

Letter from a Luciferean

by Rex Monday

Since my last epistle to Chaos International, I have received some correspondence from some readers who have sought further elucidation on the nature of my Satanic philosophy. One question in particular, I found somewhat amusing was that of "Do you follow a *genuine* [my italics] Satanic Tradition?" This is a good starting point for discussion. What is a 'genuine' Satanic tradition? It seems to me, from my observation of the contemporary occult milieu, that a good many people are concerned with distinguishing 'true' traditions from 'false' ones. This search for authentication underlies, to my mind, a reluctance to nail one's colours to any mast for fear of making (or being seen to make) an error of judgement. Related to this, is the forlorn hope that one can seize the 'magical' high ground by finding a tradition that is somehow 'better' - or perhaps - 'darker' than all the others. Although to some extent I can sympathize with the confusion of the modern seeker, faced with the bewildering profusion of traditions, systems and currents on offer, I can only say that, when I was first introduced to the existence of a Satanic group in 1954, I was not in possession of any such yardstick with which to decide whether or not it was 'genuine'. What mattered to me at the time was that I had found some like-minded people who not only shared but encouraged me in developing a perspective which, whilst frightening at times, was exciting and invigorating. Indeed, I did not know, at the outset, that I had become involved with a Satanic group.

This admission may ring strange to the modern ear. My personal odyssey began whilst sitting in a pew in St. Matthew's Church, Colchester, half-listening to the vicar's sermon. An early ban-the-bomb advocate, he was preaching the dire consequences of the arrival of nuclear weapons on the earth. I can no longer recall exactly what he said, but I was suddenly struck with a revelation that the atom bomb was the ultimate symbol of Lucifer - the light-bringer; that this destroying light had ripped away the old world - had removed all absolutes and 'givens'. Everything which I had been brought up to take for granted was shaken - the firm foundations of my world crumbled in that instant, and I was 'lost', as it were.

Some months later, I fell into a conversation with a chap I met in the central library. I expounded my somewhat idealistic conviction that science would usher in an age of rationality, and that the age of Christianity's grip upon the world was passing away. He asked me if I had heard of the 'evil' Aleister Crowley, who had declared that "there is no god but man." I had heard of Crowley - indeed my father had once burnt a copy of the 'News of the World' which had somehow 'found' its way into the house which made much of his death and the devil-worshippers who attended his funeral in Hastings. My new friend was instrumental in feeding my passion for knowledge - he introduced me to the writings of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and lent me a much-thumbed copy of the Marquis De Sade's "Justine." After some weeks of our discussions in the library, he asked me if I would like to meet some other people who were interested in these matters. He told me that he was a member of a small group who regularly met to discuss the 'importance' of philosophies which were considered by most people to be heretical. Of course, I was greatly interested, and all too eager to meet some kindred spirits.

To cut a long story short, I was introduced to this group and spent many an enthralling evening in their company. I suppose, to modern eyes, I must come across as a rather naive young man, and so I was. I do remember that on one occasion I blushed all the way down to my toes when Bernard (in who's house we met) helpfully translated some of the Latin passages in Kraft-Ebbing, especially as Michelle, a statuesque red-haired woman, (one of the two women present) stared challengingly into my eyes as the acts to which the text had alluded became clear.

These pleasant, though at times, I must admit, somewhat shocking discussions carried on for about a year. Then, one October night in 1954 - Walpurgisnacht to be precise - it all changed. When I arrived at Bernard's house, I found that our regular group of four had been added to by the presence of a man who introduced himself as Donald, a rather austere-looking Scot in his early thirties. After some small talk, Bernard rose to his feet and said something along the lines of, "Well, we've spent enough time talking. Now is the time for action." Without further ado, he and Michelle left the room. After a short interval, Michelle returned. She was wearing a scarlet cloak, and carried a lighted taper. She said "Prepare yourselves for the rite of lesser dedication" - and I realized, with a thrill, that under the cloak, she was nude. She ordered us to remove our clothes. Startled, I looked at the others present. They seemed equally unprepared for this sudden development. Once we had nervously complied, Michelle told us that we must wait, and sit apart from each other. She then left us again. I remember well the confusion and apprehension which settled upon me at that moment. We had spent months frankly discussing sexuality and the necessity of frank and open admission of our desires. After what must have been only a few minutes (it seemed much longer at the time!), Michelle returned. She told us that in a few moments we would be called to make our dedications to the "Dark-Light Brother." That we must enter the 'lodge' and make some physical demonstration of our willingness to confront our fears and repressed desires. For this purpose, we could request the assistance of one of our fellows, but that each could refuse a proposition, if we felt it to be 'beyond' our capabilities or current taste. Each act would, she said, provide a spectacle for the others and demonstrate the mingling of sympathies required for the raising of magical potentia.

Doubtless this all sounds rather naïve to the modern occultist, but one must remember that this was long before the advent of the so-called 'permissive society' or, for that matter, the popular occult movement.

It was in this way that I was 'initiated' into the "Brotherhood of Lucifer." It transpired that both Bernard and Michelle [not their real names, of course] had themselves been initiated, some years ago, into a group bearing this title, and had, as was custom, formed their own chapter; it being felt that oral transmission and mutation - in the 'light' of personal revelation were of more value than adhering to the dictates of the parent chapter. The core of the 'Rite of Lesser Dedication' is that by an act of personal transgression done before and with other members, the celebrant makes a dedication to his or her personal rebellion against previous conformity and, experiences fully the the power inherent in this transgression. I later discovered that the Lesser Dedication is the first rite by which a new chapter of the Brotherhood formally comes into existence. The emphasis on acts of a sexual nature reflects the now well-understood magical idea that sexuality is intertwined with magical power. However, it is one thing to merely state this

as a fact, and quite another thing to experience this power for the first time. Nowadays, all manner of sexual diversity is commonplace, and books on 'sexual magic' are easy to come by. The reader should bear in mind that it was a very different kettle of fish in the mid-fifties.

However, I would not like to give the impression that the focus of the Brotherhood was merely a venue for sexual orgia. The Brotherhood's Satanic ethos focused on the necessity of untangling oneself from the bindings of Christian culture. Since open and free sexual behaviour which is pleasurable, rather than merely procreative, has been for centuries castigated and demonized, our Magister considered it the most effective method of awakening and invigorating the personal magical power, the will to overcome one's limitations. I came to understand this power as the "Shining Darkness" - the luciferean life-spark. Moreover, the sharing of passions within the group serves to kindle the group's alchemica - the sense of, and experience of power which is built up and can be tapped, during ritual work. Needless to say, all ritual work (be it group or individual) was performed naked - all the better to draw on the power of the personal - or interpersonal - erotic impulse.

Since I have mentioned Christianity in passing, I will now deal with the question of the relationship between Christianity and Satanism. I make no bones of the fact that I was a Christian before I became a Satanist, as were, to varying degrees I suppose, my colleagues. I have seen, time and time again, the charge by modern neo-pagans that Satanists are merely inverted Christians. To some extent, this charge is well-founded. The relationship between Christianity and Satanism is very much like the relationship between the various schools of Tantrism and orthodox Vedanta. After all, the tantric's use of meat, wine, and sexual intercourse are only shocking within the context of orthodox belief. In the west, we think nothing of wining and dining as a prelude to sexual intercourse - providing of course that the lady pays! In the same way, Satanism rejects the Christian values of chastity, meekness, denial of pleasure and the flesh, and bending the knee to a God who is all-pervasive. What the neo-pagans miss of course, is that they themselves are as influenced by Christian values as anyone else. It is too easy by far to simply embrace something which seems to be the antithesis of normality, without examining how one is bound by those values which, on the surface, one is seemingly rejecting. Christian values have infected modern Satanic groups in much the same way. This can be seen in the way that modern exponents of Satanism have concerned themselves with 'becoming strong, and crushing the weak'. This desire to project one's own values onto other people masks a deep-seated insecurity, and is little more than the Christian desire to 'save souls' by another name. The Satanist does not merely 'invert' the Christian impulse to interminably bother other people, but overcomes it, so that he is not at all concerned with other people apart from his chosen colleagues. For myself, it is much more 'satanic' to have mastered the art of minding my own business, rather than setting myself up to pronounce the fate of other, 'lesser' mortals.

Again, one can detect the undercurrents of Christian impulse in the desire to set Satan or Lucifer up as 'gods'. Here, I will draw the reader's attention to the name of the chapter - the "Brotherhood" of Lucifer. This reflected the view that one relates with Lucifer/Satan as 'elder' brethren. Thus the aim of Satanic ritual (in a broad sense) is to identify the power of Satan as one's own power to overcome. Satan is then, an ideal type with which the Satanist identifies in order to unbridle his passions, hone his will, and test his own resolve. Lucifer, the light-bringer, is an extension of this power, the power of the intellect or genius through which one refines the

expression of one's will. The separation of Satan-Lucifer into distinct forms is merely a heuristic device which is used as one moves through different states of progression and for focusing particular ritual works. Thus, acts of dedication to the 'Dark Brother', are ultimately acts of self-dedication. The focus of ritual work as taught by the Brotherhood was to progressively identify with the ideal types of Satan, Lucifer, and Lilith until what starts off initially as external 'powers' becomes intrinsically identified as springing from within. Each 'type' expresses particular characteristics through which the celebrant is able to tap the latent power within himself. Thus, on an initial level (The stage of Suppliant) Satan embodies the power of Discipline, Lucifer, that of [personal] Poise, and Lilith, that of Abandonment. As the celebrant's own development continues, his relationship with these powers or expressions also changes.

One final point I will deal with is the relationship between man and demons. Ancient Hebraic lore states that mankind is a race of demons, and indeed that when Adam fell, he spent 130 years engendering demons with Lilith. In the Brotherhood, I was taught to view the demonic legions as kith and kin, and the Rite of the Averse Pentagram was used both to identify with the luciferean life-spark, and to attract demonic brethren who were willing to serve as effectors of one's will. In contrast to the majority of so-called 'banishing rituals' where the emphasis is placed on keeping 'things' out, the purpose of this rite was to, by raising magico-erotic 'energy' (I use the term metaphorically), attract the attention of our demonic kindred. The rite was always performed within a circle of flaming candles. This not only generated heat (heightening the physical response), but provided a 'flicker' effect much conducive to the development of clairvoyant vision. The rite attracted legions of demonic spirits to gather at the edge of the circle, and, through a process of identification with the particular passions of the celebrants, specific demons made themselves known (by name and form), all too eager to effect the formalized magical intentions of the celebrants (i.e. in contemporary parlance, the statement of intent). As has been pointed out on a number of occasions by a variety of writers, the spirits known as 'demons' become individuated by identification with human beings. Thus one acquires one's own demon 'familiar', each of whom has a particular provenance. Any process by which the passions are intensified is central to this 'pact' between human and spirit. To this end, certain sexual acts can be specified as 'sacred' - in the sense that they are only performed within particular ritual circumstances, thus retaining their emotional associations with taboo, 'forbidden pleasures' and heightened sensuality. Ritual sodomy, scatology and flagellation have their uses, but these are greatly lessened if they become 'normative' to the practitioner. In the Brotherhood, the aim of sexual magia was to enable celebrants to move between both apollonian and dionysian modes of expression at will. The popular chaos magic obsession with 'deconditioning' - which I understand as an attempt to surpass all personal boundaries tends to ignore the point that some 'boundaries' if deliberately and carefully maintained, can be extremely useful for magical work. It is such fine distinctions which separate the magician from the mere dissolute.