

The Temple of Set, Is it Satanic?

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I can't answer this in 25 words or less, so bear with me! If you consider Satanism to be anti-Christian Devil worship, the answer is no. The Temple of Set practices a completely non-Christianized, positive "high Satanism". To understand what we mean by this, a bit of history of the Temple is needed:

While the TOS as an organization was formally incorporated and recognized by both state and federal governments in 1975 CE, its magical and philosophical roots are prehistoric, originating in mankind's first apprehension that there is "something different" about the human race a sense of SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS - that places humanity apart from all other known forms of life.

Ancient religions - of which those of Egypt are generally acknowledged the eldest - either exalted or feared this self-consciousness. Those which exalted it took the position that the human psyche is capable of opposition to and domination of the forces of nature.

The psyche-worshipping, reasoning religions - or schools of initiatory philosophy - attained levels of abstract knowledge that made them mysterious to the masses. In a few societies, such as Egypt and Greece, such groups were respected and admired. More often, however, their exclusive elitism and "supernatural" activities made them objects of resentment and persecution.

While all philosophical schools embraced the psychecentric consciousness to some degree, there were a very few which made it avowedly and explicitly the focus of their attention. The divine personifications ("gods") of such schools have come down to us as symbols of what most Western religions, worshippers of non-consciousness, consider the supreme "evil": the Prince of Darkness in his many forms. Of these the most ancient is Set, whose Priesthood can be traced to predynastic times.

Originally a circumpolar/stellar deity portrayed as a cyclical counter- part to the Solar Horus, Set was later recast as an evil principle by the cults of Osiris and Isis. When the Hebrews emigrated from Egypt during the XIX Dynasty, they took with them a caricature of Set: "Satan" (from the hieroglyphic _Set-Hen_, one of the god's formal titles). Originally a sort of "prosecuting angel for YHVH", the Hebrew Satan was changed by Christianity into a personification of everything God was not - and since God was "good", Satan was necessarily "bad". Alluring or mysterious deities from religions competing with early Christianity - such as the Hellenic/Roman Mysteries and Persian Mithraic faith - were also "bad". Non-Christian gods generally were redefined as Christian "demons" and given a place in the Christian Hell (another name stolen and perverted from Norse mythology). Christian propaganda notwithstanding, the present day "Satan" is wholly their invention.

Which brings us to the present time: The Satanic religion proposes to raise the individual to personal godhood, free from enslavement to any other "God" (or gods). However this is a question not just of power, but also of ethics, morality, and psychological maturity. The parameters of philosophy and metaphysics extend far beyond the conceptual and symbolic limits of the Judaic/Christian tradition. The

Temple of Set explores the "human equation" and the metaphysical and psychological roots of the great Satanic/psyche-centered philosophies of history. The appeal of occultism is much the same as that of conventional religion: Logical positivism and scientific materialism, though they have made great strides towards explaining the "how" of existence, have failed entirely to explain the why.

Conventional religions, with their colorful mythologies analyzed in terms of the underlying philosophical principles, represent simply the primitive longing of man to feel "at one" with the Universal harmony he perceives about him. The Black Magician rejects both the desirability of union with the Universe and any self-deceptive actions designed to create such an illusion. He/she has considered the existence of the individual psyche - the "core you" of your conscious intelligence - and has taken satisfaction from its existence as something unlike anything else. The Black Magician desires this psyche to live, to experience, to continue.

He/she does not wish to die - or to lose consciousness and identity in a larger, Universal consciousness (assuming that such exists). He/she wants to BE. This decision in favor of individual existence is the first premise of the Temple of Set.

The second premise of the Temple is that the psychecentric consciousness can evolve towards its own divinity through deliberate exercise of the intelligence and Will, a process of BECOMING or COMING INTO BEING (XEPER), whose roots may be found in the dialectic method expounded by Plato and the conscious exaltation of the Will proposed by Nietzsche.

The "worship" of Set is thus the "worship" of individualism. In the Church of Satan this was taken to mean indulgence in all (legal) desires of the body and ego. Since many such desires are impulsive and destructive, the COS found itself in an awkward position, which accelerated its eventual crisis and demise in 1975. The Temple of Set determined to preserve the principle of individualism, but to add to it the evolutionary "higher self" aspirations of Aleister Crowley's pre-OTO philosophy of Thelema. Glorification of the ego is not enough; it is the COMPLETE psyche, the entire Self or soul, which must be recognized, appreciated, and actualized. Dogma, - to include fixed ideology in any form - is repugnant to Setians. We strive rather towards an atmosphere of "best possible premises", which are always subject to constructive, intelligent examination and criticism. Foolish, pretentious, or destructive egotism under the guise of exploration is neither respected nor endured.

Regretfully there still exist some individuals whose idea of "Satanism" is largely a simple-minded synthesis of Christian propaganda and Hollywood horror movies. The Temple of Set enjoys the colorful legacy of the Black Arts, and we use many forms of historical Satanic imagery for our artistic stimulation and pleasure. But we have not found that any interest or activity which an enlightened, mature intellect would regard as undignified, sadistic, criminal, or depraved is desirable, much less essential to our work.

The Temple of Set is an evolutionary product of human experience. Such experience includes the magical and philosophical work of many occult individuals which have preceded us. In examining the secret and suppressed corners of history for valuable and useful material, the Temple insists upon ethical presentation and use of such discoveries. All Setians are expected to display a high measure of maturity

and common sense in this area. We reject absolutely wanton cruelty and harm to others, and are particularly adamant about this with regard to animals.

The Temple of Set evaluates conventional religions as erroneous in principle, and feels no need to concern itself with their activities unless they intrude upon our affair. Any further questions or comments are welcome.