The Truth About Witchcraft* (1969), in which he called the language "Inelkian" and labeled it "a form of distorted Hebrew"!

It is even possible to "write" in Enochian as Crowley did, altering suffixes to create the impression of declension or conjugation. But a comprehensive grammar, essential to a true written or spoken tongue, is lacking.

For an example of how a jargon may be used, see pages #181-201 of the *Satanic Rituals* by Anton Szandor LaVey. Some years ago I ghost-wrote the entire section on H.P. Lovecraft - introduction and rituals - for the book. It was the work of about two months to develop the jargon that became the "nameless language" [I called it "Yuggothic"] of the *Ceremony of the Nine Angles* and the *Call to Cthulhu*. A word that sounded properly "Lovecraftian" would be constructed arbitrarily: *El-aka* = world, *gryenn'h* = [of] horrors. Then the word would be used consistently throughout the text of both rituals. Slight modifications of endings would suffice for different sentence constructions, and there you have a "language" every bit as flexible as Enochian!⁸⁴

Once I realized Enochian to be a jargon, I changed my approach. Now I suspected that it might be some sort of cipher or code, Dee being famous for his use of same. I tested the first three Keys against a variety of code-breaking techniques.⁸⁵ Once more I met with no success. I had not held high hopes that I would. The loose alignment of Enochian words to their English counterparts, together with an entirely different frequency of individual letters in the two languages [even cancelling out the most divergent letters], makes cipher improbable.

Only pure code - with Enochian words or letters meaning something not revealed by their internal design alone - remained. To uncover such a code, one would simply have to know the words or phrases in English triggered by a given Enochian word or phrase, unrelated though the connection might otherwise be. [For example, the otherwise random appearance of "vorsg" might be code for "for the Queen's eyes only", etc.]

Two avenues of investigation remained. First, if it were true that Enochian were neither language nor cipher, then there was still the possibility that it might be a corruption of a genuine tongue. Regardie [citing Mathers' method], Crowley, and LaVey had all accepted Kelley's comment that "He seemeth to read as Hebrew is read".⁸⁶ I decided to eliminate this Hebrew-letter pronunciation entirely, treating each word as a phonetic unity and deemphasizing the vowels. [Thus "vorsg" should be pronounced just that way, rather than "vaoresaji".]

My test case was the XIX Key, 30th Æthyr (TEX) on the assumption that there might be visual results per Crowley's experiences in *The Vision and The Voice*.⁸⁷ This time there was a certain success, in that I experienced a sequence of unusual

⁸⁴ See Appendices #72-74 of *The Church of Satan*.

⁸⁵ from my experience with the U.S. National Security Agency, concerned among other things with cryptography.

⁸⁶ Casaubon, *op. cit.*, page #120.

Crowley (Ed. Regardie), *Gems from the Equinox*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1974, page #408.

⁸⁷ Crowley (Ed. Regardie), *Gems from the Equinox*, pages #408-591.

visions and dreams.⁸⁸

Finally, during the evening of May 30, I experimented with the XVII Key and was rewarded with spectacular results - the "Sphinx and Chimæra" Working.⁸⁹

Then, in the first week of June, something quite unexpected happened. I began to write a text in installments of one or two hours per night. In the same style as the future *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, it declared the Enochian Keys to be a remote corruption of something called the *Word of Set*. There followed two "pure" Keys in English - called "parts" of the *Word of Set*. Before proceeding further I was forced to break my concentration because of the sudden crisis in the Church of Satan, and so the *Word of Set* remained unfinished for the next six years.

As to the "breaking" of the Keys "by the doctrines of Anton LaVey", therein lies still another tale. Anton's principal contribution to the Crowley Keys was to render them in what might be called a "Black Mass" form, with Heavenly references arbitrarily changed to Infernal ones. One might presume that this would invalidate the statements of the text. Oddly enough, however, the use of these "Black Keys" by the Church of Satan produced magical results that were, if anything, far more powerful than those of the "pure" system.

In my Working on the *Word of Set*, I used an approach similar to Anton's, seeking words to express what I seemed to sense the Keys were actually intended to say. In short I was endeavoring to present the Keys in a still "Blacker" version than that which appears in the *Satanic Bible*.

Moreover the North Solstice X Working which resulted in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* was begun with this new First Part of the *Word of Set* rather than with the First Enochian Key. Such would seem to be the basis for the *Book of Coming Forth by Night's* reference to the "breaking" of the old Keys.

Six years later the Working of the *Word of Set* was finally completed - on April 13, 1981 (anniversary of John Dee's initial Working).

In the *Satanic Bible* the Enochian Keys, even in their altered form, are still garbled and unintelligible. Hence Anton felt the need to venture an interpretation of each one preceding its text. These interpretations have no basis in previous documents, and indeed previous commentators - including Dee himself - had been unable to integrate the Keys into a coherent translation.

After completing the Working of the *Word of Set*, I found that the new translation needed no external interpretation - at least not for those to whom it was evidently addressed. Obviously it is idiomatic and not a word-for-word translation - as are all translations from original hieroglyphs.

In 1980, furthermore, I learned that the Casaubon account of the Dee Keys was not as error-free as I had previously supposed. My benefactor was an Initiate of the Temple of Set who kindly provided me with a complete microfilm of the original Dee diary Keys from the British Museum. Hence the "Enochian" text reproduced with the *Word of Set* is an exact copy of the original as John Dee penned it, including capitalization.

As I have noted above, this original does not lend itself to grammatically-based translation or to word-for-word correlation with Dee's own English "translation". [The most recent efforts to do so - in Donald Laycock's *Enochian Dictionary* - resulted in an arbitrary subdividing of the Enochian text and the addition of a modern-English-based punctuation in order to "force" a correlation. The quality of

⁸⁸ See the record of one such example in Chapter #1.

⁸⁹ Appendix #1.

the result is self-evident.]

An “Enochian purist” might question the translation provided by the *Word of Set* in that it is not the English version recorded by John Dee in his diaries. My answer is simply that I approached the Keys not as a historian seeking to reprint what Dee did, but as a magician seeking to operate the same “magical machinery” that Dee did - and to operate it with greater care and precision than he did.

Hence it is not a case of my “corrupting Dee”, but rather of my uncorrupting something which predated Dee’s own existence, and which was, after all, not of his [or Kelley’s] authorship. Were one to take the position that the Keys are a Dee/Kelley creation, then they would be fraudulent as a GBM Working - and merely an uncommonly-successful LBM stunt which has mystified and obsessed occultists these many centuries.

As it appears here, then, the *Word of Set* is an eighteenfold sequence of statements addressed to the original (“third ordering”) Initiates of the Temple of Set in ancient times. The 19th Part is not so much a statement as an operative invocation to be used for access to what Dee referred to as the “thirty aires or æthyrs”. Use of this invocation is best described in Crowley’s *Liber LXXXIX vel Chanokh*; see also *The Vision and The Voice*.

What exactly is an “æthyr”? Cabalistically these are “rings” or “spheres” [of consciousness] progressively closer to the universal godhead. Per Crowley, each æthyr also awakens certain kinds of dispositions and perceptions in a magician who focuses his attention towards it - and may also provide him with access to related magical tools and/or weapons. The æthyrs will stand further exploration, in light of the Initiatory advances of the Æon of Set, and should provide a rich opportunity for Setians to test their GBM sensitivity and skills.

I am the ageless Intelligence of this Universe. I created HarWer that I might define my Self. All other gods of all other times and nations have been created by men. This you know from the first Part of my Word, and from my manifest semblance, which alone is not of Earth.

The Universe as a whole is mechanically consistent, but it does not possess a “God” personality that favors one of its components - such as mankind - above others. The Set-entity, however, is a finite intelligence within the Universe and can draw such distinctions. Set is a being operating independently of the order of the objective universe, not in enforced or unconscious concert with it.

“HarWer” or *Har-ur* (“Haræris” in Greek) was one of the most ancient forms of the Egyptian god *Hor* (“Horus” in Greek). [The English translation of *Hor* is “face”.]

In predynastic and Old Kingdom times, Horus was the god of light, complementary to Set as god of darkness. Together the two gods also symbolized the unity and wholeness of the Egyptian nation: Horus as the god of the north (Lower Egypt) and Set as the god of the south (Upper Egypt). This union was represented on monuments by the ritual gesture of *samtaui*, showing Horus and Set binding the heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt around the stem of an *AnX*, symbol of divine life.

The roles of Horus and Set as the original state gods of Egypt were further emphasized by the pharaohs’ famous Double Crown (*SeXet*), being a composite of the Red Crown of Horus (*Teser*) and the White Crown of Set (*Het*)/“Great One of

Spells”).⁹⁰ And the *Tcham* sceptre, with the head and forked tail of Set, became a symbol of power and authority for gods and pharaohs alike.⁹¹

Horus, originally a solar deity, was later adopted into the Osirian mythos as the son of Osiris and Isis. Egyptologists generally distinguish the original and the corruption by the terms “Horus the Elder” and “Horus the Younger” respectively.

HarWer is a form of Horus the Elder combined with *Wer* (“The Great God”), a transcendent god of light. The Sun and the Moon were said to be the right and left eyes of HarWer, known as the *Udjat* (“Uræus” in Greek). At the same time the *Udjat* was also considered to partake of the essence of Set. “This is the Uræus which came forth from Set.”⁹² Mounted both on the *SeXet* and on other national crowns and headgear, the *Udjat* became another symbol of the pharaoh.

According to the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, the dual Set/HarWer entity is the only “god” that possesses intelligence independent of the objective universe. The Universe as a whole is not intelligent, if a requirement of “intelligence” is an active, distinct personality; there is nothing for the Universe as a whole to act upon or be distinct against. [This principle refutes the doctrine of “deism”, in which God is assumed to be identical with the totality of existence.]

The only quality common to the entire objective universe as such is internal consistency [which is not to say that such consistency is a simple thing to incorporate]. And other gods, whether Egyptian or foreign, are derivative of Set or of the human mind. This does not imply that they are “imaginary” in the vulgar sense [except when crudely conceptualized by vulgar imaginations]. The disciplined, educated, and experienced mind is capable of substantive creation; it can give life to stereotypical, archetypical, and/or unique gods and dæmons. This creative ability distinguishes the magician from the superstitious believer: The former conceives and actualizes such entities consciously and deliberately, while the latter is controlled and conditioned by externally-imposed images of them.

The “Set-animal” of portraits and hieroglyphic inscriptions has remained the object of considerable controversy. Its long, curved snout, stiffly-upraised and forked tail, and tall, brush-like ears (?) appear to rule it out of any known animal category. The most extensive and thorough treatment of Set’s image to date is by H. Te Velde in his classic work *Seth, God of Confusion*.⁹³

Among the animals he cites as past candidates for the Set-animal are the ass, oryx antelope, greyhound, fennec, jerboa, camel, okapi, long-snouted mouse, aardvark or orycteropus, giraffe, hog, boar, hare, jackal, tapir, long-snouted Nile mormyr, and the Egyptian *Nh*-bird. Dismissing each of the above as essentially different from the portraits and statues of Set, Te Velde takes the position that the question cannot be resolved from the information currently available to Egyptologists.

Concerning the hieroglyphic image of Set, Te Velde states that it does not show

⁹⁰ Ions, *op. cit.*, page #62.

⁹¹ Te Velde, *op. cit.*, pages #89-90.

⁹² Utterance #683, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, R.O. Faulkner (Trans.). London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

⁹³ The “-th” ending is the result of spellings of “Set” using the Greek letter θ. In hieroglyphic writing, according to Budge, the name should be pronounced with a hard “-t” (*Egyptian Language*, page #53). Similarly I write the name of Set’s divine consort as Nephthys, not the θ-heavy “Nephthys”. It is fair to point out, however, that the name of Set has appeared in phonetic hieroglyphs in at least a dozen variations (Te Velde, *op. cit.*, pages #1-3). The Temple of Set uses the name with a hard “-t”, after the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

the characteristics of an actual, living animal, and expresses doubt whether the hieroglyph can be traced to any animal which ever existed in the area of Egypt.⁹⁴

In his magnum opus *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, Sir E.A. Wallis Budge attempts to associate the Set-animal with the Saluki dog of Arabia. By way of evidence he cites the dog's characteristically aggressive nature, ignoring the fact that it displays none of the aforementioned physical features. Hence Budge's identification must be rejected.⁹⁵

In hieroglyphic and pictorial representations, Set was also the only god shown with red-toned skin. Most of the others were flesh-colored, save that Osiris and his principal attendants frequently had pale green complexions (symbolic of corpse-flesh).

One may note that Set was by no means the only "fabulous" creature ever portrayed by Egyptian artists. But he was the only one represented as a principal god, as opposed to a purely-animalistic monster of the *Tuat*.

Known as the Hebrew Satan, I chose to bring forth a Magus, according to the fashion of my Word. He was charged to form a Church of Satan, that I might easily touch the minds of men in this image they had cast for me.

Before proceeding further, I should perhaps at this point address a point of confusion concerning the Set/Satan relationship of particular note to some students of Aleister Crowley:

Kenneth Grant, co-editor of many of Crowley's works with John Symonds, has repeatedly and exhaustively tried to connect Set with Crowley's philosophy in general, and with Aiwass in particular.⁹⁶ Crowley's own writings, however, do not substantiate this. Crowley practically ignored Set, except for an occasional mention of the god in an Osirian-mythos context. In his principal discussion of the Devil on page #296 of *Magick*, for instance, he does not even include the name of Set.

It is obvious that Crowley's orientation with regard to Egyptian theology was exclusively towards the Osiris-cult mythos. On page #399 of his *Confessions*, while discussing the sequence of magical æons in terms of the Osirian triad (Isis, Osiris, and Horus the Younger), he emphasizes the position of Horus as the avenger of his father Osiris - a role accorded only the Osirian corruption. Additional confirmations are to be found in *Magical and Philosophical Commentaries on the Book of the Law*, wherein "Hoor-paar-Kraat" is identified on page #94 as the "God of Silence" and "Harpocrates", both designations of Horus the Younger. On the following pages his position as the son of Osiris is restated. There are plenty of other examples, but the point should be made.

Grant also endeavors somewhat desperately to identify Set with "Shaitan", whom he states was the god worshipped by the Yezidi in Mesopotamia. The Yezidi religious texts - the *Black Scripture* and *Book of the Revelation* - do not use the term "Shaitan" at all, calling the Yezidi deity by the name of Melek Taus, Taus Melek, or Taus-e Malak. [Only in LaVey's *Satanic Rituals* - which contains several errors in its Yezidi section - is the term "Shaitain" alleged to be a Yezidi term.] It is probably merely a Hebrew spelling of "Satan", and the Yezidi *Book of the Revelation* clearly establishes that the Yezidis considered Jews to be "profane".⁹⁷

Summarily Kenneth Grant appears to arbitrarily rewrite ancient Egyptian mythology, Yezidi mythology, and the philosophy of Aleister Crowley according to his personal tastes.

⁹⁴ Te Velde, *op. cit.*, pages #13-15.

⁹⁵ Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934, pages #87-89.

⁹⁶ Cf. page #226 in Grant's *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* and page #x of Grant's introduction to *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*.

⁹⁷ See Chapter #22 and Appendices #69-70 in *The Church of Satan*.

As noted previously, the Hebrew term “Satan” is a possible corruption of the hieroglyphic *Set-hen*. just as the Hebrew “YahWeh” and its derivative Christian trinity are corruptions of the earlier Osirian cult.⁹⁸

By the end of the XXV Dynasty the Priesthood of Set in Egypt was probably destroyed,⁹⁹ and the subsequent loss of the hieroglyphic language virtually eliminated the original Set from human knowledge. Only the Osirian corruption survived in legend - principally through Plutarch, who described it in some detail in his *Moralia*.¹⁰⁰

The archetypical dæmon most closely akin to Set was the Christian Satan, particularly in his Miltonian representation. See in particular Book I of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. [Some interesting comments are contained in *Asimov’s Annotated Paradise Lost* by John Milton/Isaac Asimov (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1974). Asimov discusses both the role of Satan and the nature of evil itself at some length, and not always to the credit of God.] Set accordingly chose this image as the one most meaningful for post-Egyptian manifestations.

The term “Magus” is used in the specialized sense of Western initiatory tradition. A Magus is characterized by his identification, comprehension, and introduction of a new magical/philosophical principle - a process described as the Utterance of a Word and/or Formula.

For Aleister Crowley’s interpretation of the role of a Magus, see his *Magick*, page #330. [This is the “One Star in Sight” essay, which may also be found in other Crowley works and is abridged in *Black Magic* in the *Crystal Tablet of Set*.] Like a prophet he accomplishes this through a mental “link” with a higher intellectual essence (what Plato termed *Næsis*). Such a “link” may be either external (with a separate intelligence) or internal (with the higher sensitivity of one’s own intelligence). In either case it is the results of the experience that are significant.

Unlike a prophet, a Magus establishes such a “link” through deliberate mental focus, and with full comprehension of the result. Hence an essential distinction between magic and [conventional] religion is that philosophical discipline is required for the former, while mental relaxation and abandonment of critical faculties (=faith) are required for the latter.¹⁰¹

In 1966 (the year I *Anno Satani*) Anton Szandor LaVey assumed the title of Magus V° and founded the Church of Satan in San Francisco. For its first three years, the Church remained primarily a local institution. In 1969 it began to accept memberships from other areas. By 1971 it developed a nationwide Priesthood and administrative structure.

In the fifth year of the Church of Satan, I gave to this Magus my Diabolicon, that he might know the truth of my ancient Gift to mankind, clothed though it might be in the myths of the Hebrews. Even you, who delivered the Diabolicon from Asia, did not know it for what it was. But he that I had fashioned a Magus knew, and he thought often of the Diabolicon as he guided the Church of Satan.

⁹⁸ Brandon, S.G.F., *Religion in Ancient History*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969, pages #102-132.

⁹⁹ Budge, *The Mummy*, page #276.

¹⁰⁰ Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, Volume V in *Moralia* (14 volumes), F.C. Babbitt (Ed. & Trans.). London: Loeb Classical Library, 1936.

¹⁰¹ Cf. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

In January-March of the year 1970, I was a Satanist I° of the Church of Satan. I was also a First Lieutenant in the Army, stationed in Lai Khe/Ben Cat, South Vietnam. Wishing to make a contribution to the lore of the Church, I decided to write a restatement of certain themes from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But what flowed from my pen began to assume a dignity beyond what I had anticipated. Unlike the later *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, it was not written in final draft in one sitting; rather the entire project occupied the better part of three months. I revised the *Diabolicon* extensively until I thought it "sounded right", and then I recopied the final text in calligraphic letters because ordinary handwriting or typed copy seemed inappropriate. The final document was sent to Anton LaVey in April of 1970. His response came soon thereafter:

I received the *Diabolicon* safely. It is indeed a work which will have a lasting impact. It is done in an ageless manner and with complete awareness. So impressed am I that I have selected passages from it for my own personal reading in this evening's ceremony, which pays homage to the writings of the Satanic Masters of the past, such as Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Twain, Hobbes, etc. ... You have my sincere gratitude for the fine gift you have so graciously bestowed upon us, and you may be assured that it will assume a meaningful place in the Order.¹⁰²

The *Diabolicon* was retained unreleased in San Francisco. Although I subsequently circulated a few typed copies among the Priesthood, the *Diabolicon* was not made generally available until the publication of the first edition of this Analysis & Commentary in 1976. It is included in *The Church of Satan* as Appendix #15.

Upon the ninth Solstice, therefore, I destroyed my pact with Anton Szandor LaVey, and I raised him to the Will of a Daimon, unbounded by the material dimensions. And so I thought to honor him beyond other men. But it may have been this act of mine that ordained his fall.

For the next four years after the creation of the *Diabolicon*, I wrote nothing similar to it. Even a deliberate attempt to recapture its style - a manuscript entitled *Flame of Infernus* - proved abortive. In the summer of 1974, however, I once more experienced the restlessness that had characterized the Working of the *Diabolicon*; and over a two-month period I penned a similar document containing the message referred to in this passage. In August I again sent the calligraphic original to Anton LaVey. In an accompanying note I disclaimed the prerogative to comment on it. The text of this document, since known as the "Ninth Solstice Message", is included in *The Church of Satan* as Appendix #111. Anton replied with a note in - uncharacteristically - his own handwriting:

It pleases me that you perceive that which you do. You have entered a new realm of comprehension and truly deserve the name of Satanist.¹⁰³

What I did not know for many years was that coincidental with the forming of the Church in 1966, Anton LaVey had privately handwritten and signed a personal Pact with Satan (titled simply "My Pact"). He never mentioned nor displayed it to

¹⁰² Letter, Anton LaVey to M.A. Aquino, March 27, V/1970.

¹⁰³ Letter, Anton LaVey to M.A. Aquino, August 22, IX/1974.

others, but on one evening in 1974, during a visit of mine to his home, we happened to be discussing Robert W. Chambers' *The King in Yellow*. He left the Purple Room, then returned with a locked metal strongbox, which he opened, revealing his personal copy of the then-quite-rare book. The only other item in the strongbox was his Pact - which I was unable to read beyond seeing its title and noting that it was completely handwritten on a single sheet of paper. I have often wondered what mirrors of his innermost self it contained.

Were I my Self to displace the Cosmic Inertia, I should be forced to become a new measure of consistency. I would cease to be One, for I should become All.

Here Set observes that he, as a finite intelligence possessing the prerogative to act in disregard of the mechanical norm of the objective universe, cannot completely replace or redesign that universe without himself becoming identical with it, i.e. infinite, omnipresent, hence mechanical [from the point of view of any component intelligence]. This is a more precise restatement of the famous Miltonian paradox: that a conquered God would become Satan, and a conquering Satan God. [This theme is explored by Anatole France in his classic *The Revolt of the Angels* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1914).]

To make of man a Daimon, then, may be to break his Self-reference to the bounds in which his semblance must exist.

A human who passes beyond the initiation of Magus encounters the same paradox that Set describes above. He ceases to view himself as a finite intelligence working upon an inertial environment. Rather he attains such a strong sense of harmonious interrelationships that there is a strong tendency to perceive the entire objective universe as conforming to his Word as a Magus.

Initially this would seem to be immensely satisfying, but in fact the phenomenon is so instantaneous, automatic, and comprehensive that there is no particular sense of achievement. An individual in such a situation is in danger of losing a sense of unique identity, as the barriers between his consciousness and the phenomena of the universe become fluid. [It is not inappropriate to compare this experience to that of quantum physicists, who suddenly encounter an objective universe in which all "constants" are revealed to be "variables".]

A second consequence of this situation is that a human magician is still restricted to his physical body. This requires him to move about and to participate in the ordinary society of non-magicians. Skilled magicians learn to do this without inciting fear in or ostracism by non-magicians, but a Daimon may tend to carelessness in such mundane matters. Accordingly he runs great danger of becoming a target of the mob. Socrates and Pythagoras were two who displayed Daimonic detachment. Both were slain for their "impiety".

In the Church of Satan there was no initiatory degree beyond that of Magus V° (alternately called "Satanic Master"). The designation of "Daimon" here may be considered comparable to what the Temple of Set would later Recognize as the VI° of Ipsissimus. The word "Daimon" comes from the Greek *daimon*, meaning "divine spirit" or "tutelary divinity". It is, of course, the term which was later corrupted into the Christian term "demon". The irony is not inappropriate.

I cannot undo the hurt that has come of this, but I shall restore to Anton Szandor LaVey his human aspect and his degree of Magus in my Order. Thus all may understand that he is dearly held by me, and that the end of the Church of Satan is not a thing of shame to him. But a new Aeon is now to begin, and the work of Anton Szandor LaVey is done. Let him be at ease, for no other man has ever seen with his eyes.

In May 1975, Anton LaVey announced his intention to sell the initiatory degrees of the Church of Satan for “professional services, funds, real estate, objects of value, etc.”. It was a decision completely inconsistent with the previous standards of individual awareness and ability he had maintained, nor would it have achieved its intended result of augmenting his income. It was precisely the non-corruptible nature of the Satanic degrees which had made them so highly prized. Such a startling shortfall of logic by an individual known for his analytical mind was inexplicable. The entire Church of Satan was plunged into crisis; organizational resignations poured in; and by the end of June the once-strong national network had virtually ceased to exist.

For a decade the Church of Satan had surmounted every obstacle and solved every problem with an ease unequalled and unprecedented in occultism. Now it was dying, not with a bang but with a whimper, This too we could not understand. Hence my decision to appeal directly to Satan on the eve of the North Solstice.

In the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* Set assumes responsibility for the disastrous course of events by citing the unanticipated dangers of the Daimonic state of mind. At the same time he implies that the Age of Satan (Set/HarWer) would have evolved into the Æon of Set in any case [though this would not necessarily have meant an organizational crisis or change in leadership; it was the means, not the end, which proved to be unnecessarily traumatic].



In middle Egyptian hieroglyphic this inscription reads: *Xu thenru ast a ari-f em suten*. Translation: “He did many glorious things and mighty deeds as High Priest.”.

In April of the common year 1904, I came forth in Africa as my Opposite Self and brought into being an Aeon to end the horrors of the stasis of the death-gods of men. This new Aeon was a Purification, to prepare men for that which would follow it.

On April 8-10, 1904 in Cairo, Aleister Crowley wrote down the *Book of the Law*, a magical text which announced the end of the Æon of Osiris and the beginning of the Æon of Horus. Crowley was identified as the Magus of that Æon [though he did not immediately acknowledge the title], and its Word was proclaimed to be *Thelema* (Greek *thelhma* = Will).

Crowley’s most thorough account of this incident is to be found in his book *The Equinox of the Gods*, published by the O.T.O. in 1936. See also “The Temple of Solomon the King” in his *Equinox* #1-7. For an outside analysis, see pages #61-66 (“Aiwass, the Holy Guardian Angel”) in John Symonds’ *The Great Beast* (London:

Macdonald & Co. Ltd., 1971).

Crowley attributed the *Book of the Law* to Aiwass, an entity identified in the text as “the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat”.¹⁰⁴ In translation this becomes “the infant Horus” and refers to [the Greek] Harpokrates, a representation of Horus the Younger as an infant.

Crowley was not familiar with the distinctions between the original Horus and the later Osirian corruption. His Egyptological orientation appears to have been exclusively Osirian, since his comments concerning various Egyptian gods place them squarely in the Osiris-cult characterizations. He named the magical æons according to the Osirian triad - first that of Isis, then that of Osiris, and finally that of “the crowned and conquering child”, Horus the Younger.¹⁰⁵

Closely associated with - and mentioned in - the *Book of the Law* was an Egyptian funerary stele, which Crowley called the “Stele of Revealing”. The three figures on this stele, whom Crowley called Nuit, Hadit, and Ra Hoor Khuit, lent their names to the three chapters of the *Book of the Law*.

Nuit he correctly identified as the Egyptian sky goddess.

Hadit or Had is not the name of any Egyptian deity; the winged solar disk in question is identified in the hieroglyphs of the stele as *Behut-t* (Horus Behdety), a form of Horus the Elder worshipped in the western Nile Delta at Behdet.¹⁰⁶ [The curious term “Hadit” is actually Arabic, and means “a divinely inspired utterance”.]

As for Ra Hoor Khuit, whom Crowley incorrectly identifies as Horus the Younger,¹⁰⁷ the hieroglyphs on the stele title the figure *Ra-Harakhti*. Ra-Harakhti (“Ra-Horus of the Two Horizons”) was a form of Horus the Elder identified with Ra, especially in his aspects of *Atum* and *Xepera*.¹⁰⁸

Ra-Harakhti was a rival “final judgment” god to Osiris in addition to being a solar deity, which explains his presence on the funerary stele. He is also noteworthy for having defended Set in the Osirian-mythos trial between Set and Horus the Younger. [At one point in the debate, according to the legend, Ra-Harakhti was insulted and retired to his house in a huff. The proceedings resumed only after Hathor had cheered the grouchy god with a strip-tease.¹⁰⁹]

The *Book of the Law* and the “Stele of Revealing”, consequently, are not documents of the Osiris/Isis/Horus the Younger triad or cult. They reflect the more ancient solar/light cults of Ra and Horus the Elder - the “Opposite Self” of Set.

And Aleister Crowley received the Book of the Law, and my Opposite Self declared him Magus of the Aeon.

Crowley did not acknowledge the title of Magus (9)=[2] (according to the A.'.A.'. system) until 1915-16, although the *Book of the Law* appears to confirm him thus in 1904.¹¹⁰ My commentary on the *Book of the Law* appears as Appendix #5.

¹⁰⁴ *The Book of the Law* #1-7.

¹⁰⁵ See pages #22, #399, and #665 in Crowley’s *Confessions*. Concerning Horus the Younger/Harpocrates, see Ions, *op. cit.*, pages #68 and #72.

¹⁰⁶ Ions, *op. cit.*, pages #67-68.

¹⁰⁷ Crowley, Aleister, *Magical and Philosophical Commentaries on the Book of the Law*. Montreal: 93 Publishing, 1974, page #268.

¹⁰⁸ Ions, *op. cit.*, pages #45, 51, and #70.

¹⁰⁹ Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, pages #446-447.

¹¹⁰ *The Book of the Law* #1-15. See also Crowley’s comments concerning this verse in *Magical and Philosophical Commentaries*, pages #102-103.

But HarWer, my Opposite Self, is a strange and fitful presence. I, Set, am my Self distinct from the Order of the Cosmos, yet am ordered in and of my Self. HarWer I was when I was once part of the Cosmos and could achieve identity only by becoming what the Cosmic order was not. By HarWer I cancelled the imbalance, leaving a Void in which true creation could take form as Set.

Here is recounted the phenomenon of the separation of the Set-entity from the Universal order. It is interesting to compare this statement with the “revolt” of Lucifer and his subsequent metamorphosis into Satan. [See in particular Book I of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Statement of Satan ArchDaimon in the *Diabolicon*.]

But, as I have said, I cannot destroy the Cosmic inertia without having to assume its place. And so HarWer must exist while Set exists.

Ostensibly this is a restatement of the previously-discussed “Satanic paradox”. Contained here, however, is the comment that the preservation of the HarWer entity is necessary for the continued existence and independence of the Set-entity. HarWer thus acts as a sort of “buffer” between Set and the Universal law that seeks to include all existential phenomena within itself.

It might also be hypothesized that the HarWer entity is a sort of link between Set and the objective universe which enables him to act upon it, although he does not directly participate in it.

This passage may also be considered from the standpoint of physics. If Set is a being that displaces space, then he must consist of matter. Matter may be formed by the application of energy within a zero-mass environment, the result being equal quantities of matter and anti-matter.¹¹¹ While both the matter unit and the antimatter unit may theoretically be transformed into energy [the $E=mc^2$ equation], neither can be destroyed unless they are brought together. Should such a reunion occur, the result would be an explosion releasing many hundreds of times as much energy as a hydrogen fusion bomb of the same size. The matter and antimatter would return to zero mass, and the energy required for the initial separation would be recreated.¹¹²

If Set is not matter or antimatter, he may be an energy-form of either. This is necessarily pure speculation, because detection of material energy - let alone distinguishing it from antimaterial energy - at a great distance is a young science. Such a hypothesis, however, would explain the existence of Set in a form undetected by the human sense-range within the electromagnetic spectrum..

The Aeon of HarWer endured until the Equinox of the common year 1966, when HarWer and Set were fused in one composite being. And so commenced the time of Set-HarWer - known as the Age of Satan - which was

¹¹¹ Alfven, Hannes, *Worlds-Antiworlds: Antimatter in Cosmology*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman Co., 1966, pages #25-38. [Published on the authority of the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, this book discusses the theory of the development of the metagalactic system originated by Dr. O. Klein, former Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of Stockholm.]

¹¹² *Ibid.*, page #29.

to bridge the expiring Aeon of HarWer and the forthcoming Aeon of Set.

Anton LaVey announced the founding of the Church of Satan on Walpurgisnacht (April 30) 1966, a short time after the Vernal Equinox (approximately March 21). Simultaneously he announced the beginning of what he termed the Age of Satan.

In his *Satanic Rituals* he defines this concept in terms of Hans Hörbiger's *Welteislehre* or Doctrine of Eternal Ice, in which the history of the Universe consists of alternating cycles of fire and ice.¹¹³ The "Wel", as it was termed, gained popularity in Nazi Germany because of Adolf Hitler's enthusiasm for Hörbiger, whom he called the "German Copernicus".

Anton LaVey, however, offers the theory in a social, not a cosmological context. The key number, he suggests, is nine - the number of the Devil because it always returns to itself when subjected to basic mathematical calculations. [For example: $9 \times 3 = 27$ and $2 + 7 = 9$. $9^2 = 81$ and $8 + 1 = 9$.]

History, says Anton, is divided into "Epochs" of 13,122 [adds to 9] years. Each Epoch is divided into nine "Ages" [1,458 years: adds to 18 and $1 + 8 = 9$], and each Age consists of nine "Eras" [162 years: adds again to 9]. An Era is divided into nine 18-year "Workings". A Working consists of nine years of "action" followed by nine years of "reaction", with the mid-point year being a "zenith of intensity" and the beginning and ending years being "Working Years". The initial Working Year sees the generation of the Working, while the final one is witness to its ultimate product.¹¹⁴

Whether or not there is any external basis for this theory of social evolution, the history of the Church of Satan itself adhered to it. At the mid-point of the mid-year of the Working begun in mid-1966, the Church went through the crisis which resulted in its transformation into the Temple of Set. Strictly speaking, the Temple is not so much a "reaction" to the doctrines or design of the Church as it is an "evolutionary succession" to them.

And what of the final Working Year (1983)? At the Wewelsburg Castle in Westphalia, Germany in October of 1982 was celebrated the Wewelsburg Working, resulting in the reconstitution of the Order of the Trapezoid, a creature of both the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set.

The "fusing of HarWer and Set as one composite being" evidently does not refer to a physical reunion of the two entities, else there would have been some spectacular fireworks and neither Set nor HarWer would have survived. Some sort of mental link or unified purpose seems to be implied. The use of the Age of Satan as a "bridge" between the two *Æons* seems appropriate. During the *Æon* of Horus there was a revival of various forms of primeval life-worship, as well as a reaction against the death-worship monotheist cults. During the Age of Satan this "purge" reached a climax, with all external gods being denied and man as "just another animal" being deified.¹¹⁵ Only in an atmosphere free from subconscious mental programming could the Temple of Set be reestablished in an authentic form, uncorrupted by the Osirian distortions.

Again Set pointedly uses the phrase "common year" when referring to the Christian ("*Anno Domini*") dating system; his repugnance is evident.

¹¹³ Pauwels, Louis and Bergier, Jacques, *The Morning of the Magicians*. New York: Stein and Day, 1960, pages #223-245.

¹¹⁴ LaVey, Anton Szandor, *The Satanic Rituals*. New York: Avon Books, 1972, pages #219-220.

¹¹⁵ LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, pages #23-25.

Truth there was in the words of my Opposite Self, but a truth ever tinged with the inconsistency and irrationality of which I have spoken. And so the Book of the Law was confusion to all who came upon it, and the creative brilliance of the Magus Aleister Crowley was ever flawed by mindless destructiveness. He himself could never understand this, for he perceived HarWer as a unified Self. And so he was perplexed by a mystery he could not identify.

HarWer, as an entity possessing characteristics of both the non-conscious universe and the independently-conscious Set, is necessarily inconsistent and irrational from the perspective of either Set or the objective universe. HarWer is not a true synthesis in the Hegelian sense. Rather he is the antithesis that enables Set to emerge - not as a synthesis, but as an entirely distinct and separate being. [This is a restatement and refinement of the sequence cited in the *Diabolisticon*.]

The *Book of the Law* is extremely emotional, internally inconsistent, rambling, and in general quite confusing to those who have read it. Nonetheless it conveys an atmosphere of authenticity [or at least the glamor of mystery].

Why would a god make such mistakes and present such a profile? The composition of HarWer explains this. The Great Horus is not a foolish or childish *neter*, but rather one who is caught between the Scylla of Set and the Charibdis of the objective universe: perpetually attracted to and rejecting of both.

Crowley's disciples have debated the *Book of the Law* vigorously for the years of its existence, and no two of them have been able to reach a consensus upon it. Crowley himself remained at odds with the text, speculating upon it for the rest of his life.

As for his "creative brilliance" and "mindless destructiveness", no one familiar with the writings and career of Aleister Crowley will deny either quality. Indeed he acknowledged both of them in his own diaries and publications, yet without resolving to address [or even to fault] his negative qualities. Had he succeeded in overcoming them, he could well have been a respected, rather than an infamous figure in his own time.

Ironically it is Crowley's notoriety that has accounted for much of his posthumous popularity. [Then there is the question whether a "reformed" Aleister Crowley would have remained "the" Aleister Crowley. Perhaps not. His split personality was essential to his function as Magus of the Æon of Horus, per the constitution of Horus himself.]

Crowley's "perception of HarWer as a unified Self" presumably refers to his ignorance of the distinction between the original Horus and the later Osirian corruption. The Osirian Horus was a unified personality (Osiris' son) who fought Set (recast as Osiris' evil brother).¹¹⁶ Horus the Elder was complementary to Set, not antagonistic towards him, and so these two original gods were often shown with a single body.¹¹⁷

The god identified by Crowley as Horus the Younger was in fact Horus the Elder. This accounts for the "surprising" inconsistency of Crowley's patron, as well as Crowley's oft-expressed bewilderment at such behavior.

¹¹⁶ Ions, *op. cit.*, pages #72-78. The Osirian legends on this subject are treated comprehensively in J. Gwyn Griffith's *The Conflict of Horus and Seth* (Chicago: Argonaut Publishers, 1969).

¹¹⁷ Te Velde, *op. cit.*, pages #68-72.

Inclusion here of the word “perplexed” is significant in a particularly poignant sense. According to *The Great Beast*, the definitive biography of Crowley by John Symonds, the aging Magus spent his last years in near-poverty, sick from heroin addiction and visited only infrequently by friends. He fought death, tears in his eyes as he sank into his final coma; and his last words were “I am perplexed ...”¹¹⁸

And I, Set, spoke too in the Book of the Law - “Aye! listen to the numbers and the words -

Handwritten numbers and letters in a Qabalistic cipher. The top line shows the numbers 4638 followed by the letters A B K 2 9 Q L G M O R 3 Y. Below this, the number 24 is circled and the number 89 is underlined. To the right of these numbers is the word RASTOVA L.

“What meaneth this, o prophet? Thou knowest not, nor shalt thou know ever. There cometh one to follow thee: he shall expound it.”

These are verses #75 and #76 from the second chapter of the *Book of the Law*. The strange handwriting is that of Aleister Crowley, from his original manuscript of the document. Verse #47 of the third chapter states:

This book shall be translated into all tongues: but always with the original in the writing of the Beast; for in the chance shape of the letters and in their position to one another: in these are mysteries no Beast shall divine. Let him not seek to try: but one cometh after him, whence I say not, who shall discover the Key of it all.¹¹⁹

Significantly, all printed texts of the *Book of the Law* show “24” and “89” without the top and bottom lines that suggest their sum as integers. Only the Crowley handwriting indicates this. Verse #47 continues:

Then this line drawn is a key: then this circle squared in its failure is a key also.

Again the figures are shown only on the handwritten manuscript. The line in question progresses through squares of a grid. The “failing circle” is located in one of the squares. If “each number becomes the corresponding letter”, then the sum of the multiplied coordinates of the line [3+6+9+16+20+30+35=119] less the multiplied coordinate of the “failing circle” [28] = 91 = 10 or X, the year in which the Æon of Set was manifest and the Temple of Set revived.

Crowley, in defiance of #III-47, believed the “one” to be Charles Stansfeld Jones of Vancouver. After Jones’ disavowal of the Æon of Horus and its Beast, however, Crowley reversed his earlier opinion and expelled Jones from the A.'.A.'.¹²⁰

In his “New Comment” to the *Book of the Law* ca. 1920 CE, Crowley describes verses #II-75 & #II-76 as being a “Qabalistic test”, identifying the person who may

¹¹⁸ Symonds, *The Great Beast*, page #400.

¹¹⁹ *The Book of the Law* #III-47.

¹²⁰ Symonds, *op. cit.*, pages #226 and #351-352.

claim to be the Beast's Magical Heir. Moreover the solution will be conspicuous for the simplicity of its method, and its message will carry self-evident conviction.

Crowley's use of the term "Qabala" differs in key respects from conventional interpretations of the "Hebrew" Cabala. For example:

Qabala is an instrument for interpreting symbols whose meaning has become obscure, forgotten, or misunderstood by establishing a necessary connection between the essence of forms, sounds, simple ideas (such as number) and their spiritual, moral, or intellectual equivalents. You might as well object to interpreting ancient art by consideration of beauty as determined by physiological facts.¹²¹

The "New Comment" continues with a word of doubt expressed concerning Jones' announced attainment of the grade of Magister Templi (8)=[3], inasmuch as Jones had not advanced sequentially through all of the lesser grades. Should it become evident that Jones had wrongfully assumed the (8)=[3], said Crowley, he would be destroyed as a "Black Brother". Crowley defines this term thus:

To attain the Grade of Magister Templi, he [the Adeptus Exemptus] must perform two tasks: the emancipation from thought by putting each idea against its opposite and refusing to prefer either, and the consecration of himself as a pure vehicle for the influence of the order to which he aspires. He must then decide upon the critical adventure of our Order: the absolute abandonment of himself and his attainments ...

Should he fail, by will or weakness, to make his self-annihilation absolute, he is nonetheless thrust forward into the Abyss; but instead of being received and reconstructed in the Third Order [the Silver Star of the A.'.A.'.] as a Babe in the womb of our Lady Babalon, under the Night of Pan, to grow up to be Himself wholly and truly as He was not previously, he remains in the Abyss, secreting his elements around his Ego as if isolated from the Universe, and becomes what is called a "Black Brother".

Such a being is gradually disintegrated from lack of nourishment and the slow but certain action of the attraction of the rest of the Universe, despite his now desperate efforts to insulate and protect himself, and to aggrandize himself by predatory practices. He may indeed prosper for awhile, but in the end he must perish, especially when with a new Æon a new Word is proclaimed which he cannot and will not hear, so that he is handicapped by trying to use an obsolete method of Magick, like a man with a boomerang in a battle where everyone else has a rifle.¹²²

Here there is a paradox. To become a Magister Templi, an individual is told to destroy his capacity for logical thought, i.e. his ability to draw deductive or inductive conclusions from the phenomena of the objective universe. Since it is precisely this capacity that produces the "mirror in which the Self may be seen" (*Cogito Ergo Sum*), the aspirant is invited to obliterate just what it is that enables him to perceive himself as a unique entity. Theoretically he is "reconstructed by the gods in a perfect form" - an ideal "self".

Herein lies the heart of the paradox: It is that an independent Will, capable of perceiving itself in contrast to the objective universe, cannot be entirely a product of forces derivative of that universe. True freedom of the Will necessitates the ability of that Will to move both with and against objective-universal patterns ("laws"). The Will is Self-creating, Self-sustaining, and Self-improving. [This is the basis for the Formula of the Æon of Set XXX.]

Because of the paradox, it is impossible for a Magister Templi to be the result of

¹²¹ Crowley, 777. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1970, page #125.

¹²² Crowley, Aleister, *Magick*, page #332.

such an annihilation as Crowley prescribes. Such a “Magister” would possess no Will of its own; it would be a zombie, non-consciously moving in harmony with the objective-universal laws. It would be an animated corpse, a mere “meat machine”. This would not be a re-birth of the Self; it would be suicide under the illusion of participating in a “greater life force”.

Now let us look a little more closely at Crowley’s description of a “Black Brother”. Those familiar with Crowley’s life will note that, in these few short phrases, a veritable blueprint for his own life has been presented. Crowley’s writings attest to the overwhelming presence of his individual Will in all of his enterprises.

The inevitable conclusion is that there is **no** Right-Hand Path to the initiatory level of Magister Templi [at least not as prescribed by the original G.'D'. and A.'A.'.]. There is **only** the Left-Hand Path, and it is fraught with danger - not a one-time crossing-the-Abyss test, but a continuous peril that exists from the moment the individual completely realizes him-Self as a Magister.

The Magister Templi is one who can comprehend the entire objective universe. In order to do this, he cannot have vision which is distorted by instinctive assumptions internal to that universe. He - his Will - must be independent, separate, and distinct. This necessitates an extremely strong presence of mind, a personality that is sufficiently secure not to require “crutches” from the objective universe, and a determination to fight off the panic that could result from the sensation of being utterly alone.

The Magister Templi, if he is truly entitled to that degree, possesses the abilities necessary to thwart these dangers. Those who presume to that degree without appreciating these dangers or the severe mental pressures they can cause, do in fact suffer the fate that Crowley prescribes: death or loss of sanity [or mere relapse from that level of initiation to a less-stressful one, or even to profane “freedom from initiation” ... Cf. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*].

And many of the Aeon of HarWer sought to read this but could not. Nor could the Magus himself, though he guessed rightly at its simplicity. It was said that every number is infinite - hence each number or sum of joined numbers became merely the corresponding letter.

The statement that every number is infinite is also in the *Book of the Law* [#I-4].

Crowley develops this concept in a brilliant essay appended to 777 which he also included in his later commentaries on the *Book of the Law*. Its central thesis may be found in the following included statements:

By adding 1 to 8 we obtain 9, so that we might define unity as that which has the property of transforming a three-dimensional expansion of two into a two-dimensional expansion of three. But if we add unity to 9, unity appears as that which has the power of transforming the two-dimensional expansion of three aforesaid into a mere oblong measuring 5 by 2. Unity thus appears as in possession of two totally different properties. Are we then to conclude that it is not the same unity? How are we to describe unity, how know it? Only by experiment can we discover the nature of its action on any given number. In certain minor respects, this action exhibits regularity. We know, for example, that it uniformly transforms an odd number into an even one, and vice versa; but that is practically the limit of what we can predict as to its action.

We can go further, and state that any number soever possesses this infinite variety of powers to transform any other number, even by the primitive process of addition. We

observe also how the manipulation of any two numbers can be arranged so that the result is incommensurable with either, or even so that ideas are created of a character totally incompatible with our original conception of numbers as a series of positive integers. We obtain unreal and irrational expressions, ideas of a wholly different order, by a very simple juxtaposition of such apparently comprehensible and commonplace entities as integers.

There is only one conclusion to be drawn from these various considerations. It is that the nature of every number is a thing peculiar to itself, a thing inscrutable and infinite, a thing inexpressible, even if we could understand it.¹²³

The corresponding letters are those of the English alphabet, in keeping with the English text of the *Book of the Law*. Cabalists may desire an interpretation based upon the Hebrew alphabet or Cabala. In the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, however, Set implicitly rejects the entire Hebraic mythos as a latter-day corruption of the Osiris cult. The Cabala, whose authenticity is already questioned by reputable scholars of Jewish religion, is nowhere to be found in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, or, for that matter, in the Temple of Set.¹²⁴

Even so the sequence remained unknown - and so, after its issue, to me as well. For, while I may pass free of the boundaries of time, memory of the future cannot exist.

Set states that he may “pass free of the boundaries of time” - a rather curious way of addressing the problem of time-travel. Yet such “passing free” seems to involve mental perception of the past and present only, not the future. This has interesting implications for those who believe in “predestination” (a fixed course of future events). The contrasting school is that of free will, which cannot exist unless the future is undetermined. The problem, as Crowley and Gurdjieff demonstrated, is one of identifying the true will and freeing it from mechanical conditioning, either conscious or subconscious.¹²⁵

Time-travel - or, more precisely, the control of time - is a skill which is essential to a magician. Isaac Newton believed in the idea of a universal “absolute time” or “linear duration”, saying that time is a thing in itself, not a relation between events. Leibniz argued to the contrary, foreshadowing Einstein, who said in his 1905 paper:

If we wish to describe the motion of a material point, we give the values of its coordinates as functions of the time. Now we must bear carefully in mind that a description of this kind has no physical meaning unless we are quite clear as to what we understand by “time”. We have to take into account that all judgments in which time plays a part are always judgments of simultaneous events. If for instance I say “that train arrives here at seven o’clock”, I mean something like this: “The pointing of the small hand of my watch to seven and the arrival of the train are simultaneous events.”

It might appear possible to overcome all the difficulties attending to the definition of “time” by substituting “the position of the small hand of my watch” for “time”. And in

¹²³ Crowley, Aleister, 777, pages #134-135.

¹²⁴ According to Richard Cavendish, writing in the *Encyclopædia of the Unexplained* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974), the “Hebrew Cabala’s” oldest identifiable works can be authenticated to between the third and sixth centuries CE. Since that time it has been added to and revised by innumerable occultists, with the result that it has lost even what cohesion it may once have had.

¹²⁵ The most lucid explanation of the Gurdjieff approach to this subject is contained in P.D. Ouspensky’s *The Psychology of Man’s Possible Evolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969). Crowley did not address the notion of free will in depth, save perhaps indirectly in *Liber Aleph*. He seems to have interpreted the idea in a mystical sense, along the lines of *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage* (S.L.M. Mathers [Trans.], Chicago: deLawrence, 1948). See pages #172-179 in Crowley’s *Confessions*.

fact such a definition is satisfactory when we are concerned with defining a time exclusively for the place where the watch is located; but it is no longer satisfactory when we have to connect in time series of events occurring at different places, or - what comes to the same thing - to evaluate the times of events occurring at places remote from the watch.¹²⁶

Then there was an effort to prove “linear duration” by the Second Law of Thermodynamics - the tendency of ordered molecular structure to decompose (the phenomenon of entropy). Logically it is unsound, if it is assumed that the laws of motion are symmetrical for both directions of time. [Symmetry for “reverse time” can be demonstrated by the actions of particles at the subatomic level.] So “time” is not a fixed law which the magician cannot influence; he may at the very least accelerate or decelerate it. To “pass free” of it altogether, he would have to be a being like Set, i.e. independent of the laws governing the objective universe.

Now it has come to pass, and the Book of the Law is laid bare - “Destined First Century heir - Aquino - breaking Keys by doctrines Anton LaVey - great Magus of reconsecration coming Year Xeper - founding his rightful Priesthood - Set - true origin Volume AL.” Michael Aquino, you are become Magus V° of the Aeon of Set.



I, Set, am come again to my friends among mankind - Let my great nobles be brought to me.

Set has returned in his true identity, for the first time since the destruction of the original Temple of Set in ancient Egypt. “Let my great nobles be brought to me” is the same passage that, in hieroglyphs, surrounds the Seal of Set at the end of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

In Khem I remain no longer, for I am forgotten there, and my house at PaMat-et is dust. I shall roam this world, and I shall come to those who seek me.

PaMat-et was the capital of the ancient Egyptian XIX *Uab* Nome. It was called Oxyrhynchus by the Greeks, and it was the center of the original Temple of Set. It is located in Upper Egypt at Latitude 28.5N, Longitude 30.8E. Other cities which were centers of the Setian Priesthood were Ombos at 24.5N, 32.9E and Tanis at 31N, 31.9E in Lower Egypt.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Whitrow, G.J., *The Nature of Time*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

¹²⁷ Brugsch-Bey, Heinrich, *Egypt Under the Pharaohs*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891, page #452.

Ions, *op. cit.*, page #63.

Carus, *op. cit.*, page #17.

Magus of my Aeon - Manifest the Will of Set.

The essential characteristic of a Magus is the manifestation of a philosophical principle - in magical terminology the “utterance of a Word” - to supersede or enhance previous ways of understanding, actualizing, improving, and eventually transcending the human condition.

Reconsecrate my Temple and my Order in the true name of Set. No longer will I accept the bastard title of a Hebrew fiend.

When I resigned from the Church of Satan on June 10, 1975, I spoke for its Mandate and, as a Magister Templi IV°, assumed the Satanic High Priesthood. Initial steps were taken towards a “second Church of Satan” during the next ten days. With the coming into being of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, those plans were dropped. The Temple of Set was organized, incorporated, and recognized nationally as a tax-exempt religious institution within four months.

The “bastard title” is “Satan”, which is in Hebrew a title (“Adversary”) although in Egyptian it is the name *Set-hen* (“Majesty of Set”). It is by Set’s name that he is known within his Temple and Priesthood, with “Satan” being used only to identify him by his historic image to the profane.

When I first came to this world, I gave to you my great pentagram, timeless measure of beauty through proportion. And it was shown inverse, that creation and change be exalted above rest and preservation.

The significance of the pentagram is discussed in Appendix #6.

With the years my pentagram was corrupted, yet time has not the power to destroy it. Its position was restored by the Church of Satan, but its essence was dimmed with a Moorish name, and the perverse letters of the Hebrews, and the goat of decadent Khar. During the Age of Satan I allowed this curious corruption, for it was meant to do me honor as I was then perceived.

As its emblem the Church of Satan used the Sigil of Baphomet, an inverse pentagram decorated with a goat’s head and surrounded by the Hebrew letters lamed/vav/yod/tav/nun = LVYTN = Leviathan, the sea monster mentioned in Job #41 of the Judaic/Christian *Bible*. The goat was the Goat of Mendes, the Devil’s form of manifestation in traditional Satanism.¹²⁸

The term “Baphomet” - the “Moorish name” - came into prominence as the god reputedly worshipped by the medieval Knights Temple (Order of the Temple). There have been many colorful and creative explanations of this curious term, but the most sensible is that of Idries Shah, who in his book *The Sufis* suggests that it is a corruption of the Arabic *abufihamat* (pronounced “bufihimat”), which means “father” or “source of understanding”.

Going beyond Shah, this in turn may have been a corruption from the ancient Egyptian *Ba-neb-Tettu*, the hieroglyphic term for the city of Mendes, capital of the

¹²⁸ LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, pages #129 and #136.

XVI *Khar* Nome in the Nile Delta at 31N, 31.5E, not far distant from Tanis. In Ptolemaic accounts Mendes was “notorious” for its goat-god, who was said to mate with human females in religious festivals. The truth is probably less lurid. Comments Budge in his *Gods of the Egyptians*:

The title *Ba-neb-Tettu* was sometimes held to mean the “Soul, the Lord Tettu”, and this was the name at Mendes of the local form of *Khnemu*, whose symbol there, as elsewhere, was a ram ... He was regarded as the virile principle in gods and men, and is styled “King of the South and North, the ram, the virile male, the holy phallus which stirreth up the passions of love ...”

But this is now my Aeon, and my pentagram is again to be pure in its splendor. Cast aside the corruptions, that the pentagram of Set may shine forth. Let all who seek me be never without it, openly and with pride, for by it I shall know them.

The pentagram as used by the Temple of Set is returned to its pure form, so that the beauty of *phi* is undiluted and undefiled. It is enclosed in a perfect circle (a function of *pi*), which represents the mathematical order of the Universe. The pentagram does not touch the circle, however, signifying that Set is an independent entity.

The pentagram itself does not appear on statues and bas-reliefs of Set that have come to light, nor does the Temple of Set use the image of Set against the pentagram in place of the Baphometric goat. Each may be considered a “key” to knowledge of the other, rather than two parts of a whole.

The reconsecrated Temple of Set displays the pentagram openly, and Initiates of all degrees wear a simple pentagram medallion as evidence of their affiliation.

Let the one who aspires to my knowledge be called by the name Setian.

The word “Setian” is now used to refer generally to all Initiates of the Temple of Set. It is used in a more specific sense as the formal title of the First Degree of Initiation, whose recipients are in the position of aspirants to the knowledge of the Temple.

I seek my Elect and none other, for mankind now hastens toward an annihilation which none but the Elect may hope to avoid. And alone I cannot preserve my Elect, but I would teach them and strengthen their Will against the coming peril, that they and their blood may endure. To do this I must give further of my own Essence to my Elect, and, should they fail, the Majesty of Set shall fade and be ended.

The term “Elect” refers to the degrees II° and higher in the Temple of Set. In addition to avowing themselves Setians, such Initiates have been examined by the Priesthood and found Adept in the arts and sciences encompassed by the Temple. The Temple of Set does not judge or evaluate Initiates by criteria outside of its specialized areas of expertise. Hence it is more an intellectual discipline or school of thought than a community per se.

During the first several years of the Æon, I was inclined to interpret the warning

of this passage in terms of the general ecological crisis confronting the human race as a whole during the next century. While the factors presaging that crisis remain, it is increasingly obvious that the Temple of Set is far too selective in scope and interests to be a significant factor in confronting it.

It seems more probable that Set's warning is meant to alert the Elect to the general fear which profane humans feel concerning Initiates of the Black Art, and in particular their tendency to search out scapegoats during times of stress, confusion, and crisis. [See also the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Parts of the *Word of Set* - a warning to the original Temple of Set which proved all too justified.]

The Temple of Set's response to this situation is first to dispel fear born of ignorance by explaining its exoteric doctrines to the honestly curious, and secondly to avoid the careless oversimplification of its esoteric doctrines in contexts which would tend to excite the superstitious dread of the profane.

Concerning the "gift of Set's own Essence to the Elect", see also the *Diabolicon*, specifically the Statement of Azazel.

Note again the phrase "Majesty of Set".

Behold, it is I who call you, because you are the Guardians of the Aeon of Set, zealous in what you do.

This is a salutation to the Council of Nine, the highest officials of the Temple of Set and Guardians of the Æon. Their emblem is the sacred *Tcham* sceptre. They carry forward the tradition and name of the Nine Unknown, the basis of the Church of Satan's Council of Nine and now of the Temple's Council.

The Legend of the Nine Unknown, as recounted by Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier in their *Morning of the Magicians*, began with Asoka, Emperor of the Maurya Kingdom of India from approximately 274 to 236 BCE. He became a Buddhist ca. 260 BCE, and was famous for administering his kingdom according to the most enlightened principles. Before his death he selected nine great sages to form a secret, protective society to carry on his life's work. Each One of the Nine would select nine deputies known to him alone, and each of these nine would select an additional nine, etc. [The legend was popularized in Talbot Mundy's 1925 novel *The Nine Unknown*.]¹²⁹

The High Priest of Set determines the policies and operations of the Temple and Priesthood of Set, but he in turn is responsible to the Nine.

The Satanist thought to approach Satan through ritual. Now let the Setian shun all recitation, for the text of another is an affront to the Self. Speak rather to me as a friend, gently and without fear, and I shall hear as a friend. Do not bend your knee nor drop your eye, for such things were not done in my house at PaMat-et. But speak to me at night, for the sky then becomes an entrance and not a barrier. And those who call me the Prince of Darkness do me no dishonor.

Conventional religious ritual is a device for autohypnosis of the priest and varying degrees of mass-hypnosis for the audience. The mechanical liturgies have a relaxing, dulling effect upon the mind, placing it in the (alpha-wave) mood most receptive to the conditioning (i.e. the sermon or other main body of the ritual).

¹²⁹ Pauwels and Bergier, *op. cit.*, pages #67-70.

Ritual magic falls into two general categories, White and Black. These may be distinguished as follows:

White Magic is a highly-concentrated form of conventional religious ritual. The practitioner seeks a focus of his awareness and powers of concentration via an extreme degree of autohypnosis. The technique may be used simply for meditation or entertainment through mental imagery (“astral projection”). Or it may be used to focus the Will towards a desired end - a cure, curse, etc. To accomplish this, the magician envisions a god or dæmon with the power to achieve the goal, then concentrates his Will into an appeal. The god or dæmon then carries out the appeal, more or less effectively - depending upon the strength of the magician’s conviction of its power as a functioning entity.¹³⁰

Black Magic involves no autohypnosis or conditioning of the mind to make it receptive to induced imagery. Rather it is a deliberate and conscious effort to force the mind outward - to impact upon and alter the “laws” of the objective universe.

Thus it is an attempt to “commit the same crime against God (= objective universal inertia)” as did Set: to place one’s Self deliberately apart and distinct from the objective universe.

Set was originally the god of the hours of darkness; hence, presumably, the suitability of the title “Prince of Darkness”. The word “prince” derives from the Latin *Princeps*, meaning “first”. Etymologically this is not inappropriate.

From a physical standpoint there are a surprising number of differences between the hours of daylight and the hours of darkness. This cycle is, of course, controlled by the position of the Sun relative to the Earth. There are resultant changes in gravitational pull, weather, the Earth’s magnetic field, radiation levels, and both plant and animal physiology. The impact of this cycle on the brain is as yet undetermined.¹³¹

It may be noted that the sky, seemingly opaque by day, becomes transparent at night. *Alpha Draconis* is then visible.

The Setian need conjure neither curse nor kindness from me, for by the magic of my great pentagram I shall see with his eyes. And then the strength that is mine shall be the strength of the Setian, and against the Will of Set no creature of the Universe may stand. And I think not of those who think not of me.

The pentagram is here described as a geometric “gate” linking the mind of the Black Magician with that of Set [in a GBM Working]. The Temple of Set is also admonished to direct its efforts towards its own Initiates, not towards mankind as a whole. A crucial distinction is thus drawn between humans who seek to develop their magical abilities and those who permit them to atrophy as they sink back to an existence harmonious with the objective universe.¹³²

¹³⁰ Crowley, *Magick*, pages #151-284.

LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, pages #110-152.

LaVey, *The Satanic Rituals*, pages #15-27.

¹³¹ Watson, Lyall, *Supernature*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973.

Playfair, Guy L. and Hill, Scott, *The Cycles of Heaven*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978.

¹³² Lovecraft, H.P., “The Silver Key” and “Through the Gates of the Silver Key” in *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels*. Sauk City: Arkham House, 1964.

The years of the Aeon of HarWer were confused, and I do not wish to think of them save as curiosities. But I wish to remember the Church of Satan and the Magus of that Age. Therefore let the years of my Aeon be counted from the conception of the Church of Satan.

The Aeon of Horus (commenced 1904 CE) has left few legacies of practical value to the magician. Those that do exist are heavily tinged with error and inaccuracy. Worthwhile principles may be identified only by individuals who already possess the sophistication of judgment to formulate those principles themselves. This is an important point - usually taken, unfortunately, only by those who do not need to.

Anton Szandor LaVey and the Church of Satan are held in honor by Set, hence by the Temple of Set. The Age of Satan was a necessary catalyst to the Aeon of Set, and all of its experiences, whether pleasant or painful, have been important to the realization and implementation of the Aeon. In subtle yet enduring reminder of this, the dating system employed by the Church of Satan (1966 CE = *I Anno Satani*) is to be continued by the Temple of Set, with the initials A.S. [or AES] now signifying "Aeon of Set".

And now, having looked upon the past with affection and reverence, we shall turn our gaze to the times before us. Think carefully of the Word of Set, for it is given in witness to my Bond.

Many factors have gone into the design of the Aeon of Set - among them the legacy of ancient Egypt; the work of John Dee, Aleister Crowley, and Anton LaVey; and the contributions of innumerable theorists, magicians, and metaphysicians. Each is to be appreciated as appreciation is due; yet the orientation of the Temple of Set must be to the future - to the development of the new Aeon and its unprecedented identity.

The *Word of Set* has been discussed above. Concerning the Bond see the Statement of Belial in the *Diabolicon*.

Behold, O West, I have established my Aeon. I punish the enemies who are in it, placed in the Place of Destruction. I deliver them to the examiners from whose guard there is no escape. Lo, I pass near to thee, I pass near to thee.

This passage is conspicuous for its style, which lends itself to precise hieroglyphic translation. The "Place of Destruction" is the *Tuat*, of which Budge has written:

The meaning of the name *Tuat* is unknown, and it is useless to speculate upon it or invent etymologies for it; it was applied to the home of the beatified spirits and the damned, no doubt in predynastic times, and the exact meaning it conveyed to the minds of those who first used it has been lost. To describe its general situation is less difficult, but not many details as to its exact extent are forthcoming.

To find a word which shall at once describe the situation and character of the *Tuat* is impossible, for the reason that the Egyptian conception of the place of departed spirits is unique. The *Tuat* is not the "Lower Hemisphere" because it is not under the ground, and, though for want of a better word I have frequently used "Underworld" when speaking of the *Tuat*, it is unsatisfactory; for, unless it is specifically defined to mean the place of

departed spirits in general, it produces a wrong impression in the mind. Again, the word *Tuat* must not be rendered by “Hades” or “Hell” or “Sheol” or “Jehannum”, for each of these words has a limited and special meaning. On the other hand, the *Tuat* possessed the characteristics of all of these names, for it was an “unseen” place, and it contained abysmal depths of darkness, and there were pits of fire in it wherein the enemies of the gods were consumed, and certain parts of it were the homes of monsters in various shapes and forms which lived upon the unfortunate creatures whom they were able to destroy.¹³³

According to the *Book of Gates*,¹³⁴ the first region of the *Tuat* was called *Set-Amentet*, and also the Western Gate.¹³⁵

Affix now my image as it was given to you, so that all who read of these matters may now look upon the likeness of Set.

Approximately a month prior to the North Solstice X, I happened to be looking through some books of ancient art. Among the illustrations were some mutilated images of Set, and I recalled Budge’s comment that no known portraits of the god had survived un mutilated.¹³⁶ Feeling a sudden sympathy for this “old mythological figure”, I decided to create at least one picture that was neither mutilated nor commercial. After doing this, I surrounded it with hieroglyphs - the phrase “Let my great nobles be brought to me” which would unexpectedly reappear in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*. Satisfied with the design, I relegated it to my archives, presumably indefinitely. On the North Solstice, at approximately 4:30 AM, it was appended to the manuscript.

The Word of the Aeon of Set is



Each magical Æon is characterized by a philosophy, which may be summarized by a Formula, which may in turn be summarized by a Word. The Magus of an Æon “Utters its Word”, i.e. he formulates and explains the new philosophy.¹³⁷

Although Crowley speaks of only three historic Æons (Isis, Osiris, and Horus), he identifies eight Magi: Lao-Tzu, Gotama Buddha, Krishna, Tehuti (Thoth), Moses, Dionysis (Christ), Mohammed, and himself.

Anton Szandor LaVey is the ninth, his number is Nine, and his Word is *Indulgence*. The Formula of the Age of Satan was an expansion of this Word: *Indulgence Instead of Abstinence*.¹³⁸

I am therefore the tenth, appearing in the year X, and it has been my Task and

¹³³ Budge, *The Egyptian Heaven and Hell*. La Salle: Open Court, 1974, pages #87-88.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, page #85.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, page #100.

¹³⁶ Budge, *The Mummy*, pages #276-277.

¹³⁷ The Task of a Magus is to Utter his Word. The Curse of a Magus is that, since he necessarily Utters his Word in an environment unfamiliar with it, few will initially comprehend or tolerate that Word.

¹³⁸ Crowley, *The Book of Lies*. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1970, pages #24-25.

LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, pages #81-86.

LaVey, *The Satanic Rituals*, pages #219-220.

Curse to Utter the Word *Xeper*. This is the Egyptian hieroglyphic term for “to become/to be/to come into being”, and it was personified by the god *Xepera* (Kheph-Ra). This god was portrayed as the scarab beetle, symbolizing Self-generation and the dawn.

Summarily the Word *Xeper* refers to the transformation and evolution of the Will from a human to a divine state of being - by deliberate, conscious, individual force of mind.

The Formula of the Æon of Set is *XXX = Xepera Xeper Xeperu* = “I Have Come Into Being and Created That Which Has Come Into Being.” Concerning this then-Magister [now Ipsissimus] Don Webb commented in 1995:

I’ve traced the *Xepera Xeper Xeperu* formula, which Budge got from the Bremmer-Rhind papyrus, to the XX Dynasty. It is a protective formula on the back of a statue of Rameses III, in which Rameses III portrayed himself as *Xepera*.

It is not unreasonable to suspect that the formula is/was the personal property of Set priests of Tanis, from whom Rameses III is descended. Rameses III’s reign, as that of his father Setnakt, is detailed in the Great Harris Papyrus.

Budge was one of its first translators, and sentences from it show up in many of his books, including “He did many glorious things as king (*suten*)”, which also appears in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

The same papyrus describes Setnakt as having the rage of the god KhepriSet on the battlefield. The effect of such few men as Seti, Rameses II, Setne, Seti II, Setnakt, Rameses III, Rameses IV and Rameses VI on us is amazing. Outdoing them will be hard work.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ eLetter, Don Webb to M.A. Aquino, July 13, 1995.

Appendix 4: *The Word of Set*

- transcribed by Michael A. Aquino VI°
ca. June 1-20, 1975, concluding April 13, 1981

The First Part

Ol sonf vorsg, goho Iad balt lansh calz vonpho Sobra zol ror i ta Nazpsad Graa ta Malprg Ds hol q Qaa nothoa zimz od commah ta nobloh zien Soba thil gnomp prge aldi Ds urbs oboleh grsam. Casarm ohorela caba pir Ds zonrensg cab erm Iadnah Pilah farzm u znrza adna gono Iadpil Ds hom toh Soba Ipam lu Ipamis Ds lohoho vep zomd Poamal od bogpa aai ta piap piamol od vooan ZACAR ca od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa zorge, lap zir do noco MAD Hoath Iaida.

* * *

I am within and beyond you, the Highest of Life, in majesty greater than the forces of the Universe; whose eyes are the Face of the Sun and the Dark Fire of Set; who fashioned your intelligence as his own and reached forth to exalt you; who entrusted to you dignity of consciousness; who opened your eyes that you might know beauty; who brought you the key to knowledge of all lesser things; and who enshrined in you the Will to Come Into Being. Lift your voices, then, and recognize the Highest of Life who thus proclaims your triumph; whose being is beyond natural life and death; who came as a flame to your world and enlightened your desire for perfection and truth. Arise thus in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Second Part

Adgt upaah zongom faaip sald, viiv L Sobam Ialprg Izazaz piadph Casarma abramg ta talho paracleda qta lorslq turbs ooge Baltoh. Giui chis lused orri Od micalp chis bia ozongon Lap noan trof cors tage, oq manin Iaidon. Torzu gohel ZACAR ca, Cnoqod, ZAMRAN micalzo od ozazm urelp lap zir Ioiad.

* * *

Can the wings of the winds understand your voices of wonder, O enlightened ones who shine like fire in the jaws of chaos, whom I have prepared as cups for a wedding, or as the flowers in their beauty for the chamber of righteousness? Stronger are your feet than the barren stone, and mightier are your voices than the manifold winds, for you are become a Temple such as is not, but in the mind of Set. Arise, says the First of your kind; move, therefore, unto the Elect; show them the fire within you, and awaken them that they may gain the strength to live forever.

The Third Part

Micma goho Piad zir Comselh azien biab Os Londoh Norz chis othil Gigipah undl chis tapuim qmospleh teloch quin toltorg chis i chis ge m ozien dst brgda od torzul ili Eol balzarg, od aala Thiln os netaab, dluga vomsarg lonsa Capmiali vors Cla homil cocasb fafen izizop od miinoag de gnetaab vaun nanaeel panpir Malpirgi caosg Pild noan unalah balt od vooan dooiap MAD Goholor gohus amiran Micma Iehusoz cacacom od dooain noar micaolz aaiom Casarmg gohia ZACAR uniglag od Imuamar pugo plapli ananael qaan.

* * *

Conceive of the Cosmos as a circle of twelve divisions alternating between life and death, binding all creatures save those whom I have touched. You were given powers greater than those ordering these divisions and extending throughout the ages of time, that with your vision and your voices you might exercise the Powers of Darkness, sending ever forth the Black Flame across the Earth and the expanses of time. Thus you are the Guardians of perfection and truth. Arise, then, and witness the wondrous creations born of your wisdom, even as I am near to you and the essence of my being is enshrined within you.

The Fourth Part

Othil lasdi babage od dorpha Gohol Gchisge auauago cormp pd dsonf vivdiv Casarmi Oali Mapm Sobam ag cormpo crpl Casarmg croodzi chis od vgeG dst capimali chis Capimaon od lonshin chis talo cla Torgu Norquasahi od Fcaosga Bagle zirenaiad Dsi od Apila Dooaip gaal ZACAR od ZAMRAN Obelisong restel aaf Normolap.

* * *

From the reaches of the south I saw the savages of the second ordering of life in their thousands, and I sought one through whom I might prepare them for a higher existence and for the wielding of a greater power throughout the time to come. And now you have the whole of the Earth for your pleasure, and for the pleasure of those in whom you have awakened the Gift of my genius, in my name, for all of your generations.

The Fifth Part

Sapah zimii dugv od noas toquams adroh dorphal caosg od faonts peripsol tablior Casarm amipzi nazarth af od dlugar zizop zlida caosgi toltorgi od zchis esiasch L taviu od iaod thild ds hubar Peoal Soba cormfa chis ta la vls od qeocasb Ca niis od Darbs qaas Fetharzi od bliora iaial ednas cicles Bagle Geiad iL.

* * *

My Word to the third ordering of life brings the fruits of delight to the Earth, reflecting the brilliance of the stars and the nineteen Parts of this Word. By comprehending them they came to know their relation to the first and second orderings, as well as the inspiration of their own creation and that deathless fire that burns through their past, present, and future. I bring this knowledge of your creation; I am with you in peace and comfort; and I entrust to you my essence, because thus are we the same.

The Sixth Part

Gah sdiu chis em micalzo pilzin sobam El harg mir babalon od obloc samvelg dlugar malprg arcaosgi od Acam canal sobolzar tbliard caosgi odchis anetab od miam taviv od d Darsar Solpeth bien Brita od zacam gmicalzo sobhaath trian Luiahe odecrin MAD qaaon.

* * *

Beyond you who are of the third ordering shall be those of the fourth, mighty in the Universe, who shall again come into being by a First, to recall the high orderings of the past and to witness those of the lower orderings in their mindless self-annihilation and labor, and to continue the exalted tradition of the second and third orderings. Remember my Word, because it is for you and of the power within you, and through it you shall create works of glory to you and to me.

The Seventh Part

Raas isalman paradizod oecrimi aao ialpirgah quiin enay butmon od inoas ni paradiad
Casarmg vgear chirlan od zonac Luciftian corsta vaulzirn tolhami Sobalondoh od miam
chis tad odes vmadea od pibliar Othilrit od miam C noquol Rit ZACAR ZAMRAN
Oecrimi qadah od Omicaolzod aaiom Bagle papnor idlugam lonshi od umplif ugegi Bigliad
* * *

The dawn of the Sun, ever constant and glorious throughout the cycle of the Moon,
preserves and beautifies all creatures; see it also as the dawn of the third and fourth
orderings of being, those who guard and encourage wisdom and enlightenment. O
Guardians, stand forth in my name, for by it and through your bond with me are you
given the power and the strength and an Understanding of what you do.

The Eighth Part

Bazmelo ita piripson oln Nazavabh ox casarmg vran chis ugeg dsa bramg baltoha gohoiad
Solamian trian talocis Abaiuonin Od aziagier rior Irgilchisda dspaaox bufd Caosgo dschis
odipuran teloah cacrg oisalman loncho od Vouina carfaf Niiso Bagle auauago gohon Niiso
bagle momao siaion od mabza Iadoiasmomar poilp Niis ZAMRAN ciaofi caosgo od bliors
od corsi ta abramig.
* * *

At the zenith of their power, the third ordering shall dwell within my Temple, whose
endurance shall signify my own dwelling in their land and a sanctuary from the worship of
death. For the Elect shall not die unless my Temple perishes and I depart. Beware, for
annihilation threatens; beware, for the majesty of my existence is divided against itself.
Manifest your strength in the land for your preservation and for those who may seek your
company.

The Ninth Part

Micaoli bransg prgel napta ialpor ds brin efafafe P vonpho olani od obza sobca vpaah chis
tatan od tranan balye alar lusda soboln od chisholq Cnoquodi cial vnal aldun mom caosgo
ta lasollor gnay limlal Amma chiis Sobca madrid zchis, oanoan chis auiny drilpi caosgin,
od butmoni parm zumvi Cnila Daziz cthamz a childao od mirc ozol chis pidiai Collal
Ulcinin asobam vcim Bagle Iadbaltah chirlan par Niiso od ip ofafafe Bagle acocasb icorsca
unig blior.
* * *

And in the twilight of your time, you shall confront the priests and armies of death,
enraged by the intoxicant of destruction, who slay themselves even as they would you and
whose piety is that of decay and dissolution. They cherish the fruits of Earthly decay as the
richest of treasures. Accursed are they for this foulness! You shall know them by the
dullness of their eyes and the savagery of their speech, despite the jewels with which they
adorn themselves and the marble they may work. Look on them and be prideful that you
do not worship their god of death. Beware of them and of their intoxicant! Your
endurance depends on your essence.

The Tenth Part

Coraxo chis cormp od blans Lucal aziazor paeb Soba Lilonon chis virq op cophan od raclir maasi bagle caosgi ds ialpon dosig od basgim od ox ex dazis siatris od salbrox cynxir faboan Vnal chis Const ds daox cocasg ol Oanio yor vohim ol gizyax od eors cocasg plosi molui ds pageip larag om droln matorb cocasb emna Lpatralx yolci matb nomig monons olora gnay angelard Ohio ohio ohio ohio ohio noib Ohio Caosgon Bagle madrid i zirop chiso drilpa Niiso crip ip nidali.

* * *

The threat of your destruction grows as a tree in the north; its branches reach to cover the Earth with misery and despair; it consumes being night and day; it slays as the scorpion; it poisons the very air with its stench. This is the doom whose triumph would destroy you as would the rupture of the Earth itself. Then this one growth would nourish thousands, even as a foulness of heart perverts the mind. And then woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, yes, woe to the Earth, for its foulness will be great. Heed well the warning of this Word.

The Eleventh Part

Oxiayal holdo od zirom O coraxo ds zildar raasy od vabzir camliax od bahal Niiso Salman teloch Casarman holq od ti ta zchis soba cormf iga Niisa Bagle abramg Noncp ZACAR ca od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa zorge Lap zirdo Noco Mad Hoath Iaida.

* * *

The Temple falls, the pentagram vanishes to await a new dawn, and my Other Face cries beware. For the third ordering confronts the danger of death, even as they who worship it. Beware, for it is I who warn you. Arise thus in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Twelfth Part

Nonci dsonf Babage od chis ob hubaio tibibp allar atraah od ef drix fafen Mian ar Enay ovof Soba dooain aai iVONPH ZACAR gohus od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa, zorge, Lap zirdo Noco MAD Hoath Iaida.

* * *

O Guardians of the south, may this Word strengthen you and thus our bond. Speak it to your ordering, that I may be known to them as Set. I call upon you to arise in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Thirteenth Part

Napeai Babagen dsbrin vx ooaona lring vonph doalim eolis ollog orsba ds chis affa Micma isro MAD od Lonshitox ds ivmd aai GROSB ZACAR od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa, zorge Lap zirdo Noco MAD Hoath Iaida.

* * *

O warriors of the south, relax neither your vigilance nor your resolve, lest in forgetfulness you become intoxicated by the promises and the threats of the god of death, whom you now know as a bitter sting. Arise in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Fourteenth Part

Noromi bagie pasbs oiad ds trint mirc ob thil dods tolham caosgo Homin ds brin oroch quar Micma bial oiad aisro tox dsivm aai Baltim ZACAR od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa, zorge, Lap zirdo Noco MAD, hoath Iaida.

* * *

O sons of fury and daughters of perfection who are ageless amidst the creatures of Earth, hear my Word that is a promise from the one who brought you knowledge of all perfection. Arise in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Fifteenth Part

Ils Tabaan Lialprt casarman vpaahi chis darg dsocido caosgi orscor ds omax monasci Baeouib od emetgis iaiadix ZACAR od ZAMRAN, odo cicle qaa zorge Lap zirdo Noco MAD, hoath Iaida.

* * *

O sacred beings who live and have been protectors of the sacred Flame, who carry forth my Word and the Seal of my promise, and who look upon the Earth with clearness of sight: Arise in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Sixteenth Part

Ils viualprt Salman balt ds acroodzi busd od bliorax balit dsinsi caosg lusdan Emod dsom od tliob drilpa geh yls Madzilodarp ZACAR od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa zorge Lap zirdo Noco MAD hoath Iaida.

* * *

O initiates who now enter this Temple of perfection, who shall come into being in glory and who shall proclaim perfection, who shall look upon the Earth and Understand its creatures: You shall be as I who am the Overpowering One. Arise in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Seventeenth Part

Ils dialprt soba vpaah chis nanba zixlay dodsih odbrint Taxs hubaro tastax ylsi, sobaiad Ivonpovnp Aldon daxil od toatar: ZACAR od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa, zorge lap zirdo Noco MAD hoath Iaida.

* * *

O aspirants to come, who shall bear the Flame and wield the Powers of Darkness in the name of my vengeance, awaken and hear: Arise in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Eighteenth Part

Ils Micaolz Olpirt ialprg Bliors ds odo Busdir oiad ouoars caosgo Casarmg Laiad eran brints cafafam ds ivmd aqlo adohi MOZ od maoffas Bolp Comobliort pambt ZACAR od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa, zorge Lap zirdo Noco MAD Hoath Iaida.

* * *

O thou mighty light and burning flame of comfort that brings the Majesty of Set to the Earth; in which the secrets of the principles of perfection reside; whose name is that of a stone ever sought, never found, save through the Gate of Darkness: Arise in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

The Nineteenth Part

Madriax dspraf [____] chis Micaolz Saanir Caosgo ofdisis balzizras Iaida nonca gohulim Micma adoian MAD Iaod bliorb Sabaooaona chis Luciftias peripsol ds abraasa noncf netaaib Caosgi od tilb adphaht damploz tooat noncf gmicalzoma lrasd tofglo marb yarry IDOIGO od torzulp iaodaf gohol Caosga tabaord saanir od Christeos yrpoil tiobl Busdirtilb noaln paid orsba od dodrmni zylna Elzaptilb parmgi peripsax od ta Qurlst boopaiS Lnibm ov cho symp, od Christeos Agtoltorn mirc Q tiobl Lel Ton paombd dilzmo aspian, Od Christeos Agltortorn parach asymp, Cordziz dodpal fifalz lsmnad, Od fargt bams omaoas, Conisbra od auauox tonug Orscatbl noafmi tabges Leuithmong vnchi omptilb ors Bagle Moooh olcordziz Lcapimao ixomaxip odcacocash gosaa Baglen pii tianta ababalond odfaorgt telocvovim Madriiix torzu Oadriax orocho aboapri Tabaori priaz artabas Adrpan corsta dobix. Yolcam priazi arcoazior Odquasbqting Ripir paoxt sagacor Vml od prdzar cacrg Aoiveae cormpt TORZU ZACAR od ZAMRAN aspt sibi butmona ds Surzas tia baltan: Odo cicle qaa: od Ozazma plapli Iadnamad.

* * *

O vision of the [# Æthyr], whose power is upon the Earth and reflects a perfection of the Highest of Life: I summon you that I may see with the eyes of Set your creator, the Eyes of Starlight. He it was who conceived you for an Understanding of the Universe, to make all things of which you partake intelligible; as against the aimlessness of the nature of lower existence. The Earth is but a part of this nature: Its course is without purpose; its creatures ever change. Even those of the second ordering of nature are confused and aimless; they have forgotten their past, and their greatest works are defaced and destroyed, finally to become dwellings for the beasts of the first ordering. Why? The second ordering was mere accident of chance. For a moment the Earth becomes conscious, then it becomes forgetful and savage, and finally it shall be a land of death. O vision, appear! Manifest the existence which partakes of you. Create that which is newly of you; abandon that which turns away from you; strengthen that which increases of you; and destroy that which knows not of you. Let nothing of nature escape your touch; enter and depart throughout the farthest reaches of the Universe. Arise in your glory and honor the Word of Set, which he has spoken to us in his perfection. Behold the genius of your creation, and let us partake of undefiled wisdom.

The Æthyrs of the Nineteenth Part

30 -	TEX	29 -	RII	28 -	BAG
27 -	ZAA	26 -	DES	25 -	VTI
24 -	NIA	23 -	TOR	22 -	LIN
21 -	ASP	20 -	KHR	19 -	POP
18 -	ZEN	17 -	TAN	16 -	LEA
15 -	OXO	14 -	VTA	13 -	ZIM
12 -	LOE	11 -	ICH	10 -	ZAX
9 -	ZIP	8 -	ZID	7 -	DEO
6 -	MAZ	5 -	LIT	4 -	PAZ
3 -	ZOM	2 -	ARN	1 -	LIL

Appendix 5: *The Book of the Law - Commentary*

- transcribed by Aleister Crowley (6)=[5] A.'.A.'.
Cairo, Egypt, 1904 CE
- commentary by Michael A. Aquino VI°

Introduction

On March 18, 1904 Aleister Crowley and his wife Rose visited the old Boulak Museum in Cairo. She drew his attention to the XXVI Dynasty funerary stele of the Theban priest Ankh-f-n-Khonsu.

Represented on this stele are two Egyptian god-figures and a winged solar disc, which Crowley identified respectively as Nuit, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and Hadit. He thought Ra-Hoor-Khuit to be a form of Horus the Younger (the Egyptological term for the son of Osiris and Isis in the Osirian mythos) and thus the symbol of an “æon of the son” to follow those of the mother-goddess (Isis) and the father-god (Osiris). He also believed Hadit to be “Heru-pa-kraath” (Harpokrates), the infant form of Horus the Younger. He identified Nuit [correctly] as the Egyptian goddess of the sky.

An examination of the hieroglyphs on the stele - called by Crowley the “Stele of Revealing” - indicates that it was not conceived or executed according to the Osirian mythos [save that the dead priest is referred to as “an Osiris”, i.e. a dead soul].

“Ra-Hoor-Khuit” is correctly translated to “Ra-Harakte, Master of the Gods”. This is a form of HarWer (Horus the Elder - the Great Horus of pre-Osirian legend), literally “Horus of the Horizon” in his solar aspect of Xepera. Ra-Harakte had been the judge of the dead in non-Osirian Egypt, and he was also cast as the champion of Set in the Osirian-mythos trial between Set and Horus the Younger.

The curious term “Hadit” is simply the Islamic word for a divinely-inspired utterance of any sort; hence it is not found on the XXVI Dynasty monument. The “Hadit” disc is hieroglyphically identified on the stele as “Behdety”, a form of Horus the Elder worshipped at Behdet in the eastern Nile delta. Summarily the Stele of Revealing is not based upon the Osirian triad at all; its themes are those of a Theban Sun-cult based upon Horus the Elder and Ra-Harakte.

This casts an entirely new light on the *Book of the Law* that Crowley transcribed on April 8-10, 1904. He interpreted the chapters and verses of this document according to his understanding of the figures on the Stele of Revealing, and these interpretations have been published as *The Law is for All* (Ed. Regardie), *Magical and Philosophical Commentaries on the Book of the Law* (Ed. Symonds & Grant), and *The Commentaries of AL* (Ed. Motta). Crowley’s account of the Cairo Working - the transcription of the *Book of the Law* - is contained in *The Equinox*, *The Confessions*, and *The Equinox of the Gods*.

The concepts introduced in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* make possible an entirely new analysis of the *Book of the Law*. This should be understood neither as an æsthetic criticism of Crowley’s comments nor as an attempted distortion of them. It is rather the result of the perceptual vantage-point of the Æon of Set as opposed to that of the Æon of Horus. The original Comment to the *Book of the Law* forbade all discussion or criticism of that text, not unjustifiably on the presumption that initiates below the grade of Magus could not evaluate it with Æonic perspective. As an Ipsissimus I assert a trans-æonic perspective, hence the right - even responsibility - to comment accordingly on the *Book of the Law*.

The First Chapter

1. **Had! The Manifestation of Nuit.**

This chapter is a verbalization of the Nuit-Form as perceived by Crowley. [Throughout this comment the term “Form” is used in the Pythagorean/Platonic sense as a first and/or comprehensive Universal principle.] As the Egyptian sky-goddess, Nuit was portrayed as the mother of Set, Horus the Elder, Ra, and Xepera.

2. **The unveiling of the company of heaven.**

The Book of the Law constitutes an explanation of concepts derived from these five Forms. HarWer is completely manifest, as is necessary for the Equinox of the Æon of Horus. The *Xeper*-principle is partially revealed through passages in the text dealing with transformation and evolution. The Form of Set would remain unrecognized and enigmatic, its presence but not identity sensed, until the announcement of the Æon of Set on the North Solstice of X/1975.

3. **Every man and every woman is a star.**

A star is a self-contained unit of matter, energy, and the process of conversion between the two. Once formed, a star is an island of existence unique unto itself amidst the Universe, interacting comparatively remotely with other celestial bodies and phenomena through radiation and gravitation. The constitution of each abnormally intelligence human being (*homo sapiens*) is similar; one’s interactions with other people and with one’s environment have the capacity to be dwarfed by the Self-contained consciousness of the non-natural intellect. Ultimately the Self-created perceptual universe of the magician can surpass the stimuli and consequences of the objective, material one.

4. **Every number is infinite; there is no difference.**

This principle was later revealed as an important key to #II-76 by the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*. Crowley’s extensive essay on the subject in both 777 and his 1920 Comment is excellent and deserves a thoughtful reading. According to Pythagoras and his Egyptian initiatory sources, numbers are the “building-blocks” of existence: They are not Forms *per se*, but are rather the “alphabet” through which many Forms are made comprehensible.

If Nuit is considered to be the expanse of the natural, material Universe, then the inclusion of this statement in this first chapter assumes additional significance. Numbers are infinite. For example, there can be countless manifestations of things which are viewed as quarters of wholes or as quartets of complete wholes. At the same time the “4-principle” is rigid in itself and is thus a fixed component of the natural Universe.

5. **Help me, o warrior lord of Thebes, in my unveiling before the Children of men!**

The “warrior lord of Thebes” is Amon (Amun/Amen), the patron warrior-god of

Thebes (*Uast*), generally portrayed as a ram or as a man wearing a twin-plumed headdress. This statement suggests the forthcoming catalyst of the Age of Satan [or Set/HarWer], symbolized by the Ram of Mendes (*Ba-neb-Tettu*), as a transitional phase between the Æons of Horus and Set. Note the emphasis given to the term “Children”, implying an elect body of initiates rather than the human species as a whole.

6. Be thou Hadit, my secret centre, my heart & my tongue!

“Hadit” means “inspired utterance”. “Had” is also the “secret center” of the word “Abrahadabra”, described by Crowley as the Magical Formula of the Æon of Horus. The “abra” prefix & suffix each translate hieroglyphically as “heart of Ra” or “purification of Ra”, which would render the entire Formula as an “inspired utterance from the heart of Ra”.

7. Behold! it is revealed by Aiwass the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat.

Harpocrates is Horus the Younger, the later Osirian corruption of the Great Horus (HarWer). Hence the authenticity of Aiwass as an objective entity seems doubtful. More probably he is a subjective idealization of Crowley’s own personality. *The Book of the Law* is most coherently viewed as an “inspired utterance” of the Forms identified in #I-1 and #I-2, not a statement by Aiwass on behalf of a corrupted god-Form.

8. The Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs.

Khabs is the hieroglyphic term for the gods of the 36 Dekans [or for stellar gods in general]. *Khu* may be translated from the hieroglyphic in several ways. Crowley preferred “spirit”. It may also mean “fire” or “flame”. Corresponding translations would be: “The stellar gods are conceived by one’s spirit; they do not impart it.” -or- “The stellar gods are within the flame; they do not create it.”

If the “spirit” or “flame” is presumed to be the Black Flame of primal separate intelligence identified in the *Diabolicon*, then the two translations are identical. The stellar gods [as opposed to those signified by other symbols] are identified as aspects or Forms of the Primal Form of separate intelligence.

9. Worship then the Khabs, and behold my light shed over you.

Attention is properly directed towards the stellar god-Forms and what they symbolize. One personification of these Forms [according to the imagery of the Age of Satan] may be found in the *Diabolicon*. Other, more complex interpretations are now being developed through the Orders of the Temple of Set.

10. Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known.

This affirms the principle of initiatory elitism [as opposed to egalitarian mob-rule]. The recurrent tragedy of human political history is that, whenever the elitist principle is abandoned *de facto* - whether or not it was previously admitted *de jure* - corruption and disintegration of the host culture invariably results.

11. These are fools that men adore; both their Gods & their men are fools.

This is a sharp and succinct statement concerning the inauthenticity of the prior religious systems of the world. Crowley proceeded to disregard this admonition, needlessly encumbering his speculations and calculations concerning the *Book of the Law* with irrelevant myth-material from Buddhism, Hinduism, and Cabalism. If the results were so often confusing and inconclusive, the Beast had no one to blame but himself.

12. Come forth, o children, under the stars, & take your fill of love!

Crowley interprets this straightforwardly as a statement that sexual or artistic love should be indulged openly and innocently, and that an empathy with Nuit will be one of the consequences. It may also be that one's vision, magical abilities, and emotional sensitivity will be heightened at night, when Solar light and radiation are at least partially shielded.

13. I am above you and in you. My ecstasy is in yours. My joy is to see your joy.

A straightforward sexual statement concealing a more subtle truth: The essence of the Black Flame, emitted from the stars, is captured and sustained in the persons of the Elect. The intelligence of the Flame, both chaotic (HarWer) and composed (Set), takes pleasure in the generation and preservation of similar qualities in the Elect. For their part, the Elect experience a unique exhilaration at night, especially when exposed to starlight.

**14. Above, the gemmed azure is
The naked splendour of Nuit;
She bends in ecstasy to kiss
The secret ardours of Hadit.
The winged globe, the starry blue,
Are mine, O Ankh-f-n-Khonsu.**

Crowley's poetic rendering of the juxtaposition of Nuit and "Hadit" on the Stele of Revealing. His misidentification of Behdety is again apparent, as the lover of Nuit was a god of the Earth, not [either] Horus.

The name "Ankh-f-n-Khonsu" translates to "[He whose] Life is in Khonsu". Khonsu or Khons was the Moon-god of Thebes, son of the family triad Amon/Mut/Khons. By the time of the XXVI Dynasty, the priesthoods at Thebes and Memphis were among the few remaining non-Osirian centers of learning. By the time of the New Empire, Amon was usually combined with Ra as Amon-Ra, which explains the Solar disc and Ra-Harakte on the stele of a Theban priest.

- 15. Now ye shall know that the chosen priest & apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest the Beast; and in his woman called the Scarlet Woman is all power given. They shall gather my children into their fold: they shall bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men.**

“Infinite space” characterizes Nuit. The initiatory role and authority of Crowley and his Scarlet Woman are herein defined. They are charged to bring the A.'.A.'. into existence and to promulgate its doctrines to society in general. Both of these tasks they indeed undertook, and their successful accomplishment was a necessary precondition of the Age of Satan and Æon of Set.

- 16. For he is ever a sun, and she a moon. But to him is the winged secret flame, and to her the stooping starlight.**

Crowley interpreted this verse as a simple identification of the Beast and Scarlet Woman with “Hadit” and Nuit respectively. He further hypothesized an analogy to the *Yang/Yin* interrelationship of Chinese cosmology. To me this latter interpretation seems more substantive, implying as it does that complementary magical influences would be required for the Æon of Horus to exert its full influence.

- 17. But ye are not so chosen.**

Crowley excuses this particular comment as being directed to “the other worshippers of Nuit” besides the Scarlet Woman and himself. I read it as establishing to all readers of the *Book of the Law* that there would be but one “prince-priest the Beast”. The pathetic posturing of the many self-proclaimed “reincarnations” of Aleister Crowley speaks for itself.

- 18. Burn upon their brows, o splendrous serpent!**

The Uræus cobra, worn on the forehead, was the symbol of Egyptian kingship. More precisely, the pharaoh’s role was that of a priest-king: a divinely inspired and sanctioned guardian of the initiatory Elect of Egypt. Nuit announces Crowley’s ascent to this station as Magus of the Æon. Once again the authenticity of the *Book of the Law* is subtly evidenced, as the exclusive symbolism of the Uræus is unmistakable. “This is the Uræus which came forth from Set.” - Utterance #683, *Pyramid Texts*.

- 19. O azure-lidded woman, bend upon them!**

Nuit is the “azure-lidded woman”. Considered together with verse #I-18, this implies that the priest-king powers and perceptions of the Beast and Scarlet Woman will be more fully realized during the hours of darkness. Horus, however, is a deity of daylight; consider the three 12-1 PM transmissions of the *Book of the Law* itself.

- 20. The key of the rituals is in the secret word which I have given unto him.**

Crowley believed this word to be “Abrahadabra”, symbolizing the union of complementary concepts through ritual. He explored its construction via Cabalistic numerological techniques, arriving at various numbers which he believed significant to

the Æon of Horus. While the Hebrew Cabala possesses no objective validity, Crowley insisted - presumably as a consequence of his Golden Dawn training - upon trying to use it as a device for systematizing his philosophy. His diaries reveal his exhaustive efforts in this vein and the many pointless “results” he achieved.

Exactly how Crowley used “Abrahadabra” as a ritual key is obscure. He did observe that it contains 11 letters, and that the (1)=[10], (2)=[9], (3)=[8], etc. grades of the G.'.D.'. and A.'.A.'. incorporated an elevenfold base [which was rather at odds with the tenfold Cabalistic Tree of Life]. He also felt the word to be a “corrected” version of the older term “abracadabra” (a pyramidal word-puzzle based upon the a-b-c-d sequence).

- 21. With the God & the Adorer I am nothing: they do not see me. They are as upon the earth; I am Heaven, and there is no other God than me, and my lord Hadit.**

Crowley interpreted this passage as descriptive of the Stele of Revealing. I read it rather as a statement concerning the true nature of “God”, i.e. the mechanical, inertial cosmos (objective universe) (Nuit) as opposed to popular concepts of God as an anthropomorphic, sentient center of willful personality. Such fantasies are unsubstantiated. The true “God” is “Heaven” (the objective universe/Nuit), and it is perceived as such by means of inspired visions (Hadit).

- 22. Now, therefore, I am known to ye by my name Nuit, and to him by a secret name which I will give to him when at last he knoweth me. Since I am Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof, do ye also thus. Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby cometh hurt.**

The secret name, revealed in the 12th Æthyr of *Liber 418 (The Vision and The Voice)*, was that of Babylon or Babalon, incorporated by Crowley into the seal of the A.'.A.'. Again Nuit is shown to comprise the objective universe. The adjuration of this passage lays bare the terrible secret of all forms of God/nature worship: the forcing of all deviant Will towards uniformity and conformity to the cosmic norm. Difference or independence of any sort - particularly intellectual separation - is anathema to Nuit.

- 23. But whoso availeth in this, let him be chief of all!**

A Magus - (9)=[2] A.'.A.'. , V° Church of Satan, or V° Temple of Set - is in fact an individual who succeeds in achieving a perspective of separation from the objective universe and, from that point of perspective, Uttering a Word [=formulating a philosophy] to alter that universe in some fashion. Nuit’s reaction is one of inertia. The change is resisted, but once accomplished it is reinforced. Once a Magus has successfully completed his Task, he becomes obsolete as such and must either revert to the level of Magister Templi or take the oath of Ipsissimus.

- 24. I am Nuit, and my word is six and fifty.**
25. Divide, add, multiply, and understand.

Crowley divided 6 by 50 and got 0.12, which he thought might signify his $0=2$ equation. His other attempts to solve the mathematical riddles of these verses were unsuccessful, though he attributed one or two Cabalistic symbols to the numbers that resulted. He did not, however, uncover the word of Nuit. That word is “inertia”, whose letters, numbered per the English alphabet [cf. the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*]=76=13=4. $50 \div 6 = 8$. $50 + 6 = 56$. $50 \times 6 = 300$. $8 + 56 + 300 = 364 = 13 = 4 =$ key number concealing the sacred decad of Pythagoreanism ($1+2+3+4=10$). Cf. also Crowley’s most significant *Book 4*. Q.E.D.

- 26. Then saith the prophet and slave of the beauteous one: Who am I, and what shall be the sign? So she answered him, bending down, a lambent flame of blue, all-touching, all penetrant, her lovely hands upon the black earth, & her lithe body arched for love, and her soft feet not hurting the little flowers: Thou knowest! And the sign shall be my ecstasy, the consciousness of the continuity of existence, the unfragmentary non-atomic fact of my universality.**

The response to Crowley’s appeal for confirmation of his identity was this endorsement of his belief that he was in fact the Beast 666. The most subtle and meaningful of all signs was given - a reminder of Crowley’s ability to sense the omnipresence and comprehensiveness of Nuit. Such an experience would have been impossible for one of lesser vision than a Magus, because a Magus, by definition, must first comprehend the totality of what presently exists before Uttering a Word to exert change upon it.

- 27. Then the priest answered & said unto the Queen of Space, kissing her lovely brows, and the dew of her light bathing his whole body in a sweet-smelling perfume of sweat: O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!**

Crowley’s ecstatic recognition of the sign, and hope that mankind generally will not transcend inertia by achieving a point of perspective similar to his [from which Nuit may be seen “from outside”]. Presumably this follows #I-5 and #I-10, in which only Elect initiates may presume to “see the goddess unveiled”.

- 28. None, breathed the light, faint & faery, of the stars, and two.**

Nuit validates the concept that she is all-inclusive, hence cannot be distinguished from any other thing known to her. [The Set/HarWer phenomena are distinct and apart from the objective universe.] Yet the objective universe is not a homogenous whole; it is everywhere separated into complementary parts: +/- magnetic fields, matter/antimatter, mass/energy, light/darkness, heat/cold, etc. It is the interaction of these parts which engenders the phenomena of time and mathematics.

29. For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union.

Love is the highest expression of complementary attraction. The division of Nuit into complementary components makes love possible, and the many possibilities for combination bring the phenomena of chance into play.

30. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all.

Division - the forced separation of a homogenous whole into parts - is disruptive, hence painful to the inertia of Nuit. Dissolution of components through their union with complements is joyful, insofar as the homogenous whole is thus restored. The statement argues against division and for the reunion of the whole. Again this tendency of the Nuit-Form confirms its true identity as such.

31. For these fools of men and their woes care not thou at all! They feel little; what is, is balanced by weak joys; but ye are my chosen ones.

Crowley need not worry about obstructions to the unification of Nuit resulting from the emotional and intellectual spasms of uninitiated mankind. These are balanced by complementary forces - joy for pain, satisfaction for curiosity, the death-wish for the life-force, etc. Hence intellectual or emotional ventures will be neutralized before they stray so far from the pattern as to recognize it for what it is. And the initiates known to Nuit are only those who seek to hasten reunification of the whole.

32. Obey my prophet! follow out the ordeals of my knowledge! seek me only! Then the joys of my love will redeem ye from all pain. This is so: I swear it by the vault of my body; by my sacred heart and tongue; by all I can give, by all I desire of ye all.

Nuit admonishes Crowley not to stray from the goal of reunion. Dissolution of the self into Nuit brings an end to all self-consciousness and thus from pain. The ultimate argument of Nuit is for suicide of the finite self in order to become part of the infinite whole. [Cf. Crowley's discussion of the "annihilation of the self" via the "crossing of the Abyss" between Adeptus Exemptus (7)=[4] and Magister Templi (8)=[3] in *One Star in Sight*.]

33. Then the priest fell into a deep trance or swoon, & said unto the Queen of Heaven; Write unto us the ordeals; write unto us the rituals; write unto us the law!

Crowley desires the means for reunion with the whole to be explained to him in terms of ordeals (stresses necessary to destroy the self), rituals (mental and physical exercises to bring initiates closer to Nuit), and law (commandments that are to be obeyed to achieve the reunion).

34. But she said: the ordeals I write not: the rituals shall be half known and half concealed: the Law is for all.

Nuit refuses to identify the suicide “ordeal” required of separate personalities for absorption into the whole. The procedures for the rituals will be imparted, but the weakening of the self resulting from those rituals will not be identified for what it actually is. The Law - that Nuit insists the reunion be pursued - is all-embracing; it is integral with the Form of Nuit in its entirety.

35. This that thou writest is the threefold book of Law.

Identification of the name of the *Book of the Law*.

36. My scribe Ankh-af-na-khonsu, the priest of the princes, shall not in one letter change this book; but lest there be folly, he shall comment thereupon by the wisdom of Ra-Hoor-Khu-it.

The *Book of the Law* is not to be altered, edited, or abridged in any way by Crowley, though he may comment upon it in order to explain its relevance to the Æon of Horus. The reason that the text may not be touched by that Magus is that it contains formulæ recognizable only after the Æon of Horus, as is evident from this commentary and the contents of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

37. Also the mantras and spells; the obeah and the wanga; the work of the wand and the work of the sword; these he shall learn and teach.

Ceremonial and operative magical procedures are among the tools that the Beast is to use for the communication of his Word. The suit of Wands in the Tarot covers aspects of positive existence; the suit of Swords covers aspects of force and destruction. The path of the Æon of Horus would seem evident, particularly against the tableaux set forth in the second and third chapters of the *Book of the Law*.

38. He must teach; but he may make severe the ordeals.

A Magus must Utter his Word; that is, he is compelled to explain his philosophical principle. Nevertheless he may choose those for whom he deems such explanation educational and beneficial. Pearls need not be cast before swine.

39. The word of the Law is θελημα.

[In English: *Thelema*.] Crowley explained this concept as “harmony of Will and Action”, but he also wondered if it might not also have “probably a very lofty secret interpretation”. That interpretation is decipherable once the word of Nuit - **inertia** - is known. What is understood by the term “Will” is an expression of mental separateness from Nuit, in that the self is impressing its desire for inertial change upon Nuit.

By definition, then, the separate Will cannot be harmonious. Harmony with Nuit can occur only when the separate Will is destroyed and the mind mechanically fused with the inertia of the objective universe. This notion has been expressed as “oneness

with God”, *nirvana*, etc. From the standpoint of Nuit this is immortalization of the Will; from the standpoint of the individual apart from Nuit it is suicide.

Contained in the concept is the principle that the individual Will can be weakened and destroyed only by the separate being possessing it. It is not “of Nuit” and cannot be directly influenced by that Form.

Within the context of the Æon of Horus, then, *Thelema* could be seen as the “sane” alternative to chaotic behavior, since the essence and presence of Set were as yet concealed.

- 40. Who calls us Thelemites will do no wrong, if he look but close into the word. For there are therein Three Grades, the Hermit, and the Lover, and the man of Earth. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.**

Crowley advanced a Cabalistic interpretation thus: *The* = the Hermit [of the Tarot] = “invisible yet illuminating”. *le* = the Lover = “visible as is the lightning-flash - the College of Adepts”. *ma* = “the man of Earth - the Blasted Tower”. He went on to add the Cabalistic/numerological values of these three cards and obtained 31 (“AL”+“LA”), whence came the secret name of the *Book of the Law*.

The famous final sentence of this passage, originating [like “*Thelema*”] in Dr. Francois Rabelais’ novel *Gargantua*, had also been used by Sir Francis Dashwood who inscribed FAY CE QUE VOUDRAS over the main entrance to Medmenham Abbey.

Crowley, in adopting it, applied it specifically to “one’s true will” - which, according to the Word of the Æon of Horus, meant the uniting of the individual Will with that of the objective universe (Nuit).

- 41. The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse. Accursed! Accursed! be it to the aeons. Hell.**

Compare the Magical Formula of the Age of Satan (1966-1975 CE): “Indulgence instead of Abstinence.” Crowley interprets “love” in a sexual context, but the comment concerning union of the divided implies the neutralization of complementary opposites by fusion - the compulsion of Nuit. [See #I-29 through #I-32.] All impulses other than those which lead towards such reunion and neutralization are seen as a curse, and they are collectively characterized as Hell. This is not inconsistent with the symbolism of the *Diablicon* and the Age of Satan that succeeded the Æon of Horus.

- 42. Let it be that state of manyhood bound and loathing. So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will.**

“Hell” is further described as “that state of manyhood”, i.e. a variety of distinct and separate Wills, which, from the standpoint of Nuit, is a condition “bound and loathing”. Compare again the *Diablicon*. Again the charge is given that polarized intellects “have no right” but to “do thy Will” - a meaningless aphorism except as interpreted per #I-39.

43. Do that, and no other shall say nay.

The human intellectual separation from Nuit is the only such manifestation on Earth. Once this “flaw” has been “corrected”, the natural inertia of Earth will have been restored. There are no other intellects capable of achieving a sense of separateness - of “saying nay”, as it were.

44. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is in every way perfect.

Will “delivered from the lust of result” and without “purpose” is independence of Will destroyed. The concept of Will then becomes completely meaningless except as identified with the cosmic inertia as a whole. This would in fact be “perfection” from the standpoint of Nuit.

45. The Perfect and the Perfect are one Perfect and not two; nay, are none!

Perfection as defined by Nuit consists of unity. Once it has been achieved, it becomes a meaningless concept, since there will be none apart from it to appreciate that unity.

46. Nothing is a secret key of this law. Sixty-one the Jews call it; I call it eight, eighty, four hundred & eighteen.

In that fulfillment of the Law would reduce all intellectual existence to unity and thus to a meaningless concept, “nothing” is indeed a secret key to the *Book of the Law*! What the Jews call it is unimportant, since the Hebraic/Cabalistic numerological system is insubstantial. The sum of 8, 80, 400, and 18 is $506 = 11 =$ the eleven-lettered formula of *Abrahadabra*.

47. But they have the half: unite by thine art so that all disappear.

Another reaffirmation of the law of Nuit.

48. My prophet is a fool with his one, one, one; are not they the Ox, and none by the Book?

A criticism of Crowley for his strong sense of individuality and subconscious refusal to accept and embrace the nihilism of Nuit. [Here it appears that “fool” is to be understood in the mundane sense rather than as synonym for the A.'.A.'. grade of Ipsissimus.] Nuit perceives separate intellectual existence as stupid - as are oxen - and futile according to the doctrines put forth in the *Book of the Law*.

- 49. Abrogate are all rituals, all ordeals, all words and signs. Ra-Hoor-Khuit hath taken his seat in the East at the Equinox of the Gods; and let Asar be with Isa, who also are one. But they are not of me. Let Asar be the adorant, Isa the sufferer; Hoor in his secret name and spendour is the Lord initiating.**

All principles of ceremonial magic not in accordance with the *Book of the Law* are obsolete and should now be discarded. Ra-Harakte “hath taken his seat in the East”: The Sun is now dawning on the Equinox of the Gods. Since the Vernal Equinox occurs at approximately March 21, it may be assumed that the statement refers to an “equally-balanced night” between the unity of Nuit and the separate chaos of HarWer [as will be seen in the third chapter].

Asar (Osiris) and Isa (Isis) are identified as representative of a non-germane principle: that of posthumous redemption and revival. Osiris is a mythical object of popular worship; Isis is symbolic of those who equate worship with abstinence, suffering, and deprivation. Death-worship [in the biological sense as distinct from the self-obliteration sense] and worship by abstinence have no place in the Æon of Horus; they would be distracting to the actual Word of the Æon.

The secret name of Hoor (the hieroglyphic Hor or Horus) is HarWer - in hieroglyphics the “Great Horus” or Horus the Elder - not the Horus [the Younger] of the Osirian mythos.

- 50. There is a word to say about the Hierophantic task. Behold! there are three ordeals in one, and it may be given in three ways. The gross must pass through fire; let the fine be tried in intellect, and the lofty chosen ones in the highest; thus ye have star & star, system & system; let not one know well the other!**

Within the Æon of Horus the initiatory Order - the A.'.A.'. - may accept persons of various levels of intelligence for appropriate pursuits within the Order. Tests and ordeals should be tailored to individuals’ potential as appropriate. [Consider also #I-3.] Nevertheless there should be no confusion or blurring of the distinction between the several intellectual levels; intelligence is a dispassionate identification of elites.

- 51. There are four gates to one palace; the floor of that palace is of silver and gold; lapis lazuli & jasper are there; and all rare scents; jasmine & rose, and the emblems of death. Let him enter in turn or at once the four gates; let him stand on the floor of the palace. Will he not sink? Amn. Ho! warrior, if thy servant sink? But there are means and means. Be goodly therefore: dress ye all in fine apparel; eat rich foods and drink sweet wines and wines that foam! Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me.**

Crowley considered this passage a more or less literal interpretation of the initiatory environment the A.'.A.'. was to use. Lapis lazuli and jasper he considered symbolic of Nuit and “Hadit” respectively, and he thought jasmine and rose to represent “the two sacraments” (the male and female sexual fluids). He referred guardedly to the “emblems of death” as the ceremonial symbols of Freemasonry - to be adopted and used by the A.'.A.'..

If the passage is indeed descriptive of an initiatory temple, then it may be read literally and a temple constructed accordingly, complete with four gates and sinking

floors [perhaps an alligator pit for the quick & tidy disposal of would-be initiates who failed the tests of #I-50?].

- 52. If this be not aright; if ye confound the space-marks, saying: They are one; or saying, They are many; if the ritual be not ever unto me: then expect the direful judgments of Ra Hoor Khuit.**

Crowley identified “space-marks” as stars [in the sense of #I-3]. It is equally erroneous, he said, to consider individuals as either completely interconnected with or completely disconnected from one another.

By “the ritual” he understood the sex-act, taking the admonition to mean that it was of value as a magical ritual more than as an expression of brutish lust. This is an important distinction in Crowley’s own magical philosophy and explains his interest in the later, sex-magic-based Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.).

Crowley’s magical and æsthetic approach to sex has not, it may be said, been carried forward in the practices of his latter-day disciples, most of whom err on either side of the delicate balance between the symbolic and the animalistic.

- 53. This shall regenerate the world, the little world my sister, my heart & my tongue, unto whom I send this kiss. Also, o scribe and prophet, though thou be of the princes, it shall not assuage thee nor absolve thee. But ecstasy be thine and joy of earth: ever To me! To me!**

The impulse of Nuit is to restore natural harmony and balance to the Earth - a condition which is distorted by the non-natural intellectual self-consciousness of mankind. Crowley’s exalted role in this design shall not exempt him from self-obliteration as well, but he is promised “ecstasy and joy” - the first from intellectual union with the objective universe/Nuit and the second by return to the physical station of a non-intellectual, natural animal on Earth.

- 54. Change not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! thou, o prophet, shall not behold all these mysteries hidden therein.**

In fact the various printed versions of the *Book of the Law* have consistently omitted key elements of the handwritten manuscript that could not be typeset. Two of these elements - the configuration of the coded passage #II-76 and the grid/number matrix behind part of #III-47 - proved crucial to their decipherment in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

- 55. The child of thy bowels, he shall behold them.**

Crowley interpreted this verse in a magical, rather than in a genealogical sense. At first he felt the “child” to be Charles S. Jones (Frater Achad), but then abandoned this opinion when Jones developed theories not in accordance with Crowley’s own beliefs concerning the Æon. The matter was unresolved at the time of Crowley’s death, nor were his various disciples or organizational splinter-groups able to reach consensus upon it. The question was resolved by the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* precisely a century after Crowley’s own birth.

- 56. Expect him not from the East, nor from the West; for from no expected house cometh that child. Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little; solve the first half of the equation, leave the second unattacked. But that hast all in the clear light, and some, though not all, in the dark.**

The “child” would be neither of the “Eastern” (oriental/Theosophical) nor of the “Western” (Cabalistic/Masonic) magical schools, but would come rather from a school distinct from and unrecognized by both - the Church of Satan, an initiatory magical Order that itself rejected the doctrines both of the aforementioned systems and of Crowley’s organizations.

The “child”, as Magus of the Æon of Set, necessarily had to reject the premises of the Æon of Horus as obsolete and/or incomplete, but this same perspective and initiatory comprehension enabled him to explain key mysteries of the Æon of Horus that had been unresolved even by Crowley himself. By definition only a Magus may completely comprehend a previous Magus - because the successor possesses the extra-æonic perspective required.

Crowley’s curiosity concerning the identity of the “child” is also dismissed as futile - a word of advice which he, to his continuing frustration, refused to heed.

The Words of the several Magi are valid under the circumstances of their Utterance, but each Magus will Understand only those magical and philosophical principles encompassed by his Word [and previous Words to the extent that it elaborates upon them].

Each Word represents a new equation between the experience of the past and the problems of the future. A Magus may use the power of his Word to better understand the past and to address the present, but he should not presume that his Word will be the final solution to the indefinite future.

The intellect alone will enable man to confront problems purely in the realm of the objective universe, but the uninitiated intellect is inadequate where the entire Universe - including metaphysical realities - is concerned. This is the realm of the Magi.

- 57. Invoke me under my stars! Love is the law, love under will. Nor let the fools mistake love; for there are love and love. There is the dove, and there is the serpent. Choose ye well! He, my prophet, hath chosen, knowing the law of the fortress, and the great mystery of the House of God. All these old letters of my Book are aright; but Tzaddi is not the Star. This also is secret: my prophet shall reveal it to the wise.**

Nuit is to be invoked during the hours of darkness.

“Love is the law, love under will” became one of Crowley’s key aphorisms [generally used to close any document opened with the “Do what thou wilt” quote from #I-40]. He understood it to mean a profound empathy with all entities of creation, guided not by fear [which he considered the Christian motive for love] but by deliberation.

There is further a caution concerning superficial types of love. There is “pure” love for its own sake - the dove; and there is love for ulterior motives - the serpent. [Crowley interpreted the serpent as a symbol of *Kundalini*, a sex-magic force supposedly coiled at the base of the spine. I find the concept quaint, if hardly to be taken seriously.]

Crowley himself chose the love of the serpent, always subordinating human love and affection to his magical workings. As a result his love-life consisted of an endless string of disasters, his opinion of women remained immature, and his experiments with sex-magic [as highlighted, for example, in *The King on the Royal Art*, one of his sex-magic diaries] were pathetic and fruitless.

The “great mystery”, which Crowley declined to explain in his comments on the grounds that it was reserved to the highest grades of initiation, was simply that he believed sex-magic to be the most potent form of the art - explained only at the highest degrees of the O.T.O.

Crowley understood “Book” as the Tarot, and the Hebrew letter *Tzaddi* as the Emperor trump in that deck. In his commentary he proceeded to explain why this passage identified this trump as complementary to the Star trump XVII - which I simply do not see implied by the above passage of the *Book of the Law*. [Crowley devised a Hebrew/Cabalistic interpretation for the Tarot, which I consider useless.].

58. I give unimaginable joys on earth: certainly, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest, ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.

The promise of Nuit to mankind upon its re-integration with the objective universe - at which point there would be nothing left to sacrifice, nor any separate mind feeling any awareness of a separate “deity” - hence not even the notion of “sacrifice”.

59. My incense is of resinous wood & gums; and there is no blood therein: because of my hair the trees of Eternity.

The composition of incense for Nuit and the reason for it - the tree as a symbol of timeless existence because of its apparent lack of change, i.e. growth at a comparatively slow rate.

60. My number is 11, as are all their numbers who are of us. The Five Pointed Star, with a Circle in the Middle, & the circle is Red. My colour is black to the blind, but the blue & gold are seen of the seeing. Also I have a secret glory for them that love me.

See #I-24; $5+6=11$. See also the comment concerning #I-20. The five-pointed star is the Pentagram of Set, and a red circle is the Egyptian symbol for the Sun. This fragment is inconclusive, but it might suggest the encircled Sigil of Baphomet [used during the Age of Satan] with its Solar connotations of virility - a glimpse of Things to Come. To non-initiates the esoteric nature of the *Book of the Law* might seem “black” (i.e. Satanic), but in fact it is “blue & gold” (a “God”-oriented initiatory system of magical philosophy).

For the “secret glory” see again #I-30.

61. But to love me is better than all things: if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the Serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in

splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich headdress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you: come unto me!

62. At all my meetings with you shall the priestess say - and her eyes shall burn with desire as she stands bare and rejoicing in my secret temple - To me! To me! calling forth the flame of the hearts of all in her love-chant.
63. Sing the rapturous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! Wear to me jewels! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you!
64. I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky.
65. To me! To me!
66. The Manifestation of Nuit is at an end.

The Second Chapter

1. Nu! the hiding of Hadit.

According to Islam, the term *Hadith* identifies a “divinely-inspired utterance”. The term has no meaning in Egyptian hieroglyphic. The “Hadit”-figure on the Stele of Revealing is identified in the inscription as Behdety, a form of HarWer, the Great Horus. This Second Chapter is intelligible if it is understood as an utterance of Aleister Crowley inspired by HarWer. [By contrast, the Third Chapter is in the form of a direct address by this *neter*.]

In this first verse Nuit is said to conceal or obscure the magician’s awareness of HarWer. If Nuit is recognized as the inertial *neter* of the objective universe, and if HarWer - per the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* - is seen as a concentration of intelligence directly opposite to Nuit, the antipodal tension between them may be understood.

2. **Come! all ye, and learn the secret that hath not yet been revealed. I, Hadit, am the complement of Nu, my bride. I am not extended, and Khabs is the name of my house.**

Crowley considered Hadit to be symbolic of “infinite contraction” - a geometric point - and Nuit “infinite expansion” into the three geometric dimensions. The concepts have no meaning save in pure mathematics, because the former state would mean nonexistence save as a locus, and the latter a state of existence embracing everything - in which case “Hadit” could not think or talk, while there would be no one “else” for Nuit to talk with!

“Khabs” may be translated in many ways [see #I-8]. Here it may characterize

HarWer as a *neter* of “pure spirit” [see #II-1].

- 3. In the sphere I am everywhere, the centre, as she, the circumference, is nowhere found.**

Crowley compared this to “an old mystical definition of God - He whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere”. In terms of Euclidian geometry, of course, both the center and the shell of a given sphere can be determined. Technically the shell can be “found”; it is the physical displacement of a sphere in space. But the center has no three-dimensional existence; it has location only. #II-3 is thus contradictory to fact. This statement would place HarWer completely outside of the objective universe [where such laws apply].

- 4. Yet she shall be known and I never.**

The objective universe may be comprehended through the logical and empirical procedures of science. The pure intellect, since it possesses the capacity to behave illogically, may not be defined through logic alone. Noetic intuition is also required. Consider here the *Dialogues* of Plato relative to the actual identification and definition of a Form/*neter*.

- 5. Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet! Then shall this Knowledge go aright.**

Crowley understood the “old time” as a reference to the Æon of Osiris, characterized by the predominance of death-worship religions, now to be superseded by the Æon of Horus.

He understood the ritual reference to mean that he must purge the texts of the Golden Dawn (G.'D.'.) to ensure their compliance with the principles of the new æon.

- 6. I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life, yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death.**

The capacity for intelligent thought distinguishes man from beast. This same capacity enables man to perceive his existence as distinct from that of the Nuit-cosmos, hence the finity of that distinct existence - eventual death of the self.

- 7. I am the Magician and the Exorcist. I am the axle of the wheel, and the cube in the circle. “Come unto me” is a foolish word; for it is I that go.**

HarWer is the creator of a new æon and the destroyer of the old one. His being is the origin - or axle - of the new æon, and elaborations of the Word of that æon extend outwards from this core principle.

Cubical altars within magic circles were used for certain types of magical ceremonies, but the relationship was expanded to three dimensions in the “Cry of the 30th Æthyra” in *Liber 418 (The Vision and The Voice)*: “This cube is surrounded by a sphere” - implying the spiritual above and beyond the purely material.

8. Who worshipped Heru-pa-kraath have worshipped me; ill, for I am the worshipper.

Harpokrates, the infant Horus the Younger of the Osirian mythos, is in fact a corruption of HarWer, the Great Horus. Here HarWer exposes the corruption and points to a further fallacy: An intellect cannot worship itself as an “object”.

9. Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.

This reaffirms the opposition of HarWer to Nuit, who considers non-existence [of anything else] the supreme joy [see #I-32]. Finite intellects are subject to death. The non-conscious whole of matter/energy (Nuit) will, however, continue to displace space indefinitely.

- 10. O prophet! thou hast ill will to learn this writing.**
11. I see thee hate the hand & the pen; but I am stronger.
12. Because of me in Thee which thou knewest not.
13. for why? Because thou wast the knower, and me.

Crowley recounts that, at this point, he resented the direction of the *Book of the Law* but was unable to cease transcribing it. At the time he was an avowed Buddhist [which, since Buddhists seek obliteration of the self in *nirvana*, is not inconsistent with his attraction for Nuit]. The Second Chapter of the *Book of the Law* attacks this position with an affirmation of the independent existence of the intellect. And even the very attempt to “deny” the intellect necessitates its existence: *Cogito Ergo Sum*.

14. Now let there be a veiling of this shrine; now let the light devour men and eat them up with blindness!

Despite the glaring truth of #II-10/13, those who “don’t want to hear it” will simply ignore it in favor of cherished fantasies. Crowley himself missed its significance altogether. Hence he also failed to understand that it was the HarWer aspect of his own mind that was the actual source of this Second Chapter.

15. For I am perfect, being Not; and my number is nine by the fools; but with the just I am eight, and one in eight: Which is vital, for I am none indeed. The Empress and the King are not of me; for there is a further secret.

In the Old Comment, which appeared in the *Equinox* in 1912, Crowley wrote: “I am perfect, being Not (31 LA or 61 AIN) ... Which is vital, for I am None indeed. LA.” This is rather at odds with the notion that Charles Stansfeld Jones (Fratr Achad) first communicated the AL/LA “key” to Crowley in 1919.

9 is the number of the Tarot trump “The Hermit”, symbolizing [according to the *Book of Thoth*] the Secret Fire *Khu* [see #I-8 and #I-13]. Within the scope of the Æon of Horus, however, only an Ipsissimus (10)=[1] - a “fool” - could perceive this.

To others an intellectual evaluation of HarWer would yield 8 = “Adjustment”. Among other things this trump signifies the displacement of an obsolete æon by a new one.

Trump #1 - "The Magus" - refers to Crowley's role "in 8" - i.e. in the new æon as the instrument of Adjustment. This is "vital" insofar as the HarWer *neter* cannot manifest itself in the objective universe save through the mind of a material/intellectual medium.

"The Empress" (trump #3) and "The Emperor" (trump #4) add to trump #7 ("The Chariot"), signifying the North Solstice and the mystery of the Grail. This is indeed a "further secret", as it is not of HarWer and would be revealed only in the Hall of the Dead (*Walhalla*) at Wewelsburg Castle, Westphalia, in XVII/1982 CE.

16. I am the Empress & the Hierophant. Thus eleven as my bride is eleven.

"The Empress" (trump #3) and "The Hierophant" (trump #5) again equal "Adjustment" (trump #8). The Æon of Horus is characterized by the eleven-lettered formula "Abrahamadabra" [see #I-20].

17. Hear me, ye people of sighing!

**The sorrows of pain and regret
Are left to the dead and the dying,
The folk that not know me as yet.**

**18. They are dead, these fellows; they feel not. We are not for the poor and sad:
the lords of the earth are our kinsfolk.**

**19. Is a God to live in a dog? No! but the highest are of us. They shall rejoice, our
chosen, who sorroweth is not of us.**

**20. Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, for and fire, are
of us.**

The Law of Thelema is for those who have the wit and the will to comprehend and apply it. All others are fated to continue their slow, inevitable regression to beasthood. [Consider H.G. Wells' *Island of Dr. Moreau*.] As for intellectuals and magicians of the obsolete æon:

"Such a being is gradually disintegrated from lack of nourishment and the slow but certain attraction of the rest of the universe, despite his now desperate efforts to insulate and protect himself, and to aggrandize himself by predatory practices. He may indeed prosper for awhile, but in the end he must perish, especially when with a new æon a new Word is proclaimed which he cannot and will not hear, so that he is handicapped by trying to use an obsolete method of Magick, like a man with a boomerang in a battle where everyone else has a rifle." - *Magick in Theory and Practice*

**21. We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery.
For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched &
the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world.
Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die; verily thou shalt not
die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the king dissolve, he shall
remain in pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun,
Strength & Sight, Light: these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake.**

The "law of the jungle", raised to its most complex expression in the writings of Nietzsche. One of the prerogatives of an independent intellect, however, is that of

defying the law of the jungle - to enable the weak or injured to survive in order that they may prove their worth under other circumstances. Excessive devotion to one extreme means cruelty. Excessive devotion to the other results in weakening the self through the hosting of parasites. An Aristotelian “Golden Mean” must be sought.

In Egyptian philosophy the pharaoh was not a king in the European sense. Rather he was an embodied manifestation of the gods. Human shells for him to inhabit might be required, but the “actual” pharaoh was immortal.

In this verse may also be found one of the secrets behind the practice of mummification: If the body is permitted to dissolve, the *ba* (“heart-soul”) and *ka* (“double”) cease to exist and are absorbed by the objective universe. [See *The Book of Opening the Mouth*, translated by Sir E.A. Wallis Budge.]

The Star is the Silver Star (A.'.A.'.) of Babalon, and the Snake is subsequently (#II-22) identified as HarWer.

- 22. I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight and bright glory, and stir the hearts of men with drunkenness. To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all. It is a lie, this folly against self. The exposure of innocence is a lie. Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.**

Here the random volatility of the HarWer-*neter* is shown at its most extreme. It may well be one of the greater tragedies of the Æon of Horus that Crowley did not recognize the fourth sentence of this verse as being an abrupt rejection of the disordered thoughts of the first three. This rejection is emphasized by the fifth and sixth sentences, which encourage him to strengthen, not impair his sensory powers.

- 23. I am alone: there is no God where I am.**

The conceptual separation of HarWer from Nuit is absolute; the two *neteru* are mutually exclusive.

- 24. Behold! these be grave mysteries; for there are also of my friends who be hermits. Now think not to find them in the forest or on the mountain; but in beds of purple, caressed by magnificent beasts of women with large limbs, and fire and light in their eyes, and masses of flaming hair about them: there shall ye find them. Ye shall see them at rule, at victorious armies, at all the joy; and there shall be in them a joy a million times greater than this. Beware lest any force another, King against King! Love one another with burning hearts; on the low men trample in the fierce lust of your pride, in the day of your wrath.**

Strengthening of self-awareness is not to be achieved through isolation and meditation, as in the Hindu and Buddhist systems, but through exposure and expression of the self. Those with the most highly-developed sense of self-awareness are also those who are seen to attain success in their endeavors; it is a sign that they have correctly identified and actualized their true will. Such a person will continue to achieve success, unless he should clash with another whose true will is equally well-developed - or more so.

25. Ye are against the people, O my chosen!

A reaffirmation of #II-18/19.

26. I am the Secret Serpent coiled about to spring: in my coiling there is joy. If I lift up my head, I and my Nuit are one. If I droop down my head, and shoot forth venom, then is rapture of the earth, and I and the earth are one.

A learned discourse on the pleasures of sex.

27. There is a great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss. He shall fall down into the Pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of reason.

28. Now a curse upon Because and his kin!

29. May Because be accursed forever!

30. If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does naught.

31. If Power asks why, then is Power weakness.

32. Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise.

33. Enough of Because! Be he damned for a dog!

Neither the *Book of the Law* nor other texts dealing with metaphysics can be comprehended through purely-logical analysis. This is the ultimate message of the Platonic *Dialogues*, which collectively demonstrate the futility of a logical approach to the Forms/*neteru*. After all rational and scientific procedures have been exhausted, an intuitive (Nœtic) apprehension of each Form is required.

A reading of the *Book of the Law* with an inaccurate or insufficient appreciation of the *neteru* manifest within it can lead to disaster. [Consider Crowley's own misreading of #II-22.]

34. But ye, o my people, rise up & awake!

35. Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy & beauty.

36. There are rituals of the elements and feasts of the times.

37. A feast for the first night of the Prophet and his Bride.

August 12, the day in 1903 when Crowley married his first wife, Rose Edith Kelly. In his Comment he observed that this event ultimately made possible the Cairo Working [yielding the *Book of the Law*].

38. A feast for the three days of the writing of the Book of the Law.

April 8, 9, and 10 beginning at noon.

39. A feast for Tahuti and the child of the Prophet - secret, O Prophet!

40. A feast for the Supreme Ritual, and a feast for the Equinox of the Gods.

Crowley identified the "Supreme Ritual" as the March 20 invocation to Horus which resulted in the subsequent success of the Cairo Working.

41. **A feast for fire and a feast for water; a feast for life and a greater feast for death!**
42. **A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my rapture!**
43. **A feast every night unto Nu, and the pleasure of uttermost delight!**
44. **Aye! feast! rejoice! there is no dread hereafter. There is the dissolution, and eternal ecstasy in the kisses of Nu.**

A reaffirmation of the true nature of Nuit. Concerning the “dissolution” see the comments to #I-32 and #II-21.

45. **There is death for the dogs.**

Those who reject such dissolution and absorption, and who are not initiates capable of sustaining the existence of the *ba* and *ka* after the transfer of the *khu*, will in fact die.

46. **Dost thou fail? Art thou sorry? Is fear in thine heart?**
47. **Where I am these are not.**
48. **Pity not the fallen! I never knew them. I am not for them. I console not: I hate the consoled & the consoler.**
49. **I am unique and conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned & dead! Amen. [This is of the 4; there is a fifth who is invisible, & therein am I as a babe in an egg.]**

A restatement of the themes in #II-18/21. Amon is the “conqueror” - the warrior lord of Thebes [see #I-5]. He was the patron of *Uast*, the IV (4th) Nome of Upper Egypt. Patron of the V (5th) Nome was Amsu, portrayed as one of the children of Horus the Younger [hence “babe in an egg”].

50. **Blue am I and gold in the light of my bride: but the red gleam is in my eyes; & my spangles are purple & green.**

See #I-60. Yet there is also an aspect of HarWer that is closer to Set [whose color is red] than to Nuit [whose colors are blue & gold]. Purple is the color of a Magus, and green the blending of the colors of Nuit.

51. **Purple beyond purple: it is the light higher than eyesight.**

The “vision” of a Magus extends beyond the scope of the normal range of eyesight, just as ultraviolet is beyond violet in the visible spectrum.

52. **There is a veil: that veil is black. It is the veil of the modest woman; it is the veil of sorrow, & the pall of death: this is none of me. Tear down that lying spectre of the centuries: veil not your vices in virtuous words: these vices are my service; ye do well, & I will reward you here and hereafter.**

The “lying spectre of the centuries” is Osiris, the death-oriented god of the æon preceding that of Horus. The “vices” of emotional excess are characteristic of emotional use of the intellect - an attribute of HarWer’s distinction from the

dispassionate objective universe.

- 53. Fear not, o prophet, when these words are said, thou shalt not be sorry. Thou art emphatically my chosen; and blessed are the eyes that thou shalt look upon with gladness. But I will hide thee in a mask of sorrow: they that see thee shall fear thou art fallen: but I lift thee up.**

A restatement of Crowley's role as set forth in #I-15. The Curse of a Magus is that, because he Utters a new Word amidst the values and norms of the expiring æon, or as an unfamiliar complement to the present æon, few if any will initially understand or endorse that new Word. Hence he can expect to be greeted with disinterest or even contempt. Truth, however, is not determined by vote. HarWer suggests that Crowley's reception will be so antipathetic that even his disciples may lose confidence in him. This, however, will not affect the essential truth of his Word.

- 54. Nor shall they who cry aloud their folly that thou meanest nought avail; thou shalt reveal it: thou availest: they are the slaves of because: They are not of me. The stops as thou wilt; the letters? change them not in style or value!**

The Word and philosophy of Aleister Crowley cannot be understood as a mere product or synthesis of existing philosophy. A Word [as the Utterance of a Magus] introduces a new philosophical principle altogether. While it may contain elements of preexisting wisdom, its essence and emphasis will be unique and accessible only via nœtic intuition.

Crowley is permitted to punctuate the *Book of the Law* as he thinks appropriate, but he is not to tamper with the words, letters, or numbers of the text.

- 55. Thou shalt obtain the order & value of the English alphabet; thou shalt find new symbols to attribute them unto.**

A straightforward instruction for Crowley to discard the number & letter values of the Hebrew Cabala. He ignored #II-55, due no doubt to the years he had already invested in Cabalism, and put forward *Liber Trigrammaton* as a gesture of compliance. He admitted his dissatisfaction with this in his 1920 Comment, theorizing further research into Sanskrit or Enochian.

The actual solution was deceptively simple: a direct, numerical equivalence to the order of the English alphabet and the construction of a new symbol for each letter/number. #II-55 was later to prove crucial to the revealing of #II-76 in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

- 56. Begone! ye mockers; even though ye laugh in my honour ye shall laugh not long: then when ye are sad know that I have forsaken you.**

Those who ridicule the *Book of the Law*, feeling secure in the conventions and norms of the expiring Æon of Osiris, will find that this conservatism works against them when the inertia of Nuit gradually aligns itself to the emerging values of the Æon of Horus.

Crowley himself was of the opinion [in the 1920 Comment] that this verse also had a special meaning with regard to imposters and false cults abusing the license of

the Æon of Horus: that ultimately they would merely make themselves look foolish. There is a lesson here for any individual or group attempting to “go through the motions” of ritual magic, Thelemic or otherwise, without really understanding the principles or desiring the results the ceremonies in question were originally conceived to activate. Ritual without such understanding and purpose becomes merely a rote exercise, hence an excuse for the mind to **not** think!

True to the objective universal-unifying principle of Nuit, Crowley went on to propose intellectual separateness [from Nuit ... ironically the central feature of HarWer, whose æon he was inaugurating] as the ultimate “evil”. In *Liber Aleph* he observed:

“And of such the Lords are the Black Brothers, who seek by their Sorceries to confirm themselves in Division ... know this concerning the Black Brothers that cry: I am I. This is Falsity and Delusion, for the Law endureth not Exception. So then these Brethren are not Apart, as they Think; but are peculiar Combinations of Nature in Her Variety.”

Alas for those who think that mere insistence upon a law can make its violation impossible! Quite the contrary: Were it not conceivable or possible to do so, no law would be necessary in the first place. Nor is it sufficient to say that “[objective] universal law is a fact, not a convention, hence cannot be violated”. Until man understands and correlates all of what he so boldly calls “natural law”, how can he be certain that no exception exists to the tiny province he has thus far mapped?

Why should Crowley so dislike the “Black Brethren”, then? Is it just because they are explorers bolder than he, or is it rather because the endless evolution, change, and variety they cherish is antithetical to the goal of a monolithic, homogenous objective universe - that siren’s song of Nuit which so enraptured the “Buddhist” Magus of the Æon of Horus?

Unfortunately - or fortunately, depending upon your æonic point of view - the Beast 666 had a bit of Black Brotherhood in his modus operandi as well. He may have advocated the theoretical ideal of universal harmony, but he nonetheless devoted considerable time and effort to exercising and maximizing his own individuality. [I am certain HarWer approved.]

57. He that is righteous shall be righteous still; he that is filthy shall be filthy still.

In the 1920 Comment Crowley viewed this as a corollary to #II-56, suggesting that it is actually impossible for an object to undergo change, because it cannot be altered in its basic chemical constitution. If an apparent change occurs due to the addition, subtraction, or rearrangement of elements of this constitution, then the object has lost its original identity and assumed a new one.

This argument does not provide, however, for unrealized potential, which may not be apparent in the original assessment of an object although it is in fact there. A caterpillar does not lose its identity because it evolves into a butterfly, any more than a man loses his identity because he grows a beard. For Crowley’s argument to hold true, identity would have to be defined in a strictly limited sense, and at a fixed point in time. Either one of these assignments would be arbitrary, hence artificial - a case of the stepsister’s foot being jammed into Cinderella’s glass slipper.

58. Yea! deem not of change: ye shall be as ye are, & not other. Therefore the kings of the earth shall be Kings forever: the slaves shall serve. There is none that shall be cast down or lifted up: all is ever as it was. Yet there are masked ones my servants: it may be that yonder beggar is a King. A King may choose his garment as he will: there is no certain test: but a beggar cannot hide his poverty.

The Æon of Horus [and the Æon of Set, for that matter] will not enable silk purses to be made from sows' ears. Yet superficial appearances may be quite deceptive, and an Adept seen through the eyes of a non-Adept may seem to be behaving erratically or irrationally. It is true that a beggar might not be able to hide his poverty, but a king in a good disguise would seem every bit as impoverished. In judging another, one must first determine one's actual ability to render such a judgment, then the criteria according to which the judgment will be made.

59. Beware therefore! Love all, lest perchance is a King concealed! Say you so? Fool! If he be a King, thou canst not hurt him.

See the discussion of "love" in the comment to #I-57. In his 1920 Comment with reference to #II-59, Crowley further characterized it as a "right relationship" between two components of the Nuit-totality - not a blind attraction for superficial motives which, upon closer examination, might not prove to be mutually beneficial.

60. Therefore strike hard & low, and to hell with them, master!

Crowley is to be remorseless and uncompromising in his proclamation, definition, and application of the Word of the Æon. [He was.]

- 61. There is a light before thine eyes, o prophet, a light undesired, most desirable.**
62. I am uplifted in thine heart; and the kisses of the stars rain hard upon thy body.
63. Thou art exhaust in the voluptuous fullness of the inspiration; the expiration is sweeter than death, more rapid and laughterful than a caress of Hell's own worm.
64. Oh! thou art overcome: we are upon thee; our delight is all over thee: hail! hail: prophet of Nu! prophet of Had! prophet of Ra-Hoor-Khu! Now rejoice! now come in our splendour & rapture! Come in our passionate peace, & write sweet words for the Kings!
65. I am the Master: thou art the Holy Chosen One.

Crowley's ecstatic experience of the transcription and realization of the *Book of the Law*, and a reaffirmation of his identity as Magus of the Æon of Horus.

66. Write, & find ecstasy in writing! Work, & be our bed in working! Thrill with the joy of life & death! Ah! thy death shall be lovely: whoso seeth it shall be glad. Thy death shall be the seal of the promise of our agelong love. Come! lift up thine heart & rejoice! We are one; we are none.

This is certainly the most tragic and poignant passage in the *Book of the Law* because of its prophetic irony. Crowley died frustrated and confused, tears in his eyes as he fought the coming of his final coma. [Cf. John Symonds, *The Great Beast*.] The “red gleam in his eyes”, I suspect, resisted the dissolution of his personality into Nuit.

His death was indeed testimony to the promise of the “love” of Nuit [see #I-29/32]. By becoming one, he and Nuit ceased to exist as entities who could be contrasted to one another; they became indeterminate.

Consider also the paradox of the “magical death” of the self when becoming a Magister Templi (8)=[3] A.'.A.'. See “One Star in Sight” in *Magick in Theory and Practice*, and also the “Cry of the Thirteenth Æthyr” in *Liber 418 (The Vision and The Voice)*.

- 67. Hold! Hold! Bear up in thy rapture; fall not in swoon of the excellent kisses!**
- 68. Harder! Hold up thyself! Lift thine head! breathe not so deep - die!**
- 69. Ah! Ah! What do I feel? Is the word exhausted?**

Crowley’s ecstatic vision recommences and is likened to a sexual experience.

- 70. There is help & hope in other spells. Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. Be not animal; refine thy rapture! If thou drink, drink by the eight and ninety rules of art: if thou love, exceed by delicacy; and if thou do aught joyous, let there be subtlety therein!**

This verse addresses an important aspect of Crowley’s philosophy - that pertaining to indulgence in sex and other sensual pleasures of the human body. Critics have accused Crowley of being a pervert, a lecher, and a disgusting sexual psychotic. Many admirers, on the other hand, have tried to imitate his lifestyle on a purely behavioral level - and have succeeded in earning precisely those titles.

Both groups fail to appreciate the artistry, the magical philosophy, and the sensitivity that were essential components of Crowley’s sensuality. Thus there is an almost surprising atmosphere of innocence in even the most “lurid” of Crowley’s erotica that is conspicuously lacking in the crude, genital/anal-obsessed antics of certain latter-day “Thelemites”. Yet another illustration of the point made in the comment to #II-56: that ritual without understanding is at least futile, and more often dangerous, degrading, and/or ridiculous.

At the other extreme are the compulsively cerebral schools of modern Thelemite thought. Such devotees are enthusiastic about Crowley the metaphysician, but quite uncomfortable about Crowley the sensualist. So they practice a quaintly “proper” version of his Magick: When the text of his Gnostic Mass calls for the priest to part the veil of the priestess with his lance, such practitioners dutifully brush aside a veil with a ceremonial spear!

- 71. But exceed! exceed!**

Again this verse captures an extremely significant aspect of Crowley’s philosophy. As he observes in letter #33 of *Magick Without Tears*, the Aristotelian Golden Mean “is more valuable as the extremes which it summarizes are distant from each other”. The depth of this statement cannot be over-emphasized; in fact a deliberate exploration of extremes became the Formula of the Age of Satan, according to the

Word Indulgence.

A procedure for ascertaining viable extremes from which to define a Golden Mean is too often neglected by students of Aristotle. The difficulty in arriving at any sort of “absolute” mean is more understandable when Aristotle’s motives are appreciated: He was trying to construct an alternative to his teacher Plato’s contention that absolute standards are not definable through purely logical methods. [Aristotle failed, and ultimately returned to Plato’s point of perspective.]

- 72. Strive ever to more! and if thou art truly mine - and doubt it not, an if thou art ever joyous! - death is the crown of all.**

The objective universal order of Nuit and the non-natural, emotional will of HarWer - “death” and “life” in the rawest metaphysical sense - are the ultimate extremes. [The position of Set is not inaccurately approximated as a Golden Mean between these ordered and chaotic extremes; another of the magical secrets of the absolute standard of beauty symbolized by the *phi*-ratio of the Pentagram of Set.]

- 73. Ah! Ah! Death! Death! thou shalt long for death. Death is forbidden, o man, unto thee.**
- 74. The length of thy longing shall be the strength of its glory. He that lives long & desires death much is ever the King among the Kings.**

The Curse of a Magus, as discussed with reference to #II-53, necessarily subjects him to strong forces of frustration and depression. The new Word may imply values that are so alien to those of existing society that the Magus doubts his sanity and sense of proportion. All he has to combat these factors is a fundamental conviction that the Word he Utters is **true**.

Can those who are not Magi ever understand the intensity of such a realization? Yes - those who are Masters of the Temple and thus have attained the power of Understanding.

- 75. Aye! listen to the numbers & the words:**
- 76. 4 6 3 8 A B K 2 4 A L G M O R 3 Y X 24 89 R P S T O V A L. What meaneth this, o prophet? Thou knowest not; nor shalt thou know ever. There cometh one to follow thee: he shall expound it. But remember, o chosen one, to be me; to follow the love of Nu in the star-lit heaven; to look forth upon men, to tell them this glad word.**

In his 1920 Comment Crowley observed: “This passage following appears to be a Qabalistic test (on the regular pattern) of any person who may claim to be the Magical Heir of The Beast. Be ye well assured all that the solution, when it is found, will be unquestionable. It will be marked by the most sublime simplicity, and carry immediate conviction.”

Revelation 13:11.

- 77. O be thou proud and mighty among men!**
- 78. Lift up thyself! for there is not like unto thee among men or among Gods! Lift up thyself, o my prophet, thy stature shall surpass the stars. They shall worship thy name, foursquare, mystic, wonderful, the number of the man; and**

the name of thy house 418.

Revelation 13:12.

79. The end of the hiding of Hadit; and blessing & worship to the prophet of the lovely Star!

I John 4:3.

The Third Chapter

1. Abrahadabra! the reward of Ra Hoor Khut.

Ra-Harakte was a form of HarWer adopted as an aspect of Ra by the priesthood of Ra at Heliopolis. [Cf. Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt* (London: Oxford, 1934, page #216).]

Crowley, whose familiarity with Egyptian philosophy was limited to the Osirian mythos, did not know that the cosmological systems of the Great Horus and Ra were originally independent of the Osirian movement and were only assimilated into it in corrupt forms during the final dynastic decadence. Hence Crowley remained confused as to the name and significance of “Ra Hoor Khu[i][t]” and the Third Chapter of the *Book of the Law* - and confessed as much in his 1920 Comment entry concerning this verse.

2. There is division hither homeward; there is a word not known. Spelling is defunct; all is not aught. Beware! Hold! Raise the spell of Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

Again Crowley missed the point of this verse - a simple admonition to correct the name - and conceptualization - of Ra-Harakte as indicated on the Stele of Revealing.

3. Now let it first be understood that I am a god of War and of Vengeance. I shall deal hardly with them.

4. Choose ye an island!

5. Fortify it!

6. Dung it about with enginery of war!

7. I will give you a war-engine.

8. With it ye shall smite the peoples and none shall stand before you.

Historically the two most significant events of the Æon of Horus were World War II and the development of the atomic bomb which ended that war. Nor can England’s critical importance during the Battle of Britain be denied.

9. Lurk! Withdraw! Upon them! this is the Law of the Battle of Conquest: thus shall my worship be about my secret house.

Were the values of the Æon of Horus reflected more by the Allies or more by the Axis? The latter championed elitism and “right by might”, whereas the former at least propagandistically upheld the banner of egalitarianism, socialism, and democracy.

Yet the police-state environments of Germany, Italy, and Japan also acted to stifle creativity on an individual basis, encouraging and rewarding conformity and automatic obedience to the very few who, through circumstances as much as genius or talent, had emerged in positions of power. While the defeat of the Axis might seem to have been a defeat for the values of the Æon of Horus, then, it may well be that, in a more subtle and long-term sense, the cause of elitism was better served by the victory of more openly-competitive political systems. It is still too early to venture a final evaluation in this regard.

10. **Get the stele of revealing itself; set it in thy secret temple - and that temple is already aright disposed - & it shall be your Kiblah for ever. It shall not fade, but miraculous colour shall come back to it day after day. Close it in locked glass for a proof to the world.**
11. **This shall be your only proof. I forbid argument. Conquer! That is enough. I will make easy for you the abstruption from the ill-ordered house in the Victorious City. Thou shalt thyself convey it with worship, o prophet, though thou likest it not. Thou shalt have danger & trouble. Ra-Hoor-Khu is with thee. Worship me with fire & blood; worship me with swords & with spears. Let the woman be girt with a sword before me: let blood flow to my name. Trample down the Heathen: be upon them, o warrior, I will give you of their flesh to eat!**

Kiblah: a point towards which prayer or devotions of a spiritual nature are directed.

Crowley evidently thought better of burglarizing the Boulak Museum to steal the stele. He settled for having a replica prepared for him. [The antiquities of the Boulak Museum have since been transferred to the Cairo Museum.]

Cairo (*Al-Kahira*) = [the city of] victory.

12. **Sacrifice cattle, little and big: after a child.**
13. **But not now.**
14. **Ye shall see that hour, o blessed Beast, and thou the Scarlet Concubine of his desire!**
15. **Ye shall be sad thereof.**

Crowley later identified these verses as a reference to the death of his firstborn daughter in 1906.

16. **Deem not too eagerly to catch the promises; fear not to undergo the curses. Ye, even ye, know not this meaning all.**
17. **Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth. Nu is your refuge as Hadit your light; and I am the strength, force, vigour, of your arms.**
18. **Mercy let be off: damn them who pity. Kill and torture; spare not; be upon them.**
19. **That stele they shall call the Abomination of Desolation; count well its name, & it shall be to you as 718.**

After many failures, Crowley set down “stele” in Greek, which “to him” was 52. He then subtracted 52 from 718 and got 666.

20. Why? Because of the fall of Because, that he is not there again.

In his 1912 Comment Crowley indicated that he had mentally questioned #III-19. Ra-Harakte chides him for seeking a justification [see #II-27/33].

21. Set up my image in the East: thou shalt buy thee an image which I will show thee, especial, not unlike the one thou knowest. And it shall be suddenly easy for thee to do this.

Ra-Harakte (“Ra Hor of the Horizon”) was the aspect of the Sun at dawn, when of course it appears in the east.

22. The other images group around me to support me: let all be worshipped, for they shall cluster to exalt me. I am the visible object of worship; the others are secret; for the Beast & his Bride are they: and for the winners of the Ordeal X. What is this? Thou shalt know.

Crowley thought “the other images” to be those of Nuit and “Hadit”. In view of #III-21 it would seem more probable for them to be Ra’s other aspects: Aten (noon), Atum (sunset), and Xepera (the Sun at night). Nevertheless [in *Liber Resh vel Helios*] Crowley did institute periodic devotions to these other aspects of Ra.

The significance of Xepera would indeed remain a secret until the year X of the Æon of Set, at which time it would indeed be revealed to the “winners” of that particular ordeal.

23. For perfume mix meal & honey & thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterwards soften & smooth down with rich fresh blood.

Oil of Abramelin [from *The Sacred Magic of Abra=Melin the Mage*]: Eight parts of oil of cinnamon, four of oil of myrrh, two of oil of galangal, seven of olive oil.

24. The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers: last of some beast, no matter what.

25. This burn: of this make cakes & eat unto me. This hath also another use; let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfume of your orison: it shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred to me.

26. These slay, naming your enemies; & they shall fall before you.

27. Also these shall breed lust & power of lust in you at the eating thereof.

28. Also ye shall be strong in war.

29. Moreover, be they long kept, it is better; for they swell with my force. All before me.

30. My altar is of open brass work: burn thereon in silver or gold!

31. There cometh a rich man from the West who shall pour his gold upon thee.

While Crowley did not specify anyone in particular as the object of this verse, in his later life he received crucial help from one American disciple in particular: Karl Germer, who became Outer Head (chief international executive) of the O.T.O. following Crowley's death.

32. From gold forge steel.
33. Be ready to fly or to smite.
34. But your holy place shall be untouched throughout the centuries: though with fire and sword it be burnt down & shattered, yet an invisible house there standeth, and shall stand until the fall of the Great Equinox; when Hrumachis shall arise and the double-wanded one assume my throne and place. Another prophet shall arise, and bring fresh fever from the skies; another woman shall awake the lust & worship of the Snake; another soul of god and beast shall mingle in the globed priest; another sacrifice shall stain the tomb; another king shall reign; and blessing no longer be poured to the Hawk-headed mystical Lord!

Crowley felt the "holy place" to be Boleskine House, his one-time estate on the shore of Loch Ness in Scotland. Boleskine has remained standing to date, but has become a celebrity focal point for contemporary Crowleyphiles. If the physical Boleskine is thus reduced to a "haunted house" spectacle, the mystical Boleskine remains an untouched image in the minds of those initiates who understand and appreciate its unique role in the development of its Beastly "Laird".

Harmakhis was one of the many forms of Xepera as a symbol of regeneration, transformation, and immortality. Harmakhis was portrayed in many shapes, the most famous being that of the Great Sphinx at Giza.

The "double-wanded one" is Set, whose symbols in ancient Egypt were the *D'm* (*Tcham*) and *w3s* sceptres. Both sceptres were Set-headed, but the *w3s* was distinguished by a spiral shaft and the absence of a decorative base (Set's forked tail on the *D'm* sceptre). On the Stele of Revealing, Ra Harakte holds a *D'm* sceptre. The Setian sceptres signified magical power, as opposed to the crook & flail sceptres symbolizing the pharaoh's roles as shepherd and taskmaster of the Egyptian nation.

"Fresh fever from the skies": the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

"Another woman": Lilith Aquino, the Serpent One: Maga V° of the Temple of Set and One of the Nine.

"The globed priest" and "another sacrifice": Anton Szandor LaVey [who shaved his head to signify his office as High Priest of the Church of Satan], and the destruction of the Church of Satan as precondition for the manifestation of the Æon of Set.

"Another king": Ra-en-Set *suten net*.

35. The half of the word of Heru-ra-ha, called Hoor-pa-kraat and Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

The first half of "Heru-ra-ha" reveals the name of Her-Ur (HarWer), the Great Horus, of whom both Harpokrates (the Osirian Horus "the Younger") and Ra-Harakte [see #III-1] are corruptions.

36. Then said the prophet unto the God:
37. I adore thee in the song -

**I am the Lord of Thebes, and I
The inspired forth-speaker of Mentu;
For me unveils the veiled sky,
The self-slain Ankh-af-na-khonsu
Whose words are truth, I invoke, I greet
Thy presence, O Ra-Hoor-Khuit!
Unity uttermost showed!
I adore the might of Thy breath,
Supreme and terrible God,
Who makest the gods and death
To tremble before Thee: -
I, I adore thee!
Appear on the throne of Ra!
Open the ways of the Khu!
Lighten the ways of the Ka!
The ways of the Khabs run through
To stir me or still me!
Aum! let it fill me!**

The sacred bull Mentu was the god of the city of *Ani*, capital of the IV *Uast* (Thebes) Nome of Upper Egypt [see #II-49]. Ankh-f-n-Khonsu is the priest commemorated by the Stele of Revealing. His name means: “[He whose] Life [is] in Khonsu (the Moon-god of Thebes and son of Amon and Mut)”. Crowley believed himself to be a reincarnation of this priest.

- 38. So that thy light is in me & its red flame is as a sword in my hand to push thy order. There is a secret door that I shall make to establish thy way in all the quarters (these are the adorations, as thou hast written), as it is said,**

**The light is mine; its rays consume
Me: I have made a secret door
Into the House of Ra and Tum,
Of Khephra and of Ahathoor.
I am thy Theban, O Mentu,
The prophet Ankh-af-na-Khonsu!
By Bes-na-Maut my breast I beat;
By wise T’a-Nech I weave my spell.
Show thy star-splendour, O Nuit!
Bid me within thine House to dwell,
O winged snake of light, Hadit!
Abide with me, Ra-Hoor-Khuit.**

#III-37 and #III-38 contain extracts of poems Crowley had written prior to the Cairo Working [of the *Book of the Law*]. These poems (titled paraphrases of the inscriptions on the front and back of the Stele of Revealing) are contained in the 1936 edition of Crowley’s *Equinox of the Gods*. [Therein the final line of the extract in #III-37 reads: “Aum! let it **kill** me!”]

- 39. All this and a book to say how thou didst come hither and a reproduction of this ink and paper for ever - for in it is the word secret & not only in the English - and thy comment upon this the Book of the Law shall be printed beautifully in red ink and black upon beautiful paper made by hand; and to each man and woman that thou meetest, were it but to dine or drink at them, it is the Law to give. Then they shall chance to abide in this bliss or no; it is no odds. Do this quickly!**

The secrets of the *Book of the Law* are to be found through both the English and the Egyptian hieroglyphic languages.

- 40. But the work of the comment? That is easy; and Hadit burning in thy heart shall make swift and secure thy pen.**

In both his 1912 and 1920 Comments Crowley indicated dissatisfaction with the results of his commentaries. He might have fared better had he reconsidered #II-55, though some of the contents of the *Book of the Law* would remain enigmatic until the advent of the Æon of Set.

- 41. Establish at thy Kaaba a clerk-house; all must be done well and with business way.**
- 42. The ordeals thou shalt oversee thyself, save only the blind ones. Refuse none, but thou shalt know & destroy the traitors. I am Ra-Hoor-Khuit; and I am powerful to protect my servant. Success is thy proof: argue not; convert not; talk not overmuch. Them that seek to entrap thee, to overthrow thee, them attack without pity or quarter & destroy them utterly. Swift as a trodden serpent turn and strike! Be thou yet deadlier than he! Drag down their souls to awful torment: laugh at their fear: spit upon them!**

See #I-32/38. Many who thought to exploit Crowley got the worst of the encounter, and he shed few tears over them. In fact his contempt to those whom he had discarded is at least partly responsible for the often-vicious criticism he received - and continues to receive - at their hands.

- 43. Let the Scarlet Woman beware! If pity and compassion and tenderness visit her heart; if she leave my work to toy with old sweetesses then shall my vengeance be known. I will slay me her child: I will alienate her heart: I will cast her out from men; as a shrinking and depised harlot she shall crawl through dusk wet streets, and die cold and an-hungred.**

The fate of Crowley's Scarlet Women was not a pleasant one. After Rose Crowley's daughter died, she became an alcoholic and was eventually committed to a sanitarium. Crowley's daughter by Leah Hirsig, the most famous Scarlet Woman, died at the Abbey of Thelema as an infant, and the shock caused Leah to miscarry a second child. Eventually she too was abandoned by Crowley under the bitterest of circumstances.

- 44. But let her raise herself in pride. Let her follow me in my way. Let her work the work of wickedness. Let her kill her heart. Let her be loud and adulterous; let her be covered with jewels, and rich garments, and let her be shameless before all men!**
- 45. Then will I lift her to pinnacles of power: then will I breed from her a child mightier than all the kings of the earth. I will fill her with joy: with my force shall she see & strike at the worship of Nu; she shall achieve Hadit.**

None of the Scarlet Women was able to sustain #III-44 and thus attain #III-45.

- 46. I am the warrior Lord of the Forties: the Eighties cower before me, & are abased. I will bring you to victory & joy: I will be at your arms in battle & ye shall delight to slay. Success is your proof; courage is your armour; go on, go on, in my strength & ye shall turn not back for any.**

This is popularly [by Crowleyphiles] considered to be a validation of the *Book of the Law*'s prophetic power [as a prediction of World War II] and a further prediction of war in the 1980s. Since there are local or regional wars ongoing constantly on some part of the planet, whether or not the "eighties" prediction is considered to be validated is simply a question of how extensive a war must be for Ra-Harakte to take note of it. Alternately the 1980s were in fact a decade of international paranoia concerning and social persecution of occultism generally.

- 47. This book shall be translated into all tongues: but always with the original in the writing of the Beast; for in the chance shape of the letters and their position to one another: in these are mysteries that no Beast shall divine. Let him not seek to try: but one cometh after him, whence I say not, who shall discover the Key of it all. Then this line drawn is a key; then this circle squared in its failure is a key also. And Abrahadabra. It shall be his child & that strangely. Let him not seek after this; for thereby alone can he fall from it.**

See #I-54, #II-75/76, #III-22, and the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

Although #I-56, #II-76, and #III-47 explicitly state that Crowley himself would never know the mysteries of the manuscript, the one who would expound them, or the initiatory system from which he would come, Crowley nonetheless took it upon himself to recognize Charles Stansfeld Jones of Vancouver as the "one". Jones could not interpret the #II-76 passage, but he did announce that "AL/LA" constituted the "master key" to the *Book of the Law*. Since Crowley was already well aware of the reversible qualities of this term in the Hebrew tongue [see comment to #II-15], his enthusiasm for Jones' announcement seems unjustified - nor did Jones' "master key" unlock anything at all concerning the *Book of the Law*.

What neither Crowley nor Jones realized was that "AL" in Hebrew is merely a corruption of an elder Egyptian hieroglyphic term which may be pronounced in three ways: "Al", "Ar", or "Har". This term translates to "the Divine Son" and specifically identifies Har or Hor, the Great Horus. [-ur or Wer is a suffix meaning "great".] In Egyptian mythology both Set and Horus (HarWer) were identified as children of Nuit, but the actual derivation of the two *neteru* from Nuit is explained more precisely in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*. So, ironically enough, "AL"

is a sort of master key to the *Book of the Law*, identifying it as a creation of Horus. A full translation of its name (*Liber AL vel Legis*) would be: *The Book of the Law of Horus*.

As for Jones, he suffered the fate predicted in #II-56. In 1926-27 he converted briefly to Catholicism, then disavowed the *Book of the Law* and proceeded to announce the new æon to be that of Maat. Crowley expelled him from the A.'.A.'..

48. **Now this mystery of the letters is done, and I want to go on to the holier place.**
49. **I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men.**

Crowley felt this “word” to be the four words “Do what thou wilt”, on the presumption that it would make each person his own god.

50. **Curse them! Curse them! Curse them!**
51. **With my Hawk’s head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross.**
52. **I flap my wings in the face of Mohamed and blind him.**
53. **With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din.**
54. **Bahlasti! Ompehda! I spit on your crapulous creeds.**
55. **Let Mary inviolate be torn upon wheels: for her sake let all chaste women be utterly despised among you.**
56. **Also for beauty’s sake and love’s.**
57. **Despise also all cowards; professional soldiers who dare not fight, but play: all fools despise.**
58. **But the keen and the proud, the royal and the lofty; ye are brothers!**
59. **As brothers fight ye.**
60. **There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.**
61. **There is an end of the word of the God enthroned in Ra’s seat, lightening the girders of the soul.**
62. **To Me do ye reverence; to me come ye through tribulation of ordeal, which is bliss.**
63. **The fool readeth this Book of the Law, and its comment & he understandeth it not.**

Moreover the fool readeth **this** comment & he understandeth it not.

64. **Let him come through the first ordeal & it will be to him as silver.**
65. **Through the second, gold.**
66. **Through the third, stones of precious water.**
67. **Through the fourth, ultimate sparks of the intimate fire.**

The initiatory history of mankind since the destruction of the ancient priesthoods of Egypt has passed through an era of silver (early secret societies and medieval witchcraft), gold (the G.'.D.'. and A.'.A.'.), stones of precious water (the Order of the Trapezoid and Church of Satan), and ultimate sparks of the intimate fire (the Temple of Set).

68. Yet to all it shall seem beautiful. Its enemies who say not so, are mere liars.

The *Book of the Law* exudes an aura of both beauty and authenticity that is not simply a function of its included statements. It too is a Form which cannot be defined by purely logical methods. It must be apprehended through Nœsis.

69. There is success.

And thus is the *Book of the Law* Understood
and Revealed.

70. I am the Hawk-headed Lord of Silence & of Strength; my nemyss shrouds the night-blue sky.

71. Hail! ye twin warriors about the pillars of the world! for your time is nigh at hand.

See the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* concerning the primal bound of *Samtaui* between Set and the original Horus.

72. I am the Lord of the Double Wand of Power: the wand of the force of Coph - but my left hand is empty, for I have crushed an Universe & nought remains.

Again the Crowley manuscript's value is demonstrated. Crowley originally wrote "Coph". Rose later scratched it out and penned "Coph Nia" in its place, and it is this corruption which appears in printed texts. "Coph", which Crowley recalled hearing only approximately, would make sense as one of the hieroglyphic variants of *Xeper* (pronounced "kheffer" with the vowels assumed). Perhaps it is significant that the Magus of the Æon of Horus could not "hear" the Word of the Æon of Set.

73. Paste the sheets from right to left and from top to bottom: then behold!

Crowley experimented with "chain"-pasting but noticed nothing remarkable. [I read this verse as a simple instruction to bind the manuscript of the *Book of the Law* as a book.]

74. There is a splendour in my name hidden and glorious, as the sun of midnight is ever the son.

The "sun of midnight": *Xepera*.

The "splendour in my name hidden and glorious": Set, True Origin of *Liber AL*, who would remain hidden until the North Solstice of X.

75. The ending of the words is the Word Abrahadabra.

**The Book of the Law is Written
and Concealed.
Aum. Ha.**

Appendix 6: The Pentagram of Set

- by Michael A. Aquino V°
1975+

Symbols do not represent the thing itself, the actual phenomenon. It would also be wrong to think that they are purely and simply schematic formulæ. In operational research the model is not a small-scale or simplified model of a known object; it is a possible approach to, or means of getting to know this object. And it is outside reality, in the mathematical universe.

The next requirement is that the analogical machine constructed on this model should enter into an electronic trance so that it can give practical answers. This is why all the usual occultist explanations of symbols are useless. They look upon symbols as if they were schemas that can be interpreted by intelligence at its normal level and so lead immediately to an apprehension of reality. For centuries they have been treating in this way the St. Andrew's cross, the swastika, and the star of Solomon, but have contributed nothing to a study of the profound structure of the universe.

Einstein, with his sublime intelligence, was able, in a flash of illumination, to catch a glimpse of the space/time relationship, but without completely understanding or integrating it into his scheme of things. To communicate his discovery at an intelligible level, and to help him recapture his own illuminating vision, he drew the sign λ representing the trihedral angle.

This sign is not a schema of reality and means nothing to the mass of mankind. It is a signal, a rallying cry to all workers in the field of mathematical physics. And yet all the progress made in this field by the greatest intellects will only succeed in discovering what this trihedral symbol evokes, but will not be able to penetrate the universe where the law of which this symbol is an expression actually operates. At least, at the end of this forward march, we shall know that this other universe exists.¹⁴⁰

The inverse pentagram against a circular field is known as the **Pentagram of Set**. This insignia constitutes the Seal of the Temple of Set, and it is also used to identify the six magical degrees of initiatory membership.



¹⁴⁰ Pauwels, Louis & Bergier, Jacques, *The Morning of the Magicians*. (#4B) New York: Avon, 1963.

The pentagram is one of the most ancient symbols known to mankind, dating from prehistory.^{141 142} It is significant mathematically in that it precisely embodies the ratio ϕ (*phi*), as the ratio between any longer and shorter line section within the pentagram.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁴

In ancient Egypt ϕ was known as the Sacred Cut. It was employed in all important construction and artwork. For instance, one-half the base of the Great Pyramid divided

¹⁴¹ Don Webb IV^o: “William Arnett’s *The Predynastic Origin of Egyptian Hieroglyphs* (1982) shows that the pentagram existed side-by-side with the five-line star, which became common use in the protodynastic Naquada region (a Setian site). Five-pointed stars were found at Gerza and Tarkhan, all Upper or Middle Egyptian protodynastic sites. The Tarkhan has a five-pointed star in a circle attached to a boat - one of the first signs of the journey through the *Tuat*. Arnett dates all of these to 3500 BCE, but I suspect for various reasons that they’re about a thousand years earlier.”

¹⁴² Patty Hardy IV^o:

At the Set-XIV Conclave in London I was asked if the pentagram were definitely known and used in ancient Egypt. I could do no better at the time than state that Pythagoras had spent 22 years there and then started up his Brotherhood in Magna Græcia with the pentagram as its supreme secret and badge of recognition.

Now I have archæological data. After much soul- and budget-searching, I obtained one of Guy Brunton’s three volumes on the Qau and Badari excavations sponsored by the British Museum. Flipping through the volume, I found a half-page of Old Kingdom pot marks that included two definite and unmistakable pentagrams - one cut into the clay before firing by the potter, one scratched onto the pot by its owner. The bread pot with the potter-cut pentagram was thought to be from the IV Dynasty. Brunton remarks on “the noteworthy pentagram used in quite different ways and at different periods” in speaking of these pot marks.

After that I decided to go back to Brunton’s Matmar expedition notes and found a crude pentagram among the pot marks documented there, again on a pot thought to date to the Old Kingdom.

I then consulted Flinders Petrie’s Tanis expedition notes published nearly forty years earlier. There I found among the sketches of items from Defenneh near Tanis a pentagram marked on a sealed vessel dated to the XXVI Dynasty.

So here are instances of the pentagram used to mark vessels in both Upper and Lower Egypt, in both early and late dynastic times. In all these cases the pentagram does not appear to be an ornament or decorative element; it stands by itself, without apparent reference to any other mark or inscription. Since I have only three expedition reports in my possession, and all three included an instance of a pentagram cut or scratched into pottery, it seems evident that the pentagram was known in great antiquity. It was found not on stelæ or tomb paintings, but on pottery found in graves, suggesting that the symbol predates the strict artistic canons and religious formulæ governing the work of scribes and artists in pharaonic Egypt - or arises from some tradition outside them.

What has been said so far concerns figures which are unmistakably pentagrams. The five-pointed star - in its simplest form a five-rayed asterisk - is found everywhere in Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions and art. One never finds six-pointed stars or hexagrams. A seven-pointed star is the symbol of Seshet, who appears to be a female *neter* of records and site plans. She is always portrayed at the founding of new temples and monuments, either with reed-pen and tablet in hand or assisting the king in driving the first peg that will be used to stretch cords during the foundation’s layout. [Using the stars of the Thigh to orient the foundation is frequently mentioned in the text for these scenes.]

¹⁴³ The concept and significance of ϕ may be studied at length in H.E. Huntley’s *The Divine Proportion* (#12D), as well as in related works in Reading List Category #12. As of this writing there is also an excellent website devoted to ϕ at: <http://www.geocities.com/jyce3/>

¹⁴⁴ The lines of the pentagram reflect the Golden Mean. Each inside angle of the central pentagon is 108° . Each inside angle of the five points is 36° . Every line segment of the pentagram divided by the next shorter segment yields:

$$\frac{\sin 108^\circ}{\sin 36^\circ} = 1.618033988749894848204586834365638117720309180\dots$$

into the apothem equals ϕ accurate to 4 significant figures.^{145 146}

The Greeks too used ϕ in art and architecture, naming it the Golden Mean or Golden Section.¹⁴⁷ A "Golden Rectangle", where the ϕ ratio is equal to the relationship between the longer and shorter dimensions, appears in the works of artists Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer, and George Seurat. In 1876 Gustav Fechner, a German psychiatrist, conducted experiments which concluded that the vast majority of people "preferred" rectangles in this shape.

ϕ also appears in nature. Most spiral growth in nature, notably phyllotaxis (the growth of leaves and flowers), follows the Fibonacci series, where each number in the series is equal to the sum of the two preceding numbers, ie: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34... As this series continues, the relationship between successive numbers approaches ϕ .¹⁴⁸

The Sacred Cut (or Golden Section) divides a line into unequal sections where the smaller is to the larger as the larger is to the whole. Similarly, a Golden Rectangle is one which, when divided into a square and smaller rectangle, the smaller rectangle is also a Golden Rectangle. Or, algebraically, $\phi^2 = \phi + 1$.¹⁴⁹

This, then, is the "secret" of the pentagram - a fact overlooked completely by most occult "authorities" of history. All "magic pentangles" - generally embellished with Cabalistic graffiti of one sort or another - amount to an unconscious effort to use the innate power of the pentagram even though not recognizing it for what it actually is. The pentagram as used by the Temple of Set is retained in its pure form, so that the beauty of ϕ is undiluted and undefiled.¹⁵⁰

It is portrayed inverse to imply change and movement in place of stasis and rest,

¹⁴⁵ I am particularly grateful to Setian Rodney Scott of Australia for his meticulous corrections and refinements to the ϕ -mathematics summarized in this section, as well as in the previous notes concerning it by other Setians.

¹⁴⁶ Assuming that the base to be 440 cubits and the apothem 356 cubits, then the apothem divided by 1/2 th base yields:

$$\frac{356}{440 \times .5} = 1.6181818\dots$$

¹⁴⁷ This entire idea seems to have died with the fall of ancient Greek civilization; it was not rediscovered until the 16th century, when Lucas Picioli published *Divina proportione* with illustrations by Leonardo da Vinci.

¹⁴⁸ The Fibonacci series was named after mathematician Leonardo Pisano Fibonacci . The 23rd number of this series is 28,657, the 24th; 46,368;

$$\frac{46,368}{28,657} = 1.6180339882053$$

¹⁴⁹ Some further properties of ϕ :

$$1 + \phi = \phi^2; \phi + \phi^2 = \phi^3; \phi^2 + \phi^3 = \phi^4; \text{ ad infinitum.}$$

$$\phi = (1 + \sqrt{5}) / 2$$

$$\phi = 1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/(\dots))))))\dots$$

$$\phi = (\sec 72)/2 = (\csc 18)/2 = 1/(2 \cos 72) = 1/(2 \sin 18) = 2 \sin 54 = 2 \cos 36 = 2/(\csc 54) = 2/(\sec 36)$$

¹⁵⁰ *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*. The Church of Satan again displayed the pentagram inverse, but only together with the other symbols which comprise the Sigil of Baphomet. The Moorish name referred to by Set is obviously the name "Baphomet". "Khar" is the name of the Egyptian XVI Nome, whose capital was *Ba-neb-tett*, or Mendes, and whose god-figure was the famous Goat of Mendes, notorious during the Ptolemaic period of decadence as a symbol of sensuality.

and also to proclaim the evolutionary dialectic of thesis contrasted with antithesis to produce synthesis - instead of a foreordained and unavoidable absolute standard.

In occult tradition the inverse pentagram has also symbolized Black Magic or Satanism as opposed to the White Magic of Cabalists and polytheists, symbolized by an obverse pentagram.

The Pentagram of Set is enclosed in a perfect circle (a function of π), representing the mathematical order of the objective universe. The pentagram does not touch the circle, however, signifying that the Powers of Darkness are not derived from or dependent upon that order.

Silver is the traditional color of the night, as gold is of the day. In recognition of the role of Set as Prince of Darkness and counterpart to the [Horus] light of day, the Temple of Set casts the pentagram in silver. Silver has also signified initiatory and exclusive religious systems as opposed to open, mass-oriented ones.

The background color of each degree medallion possesses distinct significance. The color white (I°) represents the newfound freedom of the mind from myths, misconceptions, and doctrines resulting from fear and superstition.

An Adept II° wears the pentagram against red. Of all the gods of ancient Egypt, Set alone was portrayed in red, and red has also been the traditional color of life-oriented religions; the Blood is the Life.

Those who are Elect to the Priesthood of Set III° wear the Pentagram of Set against black, symbolizing the individual's consecration by the Prince of Darkness.

A Master of the Temple IV° wears the Pentagram of Set against blue, the traditional color of the most advanced and accomplished initiates (such as the Philosopher-Kings of Plato's *Republic* or the Priest-Kings of Atlantis).

A Magus V° wears the Pentagram of Set against purple, the traditional color of royalty, because he is distinguished from the Masters of the Temple by being Tasked by the Prince of Darkness with the Utterance of a Word.

An Ipsissimus VI° wears the Pentagram of Set against gold. The symbolism of this color is known to the Masters of the Temple.

An Honorary Setian (a non-Initiate of the Temple so designated by virtue of distinguished service to the Temple or Æon of Set) wears the Pentagram of Set against green, symbolizing the natural universe in which the recipient dwells. In this case the Pentagram of Set appears in gold, symbolizing the non-initiatory character of this honor.

The full-size (2" diameter) medallion of the Temple of Set may be worn with formal, semi-formal, or casual attire, but never with such garb as to reflect ill upon its dignity. Under ceremonial circumstances Initiates of degrees I°-III° wear it together with a black robe trimmed in the individual's degree-color (I°=white, II°=red, III°= silver). Initiates of degrees IV°-VI° wear either robes of the appropriate degree color or black robes trimmed in the individual's degree-color. III°+ Initiates may wear a black clerical collar.

Table of Plates

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- About the Author -



Michael A. Aquino was the only member of the Church of Satan to attain the Second Level of the Fourth Degree (Magister Templi IV^o-II') prior to 1975, and was a member of the Church's Council of Nine and Order of the Trapezoid 1970-75. He served as Editor of the Church's *Cloven Hoof* newsletter 1971-75.

He served as founding High Priest of the Temple of Set 1975-1996, was Recognized as a Magus V^o and Ipsissimus VI^o, and was founding Grand Master of the Temple's Order of the Trapezoid 1982-87.

In secular life he is a Lt. Colonel, Military Intelligence, U.S. Army (Ret.). He is a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University; Defense Intelligence College, Defense Intelligence Agency; Foreign Service Institute, Department of State; U.S. Army Special Warfare Center (Special Forces ("Green Beret") / Psychological Operations / Civil Affairs / Foreign Area Officer); U.S. Army Command & General Staff College; U.S. Army Intelligence School, and U.S. Army Space Institute. Decorations include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal (3 awards), Special Forces Tab, Parachutist Badge, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

Academic credentials include the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California; and the M.P.A. in Public Administration from George Washington University. He has taught as Adjunct Professor of Political Science, Golden Gate University 1980-86.

He and his wife Lilith make their home in northern California.