

The Scroll of Set

Issue Number 81

Volume XI-7

December 1985

Editor: Margaret A. Wendall IV°

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[1] Arachne

- by K. Michael Ogle II°

The night becomes thick. O my priestess of magic, whom my fingers reach out to touch.

They flash: Scarlet eyes from behind the velvet curtains of blackness. They wink, and they vanish into the darkness; will-o-the-wisp calling me to follow.

The curtains open. The infinity of space I see.

My mind explodes to fill the vacuum. My thoughts become sticky, white. They coalesce and form a web spanning space and time.

Arachne walks across the web: a spider, black, across a chessboard, with each square a trapezoid, with each angle a gateway. Entwined within the web I wait for her advances.

She is calling me to follow.

[2] Tarot Project Update

- by Roger L. Whitaker III°

It is the responsibility of each successive æon to update the Tarot. It was in this light that the original Tarot Project was begun several years ago. But something went wrong, very wrong, and the project ground to a halt when the Master most actively involved in the project left. Only Priest Menschel, Priestess Geske, and I have continued heavy involvement with the cards.

Priest Menschel is now creating the *Tarot Primer*, which will be the essential bedrock involved in dealing with the next step of this project.

Priestess Geske and I were involved in the original project with former Master of the Temple Lynn Norton. At the time of Norton's departure from the Temple of Set, he and I were involved in the updating of the *Book of Thoth* by Aleister Crowley. Priestess Geske was involved in the actual artwork of the new Tarot cards.

At this time Priestess Geske and I are pleased to announce that this project is once again alive and well. Priestess Geske will be involved in the redesigning of the entire deck in accordance with the Greater Magical principles of the Æon of Set. The text to accompany the cards will not be an updating of the *Book of Thoth*, but will be an entirely new creation, just as the cards will be. The new text will be called the *Book of Amn* and is tentatively subtitled the "Hidden Keys to the Black Magical Use of the

Tarot". Completion of both the cards and text will take approximately ten years. Updates of the project's progress will appear regularly in the *Scroll*.

[3] The Razor's Edge: Magic & Skepticism

- by K. Michael Ogle II°

I question all things. - Satan in *The Satanic Bible*

I am pleased that my recently-published 6/23/XX letter to the High Priest has provoked some interesting replies. The questions raised in that letter are important. I would love to continue the discussion of the original letter, and I will continue it via private communication with interested magicians.¹

Now I perceive a larger, more practical, and, yes, a much more formidable question emerging from my discussions to date: When and how should skepticism and intellect be embraced by the practicing magician? Rather than update my original letter, let me use the reader's time to lock horns with this question. This will be done in three parts. This first part will deal with skepticism. Forthcoming articles will deal with science and technology respectively.

First of all, how strong a force is verbal acknowledgment or belief? My answer: not very. The intellect is in a constant state of fluctuation and is easily manipulated and fooled. Even though people almost always **think** they are acting on the basis of logic, they rarely do. [This explains the effectiveness of advertising, politics, jingles, propaganda, and mental magic.]

Instead, people act out of instinct and emotion almost exclusively, while the intellect works hard at **rationalizing** these actions. Generally the intellect works after the fact; curiously people experience the illusion of it working before the act.

Ask someone why they do any particular thing, such as studying martial arts, climbing rocks or playing chess. Nine times out of ten they will give you a very rational, seemingly reasonable answer. Nine times out of ten the answer will change depending on the time of year, the cycle of the Moon, etc. For, you see, words are cheap.

Sometimes, for reasons not necessarily obvious, it behooves one to ritually petition a disembodied entity. This action creates problems for the intellect, which, while intimately familiar with justifying other forms of instinctive behavior, is hard-pressed to justify this particular act. The would-be wizard only feels self-conscious, perhaps silly, about raising his sword and commanding the demons while living in modern "space-age" society. Not being able to cope with this, the skeptic within the wizard

intercedes; he makes statements like “You look silly.” or “You’re wasting time.” or “What will the neighbors think?”

In the mundane world we are used to forces which do not require belief. For example you do not have to believe in radio waves for a radio to work. But as we all should know, in the psychological world belief is a powerful force. And if allowed to continue, the skeptic would thwart the actions of the Sorcerer. The skeptic’s prophesy would become self-fulfilling.

There are numerous ways of dealing with our irrational desires. Chapter 2 of *Black Magic* describes several:

- (a) the approach of the natural/objectivist who simply disregards the subjective world or sublimates it into science fiction and fantasy;
- (b) the approach of the mystic, who disregards his intellect and the objective world; and
- (c) the approach of the Black Magician, who balances on the razor’s edge between the two.

The inhabitants of the animal kingdom have been unable to scientifically rationalize the need for food until very recent history, but the lack of rationalization did not curb their appetite. I have been unable to scientifically rationalize my indolence in the misty, twilight world of magical experience. But my ability to experience that world indicates that it is a real part [even if not a physical part] of my neurosystem. Like other faculties of the human entity, if left unused I instinctively know it would atrophy and fade.

I suspect that for most magicians the pursuit of religious darkness begins early in life I suspect that most of us took the first step to “Come Forth by Night” long before any “philosophy” appeared in our mind. Many of us have always felt the mystery of the darkness, have always imagined the thrill of riding on leathery wings through the night sky. We began our exploration into the strange, dreamy, and often fantastic world of magic during childhood.

While I have not always practiced ceremonial magic, the instinct has always been present, surfacing in other ways. As a spelunker, for example, I have communed with the very living darkness which permeates the hollow earth. I have experienced the thrill of a universe so far divorced from our mundane world, so completely in opposition to it, that it can only be compared with magical practice.

And the skeptic intercedes a question: Is the Prince of Darkness whom I entertain in my ritual chamber, who lives and breathes within the dark and twisting corridors of my psyche, who emerges with

vibrant, pulsating life from the angles of the Pentagram - is this living force the same force whom the Temple of Set recognizes as Set? I cannot answer.

The sorcerer within me reminds the skeptic within me: Even if magic is nothing more than a psychodramatic fantasy, even if life is a cosmic accident, a chemical machine which mistakenly suspects it has “free-will” [logically the skeptic can prove nothing more optimistic], even then I would find magical practice and study exciting, exalting, intriguing, and hence a worthy pursuit. In that exaltation I will strengthen that **irrational will to live** and to Become, thereby evolving and becoming more than I am now.

Even within the most pessimistic of scenarios, magical evolution and the Æonic Word *Xeper* [as I **sense** it] are valid. Realizing this, the skeptic smiles with satisfaction, for he is willing to accept the above “worst possible” case without a question. The sorcerer also smiles and gets on with his work.

[Now reread the above paragraph, substituting “sex” for “magic”. The implications are clear.]

But the human must be armed with the sword of skepticism and logic. We do not live in a world as simple as that enjoyed by Her-Bak. Our world is complex. Fortunate is the magician who can make the dagger suffice for the sword, Crowley reminds us.

But the very complexity of our technological society precludes such an ideal situation. Hence we take a problem, and we attack it, we analyze it. Ideal situation or not, we solve it and move on. The skeptic must do this with ruthless abandon - no topic too sacred, no ideology exempt.

Skepticism must not be allowed to turn into pessimism. Our attack of ideas serves as an evolutionary pressure against which the ideas must grow stronger or die. But when we see how quickly even the seemingly best ideas topple, a deep, brooding pessimism may arise.

Lack of rationalization may even stop action. If all one knew were the problems and difficulties associated with building and flying an airplane, it is likely that one would deny the possibility. But by attacking the problems actively, the problems can be solved. If they do not yield, we use our intuition and logic and continue on. Of course the opposite extreme - irrationally ignoring the problems and leaping off the cliff - must be avoided.

Recognizing the ultimate, irrational basis of all behavior, we need not see the growth of an idea as an end in itself. The value of a theory can be judged on the basis of its effect: How does it change your world or allow you to change the world? Even the more subtle theories of cosmology, which may not have an immediate practical application, do have

aesthetic value and alter our perspectives of the universe and hence our behavior in that universe.

The subjective universe is as real to the magician, to the politician, or to the advertising man as the physical universe is to the physicist or the carpenter. It is real in that it is an important, often deciding variable in the decisions these people must make.

The subjective universe is important to me because I see how human behavior is determined by the elements of the subjective universe. Yet as I map out the regions of the subjective universe, as I categorize the elements, I learn that the entities that dwell there do not take kindly to analysis. Likewise the dissected frog can no longer be considered a frog. I wish to explore the dark corridors of the psyche, to see what is there and how it affects my life. But I must leave it intact, neither leaving footprints nor running off the inhabitants. And I do this by suspension of skepticism.

Mind control is absolutely essential to magical work. If I am to commune with the Prince of Darkness, or if I am to work my will into a mighty vortex to shape and change the world around me, what time have I to think about skepticism or anything else?

This ability to focus and concentrate is crucial to magic, as it is crucial to other worldly pursuits such as working professionally or participating in sports. The magician must be enflamed with passion, with energized enthusiasm, and simultaneously focus attention on the chosen image. Without focused attention the exercise is simply that of romantic belligerence; without the released passion, the exercise is simply one of concentration.

A useful trick is to separate different aspects of the personality, give them names, measure their properties. I can distinguish numerous ones within myself: some logical, some illogical, some liberal, some conservative, some friendly, some decidedly evil. It is not my ambition to balance these with each other. Instead I choose to exalt each one, ritually if need be, sexually if need be, academically if need be.

When I am a scientist, I am "Dr. Ogle, Scientist". When I am a sorcerer, I am "Adept K. Michael, Apophis PyrrArchnæ". When I am a mad scientist, I am "Dr. Baron von Kevinsky the Mad". The goal is to be only one at a time - but to be that one 100%. To the extent that this is achieved, Dr. Ogle will not bother Apophis PyrrArchnæ in a magical working, nor will Apophis PyrrArchnæ disturb Dr. Ogle in a professional working. The ability to focus attention in other environments is thus assured. Ultimately each separate "self", each facet of that crystal which is my true self will exalt the other so that the whole is much, much more than the sum of the parts.

Just as humanity solved the puzzle of why animals must eat to live, I suspect that someday we can scientifically solve the riddle of why an animal would petition a disembodied spirit - and why the spirits sometimes answer.

I maintain that all theories to date are speculations; most are idle speculation. The first chapter of *Black Magic* proposes a speculative theory, but it is not an idle speculation. If it had been, I would simply have ignored it.

The first chapter of *Black Magic* is a thinking chapter; my response was a thinking response. My contention is that scientific thinking [and its philosophical counterpart, logical positivism] is the most accurate way to think. This is in agreement with Chapter 4 of *Black Magic*, which states that logical positivism is a "necessary foundation upon which to build".

But thinking does not substitute or preempt emotion, sensuality, or intuition. While Dr. Ogle works hard at scientifically exploring the material universe, Adept K. Michael, Apophis PyrrArchnæ, is busy exploring a mistier, less substantial universe:

When I evoke the Prince of Darkness and commune with him, it is an experience which is beyond the intellectual, thinking mind. In fact when I analyze the substance of ritual magic, I see it standing in direct contradiction to rationality.

But as I stand before the altar in my chamber, tracing pentagrams in the air and calling the names of the Hierarchy of Night, I leave the mundane world behind rationality is conquered ["sublimated" might be a better term] by deeper, more subtle, and yet more luminescent aspects of self. The mundane self crashes into the reefs and is demolished, vanishing into the dark depths of the ocean. Only those fragments which are intrinsically luminescent, like the light-generating animals deep at the bottom of the sea - **Only they will survive the Darkness.**²

Special thanks to Adept Robert Robinson, who read an early draft of this work and asked difficult questions. I hope I have answered them.

Notes

1. In a nutshell the problems I pointed out all revolve around the differences of perspective between myself and the author of *Black Magic*. Having a primary background in physical science, the word "truth" has different connotations to me than it might have for people with different background. [This problem is partly resolved by skipping ahead to Chapter 5.] The purpose of my

letter was to stay within the conceptual framework of Chapter 1, hence Chapter 5 was “inadmissible evidence”. Likewise the constancy of nature is not obvious to me, though it is to many people. The important mystery is that I exist. I am aware, I am conscious. If not all the time, “I am” some of the time. I cannot explain this physically, or - to use another phrase that my background leaves me less comfortable with - naturally.

2. Letter, K. Michael Ogle I° to Lilith Sinclair IV°, 2/23/XX.

[4] Unmentionable?

- by Roger L. Whitaker III°

Xem exists. As an essential element of the process of Coming Into Being, it remains as a final direction of the thought-processes of the evolutionary initiatory consciousness. *Xem* exists as a result of higher initiation, and thus *Xem* and the Temple of Set have been in a constant state of crystallization.

Xem must exist as a manifestation of each Initiate's absolute free will and creative genius. This is known to us because history has shown that any attempt to control the direction of *Xem*, or the mirror of *Xem* (the Temple of Set) can only result in an annihilation of the fundamental technique we the Initiates of the Temple utilize in the systemization of our thoughts. The technique I refer to is the development of a central fact based upon rational approach to the Powers of Darkness and their sovereign.

The strictly-controlled initiatory climate introduced by former High Priest of the Temple of Set, Ronald Barrett, has shown us that any attempt to harness the *Xeper* process and its accompanying crystallization into matter - its *Xem* - can result only in destroying that very crystallization which is the desired result of our initiation.

The important point to be made is that the forced-march atmosphere of the Barrett era within the Temple was unnecessary in that the very manifestation of wisdom which High Priest Barrett sought to force out of the Initiate was occurring already as a result of the *Xeper* process of Coming Into Being.

Xem was certainly not a new concept, and in fact never seemed like a “word” in the strictly-æonic sense. However its importance appears just as great in that its manifestation signifies that the æonic progression has gone its route and has ended with the recognition of the only legitimate Temple dedicated to the true Prince of Darkness in the Common Era.

A short digression now appears necessary. Consider this: The connection between society and initiation has always existed, and each has been integral with the other in the creation of certain components within their individual constructions.

Historically distortions have been inherent. This was inherent in the framework of past initiates and initiatory societies because it was the only way of protecting the Black Flame from expiring as it existed amidst time and social structures that were not conducive to the acknowledgment of a legitimate Temple dedicated to the Prince of Darkness.

Now we are in the Æon of Set. It is a new era, one in which the true Prince of Darkness has been recognized in his original Form. The time of cruel, murderous reprisals for our beliefs is over. Let there be no doubt that there still exists a climate of danger, and a portion of that element will always exist. But the fact of the matter is that our type of initiation - our type of Satanism - is the only legitimate source of the Dark Priesthood in existence.

Our authentic legitimacy, while attracting the quality Initiates we have seen these past few years, simultaneously makes us marks for reprisal. It appears to be the price we must pay for our authenticity.

It has been the Great Work of past æons to change society - to alter the existing social climate in order for this particular æon to come into existence. The æonic progression has ended, and *Xem* is what lies beyond the established purpose of the æons. True free and creative genius can now be established, and a personal and meaningful crystallization or result of that will is possible. No more æons are necessary for the establishment of an environment which will allow the utilization of free will and the existence of an acknowledged Temple dedicated to the Prince of Darkness to exist.

It is now time for all of us to assume the inherent responsibility of being true creators in order to establish our many varied and diverse universes.

Xem is the fulfillment of a promise made to an ancient Priesthood as it crumbled before overpowering political & religious forces. *Xem* is the fulfillment of that promise, which has brought the recognition that the æonic progression has ended with the Coming Into Being of the Temple of Set. With that finally accomplished, all of us may go about our business to recreate the land of our ancient forerunners.