

Balanone's Temple of Set FAQ

Contents:

- 1.0 Introduction

- 2.0 Philosophy
 - 2.1 Xeper
 - 2.2 Initiation
 - 2.3 Satanism
 - 2.4 Left Hand Path
 - 2.5 Metaphysics
 - 2.6 Dogma vs Doctrine

- 3.0 Religion
 - 3.1 The Temple of Set as a Religion
 - 3.2 Set
 - 3.3 The Gift of Set

- 4.0 Magic
 - 4.1 Black Magic
 - 4.2 Ritual Practices
 - 4.3 Occult Studies

- 5.0 The Organization
 - 5.1 Membership in the Temple
 - 5.2 Relations with Other Organizations
 - 5.3 Why the Temple of Set?
 - 5.4 Our Reputation(s)
 - 5.5 Pylons and Orders
 - 5.6 The High Priest

- 6.0 Setians and Setianism
 - 6.1 Activities
 - 6.2 Setians
 - 6.3 Why are we here?
 - 6.4 Miscellaneous

- 7.0 Contact and Information
 - 7.1 Formal and Official Contact
 - 7.2 Informal Contact
 - 7.3 Friendly and Neutral Others
 - 7.4 Unfriendly Others
 - 7.5 Getting More Information
 - 7.6 Those Stories About Us

- 8.0 Miscellaneous
- 8.1 Miscellaneous Links
- 8.2 FAQ/REF Sources

>> 1.0 Introduction

The Temple of Set is probably best described as an initiatory magical order of the Left Hand Path, a description which probably doesn't mean much to those without occult backgrounds.

"Initiatory" means the ToS advocates self-advancement through a series of levels of self-knowledge and similar attributes.

"Magical" means that the ToS openly works with magic (non-scientific cause and effect), not stage magic.

"Left Hand Path" indicates that the path followed by Setians is one of concentration and refinement of the self, leading toward more and more individuality and more and more individualism, as opposed to the Right Hand Path goals of growing toward some outwardly determined standard.

A slightly more detailed introduction can be found in the REF.

>> 2.0 Philosophy

2.1 Xeper

- Perhaps the best discussion of Xeper available online is Magus Don Webb's, found at: <http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/xeper2.html>
- Balanone: Setian Philosophy centers around the Egyptian concept of Xeper (often spelled Khepher), personified by the Egyptian Neter (god?) Xepera (Khephra), a concept that can be translated to "self improvement," or perhaps "Be all you can be."

Though that statement above seems simple enough, the study and pursuit of Xeper has proven complex and long, intriguing and challenging enough to keep Setians occupied for a life time.

- Apr 28, 1996, Priest Roger Whitaker, Xepera-I:

Xeper describes a methodology for manifestation. You cannot separate yourself from the force which motivates one to Xeper. It is ingrained within the many and varied paths which lead to it. Xeper such as it is results in a deeper recognition of Self consciousness, i.e., the uniquely human ability to sense its separateness within the body even while it resides within it. This heightened sense of Self Being, itself the result of polaric constituents - its me, in this other thing called a body - becomes a building block of a personal methodology based upon knowledge, intuition, learning and change as a result of the preceding.

The results of Xeper are manifestations into the world of ideas, art, science and culture. For the individual the results of Xeper become a metaphysical departure point for developing a bond with the Prince of Darkness by creating a matrix of linked ideas whose path leads towards the Genesis of Self Being.

You'll find another comment or two concerning Xeper in the REF document.

2.2 Initiation

- What do those necklaces and medallions mean?

The Temple of Set is an initiatory organization, dedicated to the initiation and growth of its members.

That dedication to initiation, to the philosophy of Xeper, and to Set, is represented by our primary symbol, the Pentagram of Set (a point-down pentagram within a circle). To help our members identify each other so we can work together, and to help them identify which level of initiation has been achieved by each other, we wear this symbol on different colored medallions, normally worn on necklaces of some kind, at formal gatherings.

There are six levels of initiation recognized within the Temple of Set, each with its specific color medallion.

- The first degree member wears a white medallion. This is a period of trial membership, in which the member begins to explore our philosophies, our practices, and our society. The member can decide whether our organization is one which will help the member's personal growth, and if not he is welcome to leave at any time, with our good wishes. Likewise, during this period we determine whether the member will function well within our society, will benefit from our activity, and will eventually be able to help others in the

organization with their personal growth. If not, then their membership is terminated, hopefully with no hard feelings. We title this degree "Setian," which is also the generic name for all of our members. The term stands for all who pursue their self deification while in contact with the philosophical and magical stream of the Temple.

- The second degree wears a red medallion. This is a member who has completed the trial membership and has been found to be compatible with and a valued contributor to the Temple of Set, just as we have been found to be useful to the member's own growth. More, through hard work the individual has opened him- or herself to the forces of Becoming within the body-soul complex. This is a place of great excitement and achievement. We Recognize our Adepts by the quality of their adventures and projects. This is where we differ from most occult schools that would award degrees based on knowledge and memory feats. These members are free to work with our philosophies and to participate in our activities to the fullest. More members are in the second degree than any other level of initiation. We title this degree "Adept," declaring them able to pursue any and all goals applicable to their personal growth.
- The third degree wears a black medallion. This is a member who not only has shown all of the qualities of an advanced second degree member, but who has also been chosen by Set to serve in his priesthood. This member has demonstrated abilities in working with and representing Set and the Temple of Set. We title this degree "Priest." Another way of putting this: the Third Degree Setian has become Resonate with the Work of Set. He or she is directly empowered by Set and charged him to expand the Setian experience -- this includes everything from running the Temple, which belongs to its Priesthood, to a variety of scholarly, artistic, or (obviously) magical endeavors to increase the Setian mindscape. Third Degrees can represent the Temple in most matters. If you have any questions concerning the Temple of Set (the organization, our activities, beliefs, or members), these members are the best qualified to answer your questions.
- The fourth degree wears a blue medallion. The Fourth Degree Setian is the founder of a school of thought in the Temple, which may effect the general philosophical and magical actions of mankind as well. These schools of thought are called Orders. Some such as the Order of the Vampyre or the Order of the Trapezoid are well known beyond the boundaries of the Temple walls, while others have lower profiles. The job of the Fourth Degree is the discovery and articulation of communicable methods of Initiation. The Orders bear

the same relationship to the Temple as departments do to a University. They are places for the Adept to specialize in pursuit of the specialized tools for their personal achievement.

- The fifth wears a purple medallion. The sixth wears a gold medallion. The distinctions between these grades of initiation are very meaningful within the Temple of Set, but for most purposes you can consider them as variations upon the fourth degree.

Why do you turn the pentagram upside down?

or as flagg@tiac.net stated on alt.pagan on Jan 10, 1996, and I responded:

ft> I know some satanists would like to THINK they are pagan, but if this is the case, why the need to desecrate the Pentagram as they did the Cross? I know the pentagram is not central to all pagan beliefs, but there is still no need for this. All pagan faiths that I know of respect the symbols of other religions.

Agreed. So why do you turn the holy and glorious Pentagram wrong side up? It's a symbol of dynamic balance, resting actively on one point. Why do you have to turn it over with its all-important balance point pointing meaninglessly up into the air?

There is additional discussion of initiation and the Temple's degree system in the REF document.

2.3 Satanism

Is the Temple of Set a Satanic organization?

The Temple of Set as an organization was founded in 1975 by Dr. Michael Aquino, in San Francisco. Its initial membership came from the Church of Satan (that infamous "Satanic" organization of the carny Anton LaVey), composed of CoS members who felt there was something real and important about the magic they were exploring, and felt that Anton LaVey's antics of that year were in contradiction to their own experiences. The Temple of Set has grown a lot in scope and maturity in those twenty years.

Because of this history, and because of the many antinomian pursuits followed by Setians, many people will call the Temple of Set "Satanic." Many Setians do, too, but not all.

"Satan" is a name given to the Prince of Darkness, just like "Set" is a name given to the Prince of Darkness. However, "Set" is a name given by a religion which found Setian principles attractive and noble, and which honored the Prince of Darkness. "Satan" is a name given to the Prince of Darkness by Christianity out of fear and revulsion. The Christian Satan is a twisted bastardization of the true Prince of Darkness.

"Satanism" is a term used by many to describe the Left Hand Path in the West. We are a proud part of the tradition of spiritual dissent, differing philosophically from the Church of Satan. Their take on the Left Hand Path is the Immanent Path wherein godhood is achieved by the worship of the carnal ego with no possibility of personal immortality save in some vague connection to the organic stream. We are followers of the Transcendental path, wherein person immortality is achievable by a strengthening of the idealized Self. In an increasingly post-Christian world, the term "Satanism" will become irrelevant.

More discussion concerning the Temple of Set and Satanism can be found in the REF document. You may also be interested in essays concerning the Prince of Darkness provided by Balanone (<http://www.bigfoot.com/~balanone/pod.html>) and "Concerning our Patron" by High Priest Don Webb (<http://www.bigfoot.com/~balanone/patron.html>).

2.4 Left Hand Path

The Left Hand Path is the tradition of spiritual dissent. It is a process of using the ideas and actions of the Seeker to create or realize an immortal, individual, potent, and powerful essence that will survive death. The Left Hand Path is the quest for personal immortality, won by hard effort without grace of gods, even of our role model, Set.

2.5 Metaphysics

This section is found only in the REF document.

2.6 Dogma vs Doctrine

The Temple of Set has no dogma, but it does have teachings. We're sometimes accused of having dogma because of these teachings.

The REF document includes some discussion detailing the distinction I see between doctrine and dogma.

There is some disagreement on this issue, primarily I believe because people use different definitions for dogma. For example, in reviewing a

draft of this FAQ, Magus Don Webb, the High Priest, suggested I erred in my statement above:

DW> Actually the Temple of Set does have dogma:

DW> 1. Being and Becoming are Good.

DW> 2. Being and Becoming can be enhanced by consciously chosen activities including Magic.

DW> 3. The Temple of Set, if properly maintained and used as a tool can be used to obtain Being and Becoming.

DW> That's about it.

>> 3.0 Religion

3.1 The Temple of Set as a Religion

Is the Temple of Set a religion?

Yes, although belief in the religion is not required of I* or II* members. See the REF document for some discussion why I consider the Temple of Set to be a religion.

* Fr. Ignatius asked on the Xepera-L mailing list, May 22, 1999:

> If ToS is a "legally recognized" entity, is it then tax-exempt? And are
> ToS Priests able to perform legally binding marriage ceremonies? I was
> wondering because I know that gov't recognition of one's path as a *real*
> religion has been an issue in the neo-pagan community for quite a while.

Yes, from its initial incorporation, the Temple of Set is a legal religious corporation within the State of California, and it is fully tax exempt. (I believe most of us would gladly do away with the tax exemption of all religious organizations, losing our own if it meant that all Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Scientologist, and other religions also paid their fair taxes. But as long as they are tax exempt, we'll save our money this way also.)

Yes, Setian Priests are able to perform legally binding marriage ceremonies.

3.2 Set

Set is the most ancient name for the Prince of Darkness, given to the Prince of Darkness in ancient (pre-dynastic) Egypt. Whether Set exists as an independent metaphysical being, or whether he's a symbol for man's most individualistic attributes, is a topic always under discussion somewhere in

the Temple of Set.

You may also be interested in essays concerning the Prince of Darkness provided by Balanone (<http://www.bigfoot.com/~balanone/pod.html>) and "Concerning our Patron" by High Priest Don Webb (<http://www.bigfoot.com/~balanone/patron.html>).

3.3 The Gift of Set

The Gift of Set means so many different things depending upon whom you speak to. To some it's the gift of Intelligence, to some it's Consciousness, to some it's the ability to step back from the current moment/place to see/think about what's happening. To some it's the ability to work (or at least conceive of) magic. etc. The Gift of Set is whatever happens to separate us (those with potential) from animals (those without quite as much potential), which is one of the grey areas that haven't been clarified very well (some of us not seeing very much difference between humans and "higher" animals).

There is more discussion of the Gift of Set in the REF document.

>> 4.0 Magic

4.1 Black Magic

What is Black Magic? How does the Temple of Set teach it?

Black Magic is consciously-directed alteration of one's environment through obscure natural (Lesser Black Magic) or non-natural (Medial Black Magic) means, or apprehension of the Forms/Principles of the natural/non-natural universe (Greater Black Magic). Black Magic inverts the formula of religion from "Thy will be done!" to "My will be done!"

The Temple of Set teaches both theory and practice of LBM/MBM/GBM, along with individual and social ethical considerations to which the Initiate must be sensitive in order to use such magical knowledge creatively, constructively, and responsibly. [Descriptions of "Black Magic" as involving human or animal sacrifice, rape, or other illegal or reprehensible practices are merely Judaeo/Christian propaganda, and have no basis in truth whatever.]

4.2 Ritual Practices

Setian ritual practice is generally not discussed in public forums. However, some specific questions seem to require answers.

- Do you sacrifice animals (or children)?

No. See the REF document for a more detailed discussion of this, and for other questions/answers concerning our ritual practices.

4.3 Occult Studies

Discussion of other occult studies (such as Astrology, Thelema and Crowley), are found in the REF document.

>> 5.0 The Organization

5.1 Membership in the Temple

Note: Most of these sections are explored in more depth in the REF document.

- Exploration

Joining the Temple of Set is a serious decision. Anyone who is attracted to the Temple of Set through the things you see and hear should investigate thoroughly before applying for membership.

- Affiliation

Application to the Temple of Set may be made to the Executive Director or to any Priest of Set. Information about this procedure is provided in the introductory letter.

- Assuming you're approved for membership (the Executive Director has indicated that the majority of applicants are denied), you as a I* Setian you will receive 1) the current edition of the _Crystal Tablet of Set_, which includes all of the basic philosophical, magical, and initiatory material any Setian would need to begin and accomplish his initiation to the II*, 2) a I* Pentagram of Set medallion, and 3) a year's subscription to the _Scroll of Set_ newsletter.
- You will have two years in which to achieve the II*, using the information and inspiration provided by the _Crystal Tablet_, by correspondence and other contact with Setians, and through your own

work towards Initiation.

- Following from our choice to avoid all practices that would create a barrier between us and our self-created divinity, the Setian can not in good faith hold membership in any other religious organization after he has become an Adept. Membership in organizations that advocate illegal action are likewise incompatible with Setian affiliation. One cannot be for one's own Xeper, and be working to restrict the Xeper of another.
- The application and its approval.

Though some applications are approved and acted upon quickly, other applications for membership in the Temple of Set seem to take a very long time. Our "staff" are all volunteers, and their administrative activities within the Temple of Set are given appropriate priorities, *behind* personal initiation, family, and career. Therefore, be prepared for some delay in the processing of your application. If the delay seems overly long, it's always helpful to send a friendly query to the Executive Director asking about its status.

One applicant asked on Xepera-I: "I sent off my letter of application about three weeks ago now- and I still haven't heard a word. Any idea how long it takes to get a response?"

- Adept Foster answered:

Once you've submitted your letter of application, it can take anywhere from one to three months before you hear anything. I know it sucks to have to wait that long without knowing, but these things take time- especially when you consider exactly HOW BUSY the Temple's Executive Director is (and that being the E.D. is a full time job, ON TOP of a normal, *paying* full time job- and then add in some time for family, other official Temple matters and their own personal Initiatory work!) All told, I'm surprised it happens as quickly as it does.

Just consider this a lesson in patience, and enjoy the anticipation. :)

- My answer was:

It's highly variable, depending on how busy our volunteer Executive Director is, and how busy her staff is, and how much difficulty she has finding an available Priest for the interview process. Then the question becomes how busy that Priest is, whether he has email capabilities, etc.

You can send a quick email to her at balfaq.ed@xeper.org and verify that she at least received your letter of application.

- Lewis Cawthorne asked on Xepera-I, Date: Fri, 18 Dec 1998, Subject: TOS & Recognition

Not to put the cart before the horse, but I do have one minor concern, how would an Initiate in a small town in North Carolina with some resources at his disposal for traveling to other places for contact with other Setians but probably without adequate resources to be able to make it to a normal pylon meeting should one be within a reasonable distance of his location (which there probably isn't) ever manage to have enough contact with a Priest of the temple to be reconized as an Adept?

From: "Koyote", Date: Fri, 18 Dec 1998

(All of this is from the p.o.v. of a first degree Setian with little face to face contact due to where I am and my job hours- I work most on weekends.)

Recognition, you should remember, is just that- Recognition. The work must be done by you. Communicating that can take many forms other than direct F2F. Publishing articles in the various newsletters, communicating with other Initiates via direct email, phone conversations, and attending larger gatherings (which occur in the continental US many times each year) are all adequate.

From: "fun fear", Date: Sat, 19 Dec 1998,

As an isolated Setian, I had similiar concerns, but I must agree

with Koyote. The Internet is a wonderful tool for contacting Priests and Priestesses, and as Koyote suggested, writing articles for The Scroll of Set is equally rewarding. Also, there are several correspondence Pylons available.

Beyond this, I have realized that one should embrace one's isolation. Just look to Set as an example: the apotheosis of the different and isolate! You have two years to get Recognized -- plenty of time to explore, make contacts with the Priesthood, and, if worthy, become Recognized. You don't need a group to hold your hand to do it, I hope! Embrace the isolation, embrace the Darkness!

From: Balanone <Balanone@geocities.com>, Date: Sun, 20 Dec 1998

It's a challenge. That hypothetical Initiate would have to Work at it -- corresponding with as many Setians as possible at the I* and II* levels (for breadth of perspective) and with several members of the Priesthood. He would have to take responsibility for maintaining correspondences, for establishing new ones to replace old ones that move on, and for demonstrating to the Priesthood his level of knowledge, his activity and study, and his advancement, along Setian lines.

It's a job. It's not easy. Magister L. was the only Setian in Finland, and he had to work to overcome the difficulties inherent in demonstrating his Xeper into the II*. Magister W. faced the same challenges in Germany some years earlier. Magister K and Magister A in the British Isles had it almost as bad, but at least English was their native language (though they had to deal with many curve balls tossed by our writing most Setian materials in American English rather than British English).

It's not easy, as Priestess N, Adept B, Priest C, Adept D, Magistra H, Priest R, Priest W, and several others can report (several were the only Setians in their state, and a couple were the only Setians in their country).

It's not easy, but it can be done, as these have shown. Only you can tell whether you're up to the task.

From: Christopher Merwin, Date: Sat, 19 Dec 1998

As a Temple Initiate from a small town in North Carolina I think perhaps I can help you with some of your queries. Due to the widespread distribution of Temple members many Pylons are organized based around correspondence, with email and Pylon

newsletters as the primary form of communication. In fact, due to the highly private and individualistic nature of most Setians this is our preferred means of communication. ... The ability for you to meet face to face with other Initiates is left completely up to you and the other Initiates involved. The largest obstacle to being a Setian in the Carolinas is the local attitudes toward other non-christian religions, which any intelligent and sensitive individual should be more than capable of handling.

- Departure

You may choose to resign from the Temple of Set at any time for any reason. The great majority of people who leave the Temple of Set do so simply by not paying their annual dues, and letting their memberships expire. Many others send a simple and courteous resignation letter to the Executive Director or any Priest.

A few members are automatically expelled upon the completion of two years of membership during which they did not achieve the II*. There are surprisingly few of these to my mind, probably because the Executive Director and Priesthood do such a good job of screening applicants.

Fewer members resign because they encounter something within the Temple of Set which they don't like, and fewer still are expelled because they prove to be incompatible with Setian philosophy or life.

- Rejoining

Despite the claims of a few who state otherwise, the Temple of Set does not pursue those who leave the Temple of Set. Whether that separation was friendly, unfriendly, or automatic and impersonal, we feel anyone and everyone should be allowed to go their own way, as long as they don't interfere with our Xeper or the organization.

A few people who leave the Temple of Set do apply to rejoin the Temple. Setians who have left the Temple of their own accord may be allowed to rejoin on a case-by-case basis. The Temple is not designed as a revolving door, but we do realize that may not have entered the Temple at a time conducive to their development. Those that left impersonally or on an amicable basis are usually welcomed back without hesitation. Those who caused problems during their earlier membership or after their departure are carefully examined before they are welcomed back into the Temple of Set.

- How long does the application process to the ToS usually take?

The application process time is highly variable, depending strongly on

- whether there are any delays in the mail (especially for overseas applicants)
- the time availability of our volunteer staff (expect longer delays during conclaves and gatherings)
- whether your application is sponsored by a member of the Priesthood (which generally speeds up the process greatly)
- whether there is a local Priest readily available to contact you for an interview
- whether there are copies of the Crystal Tablet available to be mailed out immediately or whether they need to be printed first
- whether you are accepted or rejected (rejections tend to process faster than acceptances)

Though some membership applications are processed in as little as two weeks, it's not uncommon for incidental delays to extend the process to two months. If you are concerned about the delay, you may send a polite email or postal mail query to the Executive Director, who should be able to tell you how far the application process has gone.

As James F Foster wrote on Xepera-I:

General rule of thumb- before complaining about something, ask yourself: "What am I doing to fix it?" If you aren't doing much on your behalf, why would anyone else?

Second general rule of thumb: Before complaining about someone else's (lack of) performance, ask if there's a problem with the paperwork and if there's anything you can do to help.

5.2 Relations with Other Organizations

By its bylaws, the Temple of Set as an organization can have no formal relationships or ties with any other organization. Individual Setians, however, can work with or have dealings with other organizations and its members. There are two limitations: 1) an Adept II* of the Temple of Set cannot also be a member of another religious organization, and 2) no Setian may be a member of an organization which condones or takes part in the violation of society's laws to the detriment of society.

That first limitation has often been a subject for discussion by people who don't understand it or who want clarification. One clarification I posted to alt.pagan in 1996 was,

"The Temple of Set wouldn't care if a Setian chooses to participate in a

Buddhist retreat, an Indian sweat lodge, a Thelemic Gnostic Mass, a Passover Seder, a Pagan circle, or whatever. Part of being an Adept Magician is being able to see and mesh with whatever magic is taking place, understanding the causes of the ceremony and participating in those causes as appropriate to our own Will.

"However, if someone claimed to seriously believe in the wheel of karma, and that Xeper is valueless because until we can learn to avoid all participation in this world we're doomed to ride that wheel cycle after cycle, then yes, that religious belief would be opposed to the Setian principles of Xeper, and that person would not be able to remain a member of the Temple of Set. The two philosophies are simply incompatible."

The REF document includes sections which examine our history regarding specific other organizations.

5.3 Why the Temple of Set?

The REF document examines the question "What does the Temple of Set have to offer?"

5.4 Our Reputation(s)

Lupo the Butcher, in his "alt.satanism FAQ file", states/stated: "The most vocal of groups which border upon Satanism, is the Temple of Set of Michael Aquino and friends, which splintered away from the Church of Satan in a disagreement over monetary policy. They have a number of nasty habits, including the public publishing of names, addresses and workplaces of former members as a harassment tactic, disinformation regarding Satanic and occult groups, including their own, and a good deal of "we are the one true way" posturing."

See the section on Satanism for a summary of the schism with the Church of Satan.

We do not normally publish the name, addresses, or any other information concerning former members. We do not harass former members. Thousands of exmembers have left the Temple of Set for many different reasons, without any activity such as Lupo complains about.

See the REF document for more information.

5.5 Pylons and Orders

5.5.1 Pylons of the Temple of Set

Setians who live in the same area sometimes organize a local pylon in which they can meet together regularly for discussions, study, ritual work, and other activities. See <http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/pylons/pylons.html> for a good discussion of local pylons within the Temple of Set.

In addition to local pylons, there are correspondence pylons which support the Xeper of Setians who wish to participate in group discussions and activities by correspondence.

5.5.2 Orders of the Temple of Set

IV* Setians, Masters of the Temple, may found Orders within the Temple of Set. If you were to think of the Temple of Set as a college of higher learning, the Orders could be seen as departments within the school, each concentrating on specific flavors of exploration. They are places for the Adept to specialize in pursuit of the specialized tools for their personal achievement. Some Orders, like the Order of the Vampyre or the Order of the Trapezoid, are well known beyond the boundaries of the Temple walls, while others have lower profiles.

The REF document includes more information, specifically concerning the Order of the Trapezoid.

5.6 The High Priest

- The High Priest of the Temple of Set at this time is Magus Don Webb.
- The High Priest is chosen by the Chairman of the Council of Nine, and serves indefinitely until he vacates the position or is removed from office by the Chairman.
- The High Priest serves as the President of the corporation.

See the REF document for more information concerning the High Priest of Set.

>> 6.0 Setians and Setianism

"Setian" is the generic term which applies to each member of the Temple of Set. "Setians" is the term which applies to two or more members, and to the entire membership together.

"Setianism" is a term which can be applied to the Setian philosophy, the

Setian religion, and/or the Setian way of life. Some (many?) Setians prefer the terms "Setian philosophy," "Setian religion," and "Setian way of life" over the term "Setianism." I find "Setianism" a convenient term to use when I am referring specifically to the Setian way of life, or to any combination of these ideas.

6.1 Activities

What do Setians do? This topic is covered in the REF document.

6.2 Setians

6.2.1 Specific Setians

- Executive Director -- can be contacted through the Temple's postal address, or through email balfaq.ed@xeper.org).
- High Priest -- Magus Don Webb can be contacted through the Temple's postal address, or through email (balfaq.hp@xeper.org).
- Dr. Michael Aquino -- the founder of the Temple of Set can be contacted through the Temple's postal address or through email (balfaq.maquino@xeper.org).
- Balanone -- this long-time member (and author of this document) can be contacted through the Temple's postal address or through email (balfaq@xeper.org).

One frequently asked question is why Balanone signs his email and posts with "PP" below his name. As stated in April, 1993 on the Base of Set echo and many other times, "That's as close as I can get with this keyboard to the Egyptian hieroglyph for Shuti (the double Maat feather), symbolizing my personal dedication to Balance."

- A few others are mentioned in the REF document.

6.2.2 Questions about Setians

Are Setians Pagans? That's a question which depends heavily upon your definition of "pagan." See the REF document for this discussion.

6.2.3 Imposters

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then how should you look at people who claim to be members of the Temple of Set and aren't? If you encounter someone online (or offline) who claims to be Setian, how do you know

if they really are?

Our High Priest, Magus Don Webb, offers an excellent answer in his essay "How to Spot a Setian" (<http://www.bigfoot.com/~balanone/spot.html>). My personal answer is less meaningful, but they're techniques you might find useful.

- * All members of the Temple of Set can be identified physically by their colored cloisonne point-down medallion, and by their membership card (with expiration date). If you have physical contact with someone who claims to be Setian but who can't show you the membership card or medallion, that person is not a member.

June 2001: Recently we've seen a couple of medallions being auctioned on Ebay. If someone has our medallion, that is not proof they are currently a member, and maybe not proof they ever were. But if they do not have a medallion, then they aren't a current member.

- * All online members of the Priesthood have a xeper.org email address. (Example: Priest Thomas White's email address within our domain is twhite@xeper.org) Anyone claiming online to be a member of the Priesthood should be able to supply their name@xeper.org or alias@xeper.org email address, and should be able to respond to any email sent to that address. Anyone online who cannot give you an email address @xeper.org, or who cannot answer mail sent to that address, is not a member of the Priesthood.

- * The Executive Director's staff will confirm the membership of any Setian who asks to have that membership confirmed. The member should send the email from their email address of record to confirm@xeper.org -- this email will be validated, and the confirmation will be sent to any email address desired. Any person claiming to be a member online but not willing or able to provide this confirmation is not a member.

While the Temple of Set and its members normally will not reveal, confirm, or deny anyone's present or past membership in the Temple of Set, there are exceptions:

- * If members indicate it's OK, such as through the request method above, we'll confirm their membership.
- * Some members are very open and public about their membership. We'll confirm those members' status.
- * People who publicly claim to be members and aren't (in our view) are claiming to be part of that second group. We will therefore provide the information that such people are not members.

There have been a few people who fall into that last group, as identified by

members of our Priesthood. These include:

- * Ravenwrld@aol.com -- I am told he has claimed to be the High Priest of the Temple, and that he offers to sell the _Crystal Tablet_. The High Priest of the Temple of Set is Don Webb. No member of the Temple may sell their Tablet.
(Past members may sell the copy they received from us -- it's their property. However, they can sell only that one copy -- they are not permitted to make additional copies for sale.)
- * Reverend77x@aol.com -- I am told he has claimed to be a IV* member of the Temple of Set. He is not a member.
- * Lilithdarkmoon@aol.com and/or lilithvmp@aol.com -- I am told she claims to be a former member. She is not.
- * magussatanicus@aol.com -- I am told he claims to be a member of the Priesthood in "German Chamber" and claims as well that lilithdarkmoon@aol.com/lilithvmp@aol.com is actually Lilith Aquino. He is not a member. There is no "German Chamber." Lilith Aquino does not use either of those two aliases on AOL.
- * Xeper879631179@aol.com -- While this person has not yet claimed to be a member of the Temple of Set, he apparently has proclaimed himself the Magus of Xem. Xem is an Aeon Word within the Aeon of Set, and the Magus of Xem was Magus Ronald K. Barrett. This is not Magus Barrett, and this person has no membership nor recognition within the Temple of Set.

Finally, on reading Magus Webb's "How to Spot a Setian", one Adept mentioned,

Along those lines, I have encountered those who claim that they have been approached by a Setian, which tried to "recruit" them. I find this very funny. This right here shows that they have no idea what they are talking about. I guess it makes them feel good to tell others that such a wonderful organization as ours was wanting them to be a member. Anyone who really knows anything about the Temple would know that does not go on.

I've asked a few, "and why would they want you?" Maybe not the polite thing to say, but I can only laugh at these people.

The Temple of Set does not recruit. Individual members who feel that their friends might benefit from membership might mention this to their friends, but we do not ever try to recruit anyone, and don't even approach those people who have no ties of friendship to us.

6.2.4 Who is a Setian?

Various people continue to call themselves Setian even though they are not members of the Temple of Set. The question as asked on the Xepera-L mailing list in May, 1999 was:

- > If one can be a *Satanist* without being a member of CoS, can one be a
- > *Setian* without being a member of ToS?</blockquote>

My answer:

- * If you mean "Can someone believe in the Prince of Darkness as Set without being a member of the Temple?" Then yes, they can.
- * If you mean "Can someone actively seek and accomplish Xeper without being a member of the Temple of Set?" Then yes, they can.
- * If you mean "Can someone practice Setian forms of magic without being a member of the Temple of Set?" Then yes, they can.
- * If you mean "Can someone be recognized as and called a Setian by the Temple of Set's administration, Priesthood, or general membership without being a member of the Temple of Set?" Then no, they cannot.

This evoked the question "Why not?" I responded with the following two definitions:

Setian (n)

A member of the Temple of Set.

setian (adj)

1. action, statement, or belief inspired by the philosophy of Xeper and/or the being or idea of Set.
2. action, statement, or belief compatible with inspiration by the philosophy of Xeper and/or the being or idea of Set

6.3 Why are we here?

Here" may be any digital forum -- you may be reading this on a web site, a newsgroup, or FTP archive. I've tried to generalize the answer to apply to most situations. For that matter, "here" may also apply to Pagan gatherings, meetings in hotels, new age fairs, etc. These questions are examined in the REF document.

6.4 Miscellaneous

There isn't much in this section, and it all resides in the REF document at this time.

>> 7.0 Contact and Information

7.1 Formal and Official Contact

- Postal Address: Temple of Set, P. O. Box 470307, San Francisco, CA 94147
- Electronic Mail: At this time, you may send email to the Executive Director c/o balfaq.ed@xeper.org
- The Priesthood of Set: To contact a member of the Priesthood, send your request by postal mail to the Executive Director, who will forward it to an appropriate member of the Priesthood. (That member of the Priesthood may not indulge in electronic mail capabilities, so postal mail is usually a requirement here.)
- Copyrighted material

Almost all of the Temple of Set's internal documents are copyrighted and intended for internal distribution only. We do release some material for public consumption from time to time, but other material is not released. We have problems from time to time with people copying or publishing our copyrighted material. We'd appreciate anyone and everyone who helps us maintain our intellectual property rights.

See the REF document for comments concerning the *_Book of Coming Forth by Night_*, *_Crystal Tablet of Set_*, and other publications.

7.2 Informal Contact

- "My name is ... and i wish find a Setian Priest in my area to inquire as to joining the Temple."

Information on how to join the Temple of Set is readily available at the Temple's web site, by following the General Information and Admissions Policies links.

To ask the Executive Director if she can help you contact a Priest of Set in your area, a) find her email address above, b) send her your request, including your postal address and/or phone, so our local Priesthood can contact you (they may not have email).

- Electronic Mail mailing list(s)

Xepera-I <<http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/archives/xepera.html>> is the only public mailing list hosted by Setians. Moderation is minimal, topics can be anything of interest to Setians, and participation is open to all who are not openly hostile to the Temple or to Setians.

Visit its informational web page for subscription information.

- Internet newsgroups

- alt.satanism

alt.satanism is a newsgroup for discussions of satanic philosophy, religion, organizations, activities, etc. Most Setians avoid the newsgroup because of the high level of juvenile behavior that we run into there. However, there are a few Setians who can be contacted through that newsgroup.

- alt.pagan

alt.pagan attracts several Setians who belong to that community. We prefer to avoid discussing simply Setian philosophy and religion or Satanism in alt.pagan, since those are more appropriate to alt.satanism, but the relationships between Setian philosophy and religion and other Pagan philosophies and religions are on-topic and suitable for that newsgroup.

- soc.religion.paganism

soc.religion.paganism is a well-moderated newsgroup in which the same topics can readily be discussed. There are probably fewer Setians on this newsgroup than on the other two, but there should be enough visiting soc.religion.paganism to hold a meaningful discussion when necessary.

- FIDO/PODS echoes

The Setian Discussions echo (tagname: SET, and previously named "Base of Set" was the only FTN (Fido Technology Network) echo hosted by Setians concerning Setian philosophy or the Temple of Set. Moderation was minimal, and topics could be anything of interest to Setians. Participation was open to all who were not openly hostile to the Temple or to Setians. This echo was carried on the FIDO North America backbone, and by most major hubs within PODS. It was carried in Australia by both FIDO and PODS, and in Germany (and perhaps other areas of Europe) by PODS. Unfortunately that echo closed down in 1999, and is no longer operational.

- World Wide Web sites and pages

- The Temple of Set's "official" World Wide Web site is <http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/index.html>; most sites dealing with the

Temple of Set can be found through links from this site.

- The Order of the Trapezoid maintains its own web site at <http://www.trapezoid.org/>
- FIDO/PODS bulletin board systems: There used to be quite a few bulletin board systems owned and run by Setians, but it seems that all have them have disbanded or gone to mail-only operations. We also used to host a Setian Discussions echo, as part of the FIDO and PODS networks. (PODS is dedicated to Pagan activities and discussions.) That echo is no longer operational.

7.3 Friendly and Neutral Others

Though I've often quoted from others' responses to frequently asked questions, still this document is just one person's compilation concerning the Temple of Set. Anyone who needs a more comprehensive view should contact one or more of the other Setians (above, or better through Xepera-I), and perhaps one or more people who aren't Setian. A few people who are active online, whose independent views concerning the Temple of Set at this time appear to be informed and reasonable, are listed in the REF document. Please note that neither I nor the Temple of Set have much influence over nor agree with everything these people say.

7.4 Unfriendly Others

The REF document identifies a few people whose messages, documents, or web pages you're likely to run into on the Internet, and who are biased against the Temple of Set for a variety of reasons.

7.5 Getting More Information

- General Information Letter

The current General Information letter (including membership information and policies) is available upon request. Write to: Executive Director, Temple of Set, Post Office Box 470307, San Francisco, CA 94147, USA. Or provide a *postal* - not E-mail - mailing address to: balfaq.ed@xeper.org

There are copies of that letter floating around cyberspace, available on various FTP sites and on BBSs. Unfortunately, most of them are out of date, since the introductory letter is updated semi-regularly, and the files on these unrelated sites aren't. The primary site known and guaranteed to maintain a current copy is the WWW site maintained by a Priest of Set, <http://www.xeper.org>.

- Computerized archives

Over the years, a number of other files pertaining to the Temple of Set were made available. These were generally intended for limited distribution, but over time were archived on various Internet and FTN sites along with material /about/ the Temple of Set which did not originate /from/ the Temple of Set. Many of these files contain dated information; the accuracy and authenticity of these is doubtful. In future revisions of this document, comments about these files may be added (if you bring the need for same to our attention).

- However, be warned that a lot of files of questionable value are floating around the 'net. Check the source for each document, and if you have questions about its value, ask about it on the Xepera-I mailing list. The REF document discusses at least one such example of this.

- Archives hosted by Setians

- <ftp://ftp.xeper.org>

- Reference: <mailto://webmaster@xeper.org>

- Note: This is the only FTP site both managed by a Priest of the Temple of Set and dedicated to the Temple of Set at this time to our knowledge. The reliability of other FTP sites will be lower -- they will not be as accurate nor current. As other Setian sites are identified they will be listed at <http://www.xeper.org>

- Other FTP sites

- <FTP://ftp.lysator.liu.se/pub/religion/satanism/ToS>

- 10/1997: the most recent files found were dated 1994.

- 9/1999: The site URL has changed (capitalization only), and the most recent files at this time are dated 1996.

- It does have a 1994 copy of the Temple's reading list.

- <FTP://nic.funet.fi/pub/doc/religion/occult/magick/thelema/ToS>
(this is the original slopoko tree moved to funet)

- Obsolete FTP links (no longer useful)

- <FTP://etext.archive.umich.edu/pub/Quartz/occult/set>

- Reference: <mailto://ftp@etext.archive.umich.edu> (Paul Southworth)

- October, 1997: I could not find the Quartz/occult directory

- November, 1997: It appears that all files dealing with the ToS have been removed from this site because of their age.

7.6 Those Stories About Us

Despite our general policy of keeping a low profile, sometimes rumors about us do get spread, generally by people who dislike or fear us for some reason (perhaps because so little is known about us, or simply because of our non-Christian belief system, or for other reasons). If anyone (perhaps someone else at a location of one of our formal meetings, or someone you meet on the 'net, or some other acquaintance) should ask you any of the following questions, it's good to be able to give them the correct answers.

7.6.1 A Cult?

"Is this a cult?" No. Some people may define "cult" to mean any non-Christian religion, and then yes, we don't believe in the Christian religion. But most people reserve the word "cult" to you mean something dangerous to society or its members, and no, we're not a cult since we are beneficial to our members, and we're not anti-social by any means.

The REF document contains more discussion on this topic.

7.6.2 Satanists?

"Are you Satanists?" A lot of people say yes, and a lot of people say no. A lot of Setians say yes, and a lot of Setians say no. See the REF document for this discussion.

7.6.3 Naziism and Fascism

Are you fascists? Nazis? No. See <http://www.bigfoot.com/~balanone/nazitrap.html> or <http://www.necronomi.com/magic/satanism/fascist.set.txt> for one member's discussion of this question [as of July 6, 1998, the necronomi.com copy was not found online].

7.6.4 Presidio

What about the Presidio stories?

On August 14, 1987 CE the San Francisco home of Lilith and Dr. Aquino was raided by San Francisco Police officer Glen Pamfiloff on a search warrant obtained as a consequence of the accusations of Army chaplain Lawrence Adams-Thompson that the Aquinos had kidnapped and sexually abused his stepdaughter as part of the Presidio of San Francisco day-care witch-hunt.

These claims were investigated in depth by the SFPD, the FBI, and the US Army CID. No charges were ever made in any jurisdiction, and the evidence has shown Dr. Aquino and Lilith Aquino to be innocent of any such activity. Full details can be read in the alt.pagan post, dated Sun Jun 02, 22:14,

From : scratch@gladstone.uoregon.edu, Subj : Re: Curio courts the CAW.

7.6.5 Other Occultists

- Why should Wiccans, Druids, and other types of Pagans defend those who call themselves "Satanists" against the Christian majority?

I've never understood why Wiccans, Druids, and others might think we want their defending. There are ethical and social reasons to do it, and that's why Setians generally defend other Pagans against discrimination and other forms of attack, but Satanists don't need others to defend them -- Satanists would be happy if other Pagans would simply stop buying Christianity's lies and attacking the Satanists as if allied with Christianity's blind bigots.

There's a little more discussion of this in the REF document.

- "Are you witches?" That depends upon your definition of a "witch." We do explore activities which many people would call "magic," such as telepathy, divination, and methods of strengthening our souls and spirits through mental and spiritual discipline. However, modern witches usually believe that their magical powers come from one or more gods or goddesses, and many Christians believe these powers come from the devil. We don't believe in any such gods or goddesses or devils. Most modern witches claim we are not witches.
- Perhaps the most important point to know and remember about us is that we believe a primary requirement of self-improvement and individual Xeper is to be honorable and ethical. We do not tolerate any illegal activity. We do not tolerate any illegal drugs, and we frown upon excessive use of legal substances like tobacco and alcohol. We believe in individual freedoms, and respect everyone else's desire to live life the way they want to, asking in exchange only the freedom to be able to live life the way we want to.

We do enjoy companionship and camaraderie. At our various conclaves, many of us will gather in private rooms, local restaurants, and the hotel lobby, and we'll just talk for hours, about almost anything. Some of our people will even sometimes forget to go to sleep, being so wrapped up in talking to people they see only once or twice a year.

We enjoy life, we enjoy growth, and we enjoy each other. If you spend time with Setians, you'll find that most of us smile a lot, honest smiles, reflecting the enjoyment we find in life.

- What about Magda Graham? This is discussed in the REF document.

7.6.6 The Setian Illuminati

These topics are explored in the REF document.

>> 8.0 Miscellaneous

8.1 Miscellaneous Links

- FBI Special Agent Kenneth Lanning's /Investigator's Guide to Allegations of "Ritual" Child Abuse/:
<http://www.necronomi.com/magic/satanism/FBI-ritual-abuse-report.txt> and
<http://www.bigfoot.com/~balanone/lanning.9201.html> [as of July 6, 1998, the necronomi.com copy was not found online]
- The Temple of Set's Reading List from the Crystal Tablet of Set (an old version, but better than nothing):
ftp://ftp.lysator.liu.se/pub/religion/satanism/ToS/Reading_list/

8.2 FAQ/REF Sources

- Setian Discussions echo FAQ. author: Balanone, version: Dec 30, 1996
- "More About the Temple of Set" web page. author: Balanone, version: Nov 25, 1996
- The alt.satanism FAQ file. author/editor: Lupo the Butcher, Version 2.3, January 7, 1996
- Temple of Set alt.satanism FAQ. author: Dr. Michael Aquino, version: Oct 10, 1995
- Misc email from Xepera-I mailing list
- Misc email from newsgroups and echos