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[1] *Xem* and *Per-t*: From Magic to Mysticism - by Michael A. Aquino VI°

The critical events prior to, during, and following the Set-IV Conclave are now so well known throughout the Temple of Set that it is unnecessary to recount them here. It is important, however, that the magical consequences of those events be evaluated. The disgrace of Ronald Barrett and Lynn Norton is significant in that these two individuals were recognized as Magi V° by the Temple, hence were acknowledged to have made significant breakthroughs in the magical and philosophical principles of the Left-Hand Path.

Something, however, went very badly wrong. What and why? And what are the resultant implications for the Temple?

For the first two years of Barrett's High Priesthood (mid-XIV to mid-XVI), his Utterance of the Word *Xem* was in keeping with the traditional climate of magical and philosophical freedom that had characterized the Temple of Set since *Xeper*: that is, the Word was expected to stand on its own merits, and no one was forced to concentrate on it. Barrett was a strict High Priest, but only insofar as Temple protocol and administration were concerned.

This happy state of affairs began to deteriorate, as far as I can determine, at the Set-III Conclave a year ago. On that occasion Lynn Norton was Recognized to the V°, and Barrett's attitude towards *Xem* underwent a change. Now it was important that those who had not paid what he felt to be sufficient attention to *Xem* do so forthwith. This was to be done by (1) the introduction of a written II° test and (2) the redefinition of the Temple's degree system to make the degrees correspond simply to the progression of Magus-Words from Crowley forward. [Barrett announced these two policies in *Scroll #VI-6*.]

At the time there seemed no particular reason for concern. Barrett's record was a good one, and he was the first to assure Setians that the test was not to be used punitively, nor would it be centrally graded, nor would there be a specific passing score. It would be used as an aid to evaluation only.

During the ensuing year, Barrett altered all three positions. He and he alone decided passing grades and correct answers to the often-ambiguous questions on the test. II°s not passing were demoted

to I°. All III°s were forced to take the test with a short time limit when few did so on their own. III°s not passing the test, said Barrett, should be inactivated until they did. By April XVII all II°s in the Temple had been demoted to I° [if they had not resigned by then], and action against the III°s was halted only by Magistra Sinclair, who as Chairman of the Council of Nine informed Barrett that she would not tolerate punitive actions against Councillors merely because of their performance on the test.

Absorbed with the massive project of *The Church of Satan* history, I was not immediately alarmed by the test or by the comments concerning the degree system. I trusted Barrett's integrity, and I assumed that the test problems were "growing pains" that would be solved constructively. As for the degree-system, I did not perceive Barrett's intent as being a change to its underlying structure - a structure so strong and time-tested that it has endured formally for a century [since the founding of the Golden Dawn].

In a letter to the III°+ on 7/15/XVI, Barrett commented on the Recognition of Norton at Set-III:

First and foremost is the Coming Into Being of a new Magus V°. I'm not going to say much about it at this time until the Recognition has become official, except that I'm delighted and magically elated beyond Words.

I will say this however: *Xem* is no longer only conceptual, for the Coming Into Being of Magus Norton (Ptah) has validated one of the Principles of *Xem*, for the idea has become in first Manifestation. *Xem's* first truth is, and through that *Xem is!*

Now the Gates which are open have been passed through, and it is the time of the new Magi, of whom Ptah and I are but the first. Now comes the Great Work. What is more and very important is that the Curse of the Magus is broken; it is no more.

More on all of this will be explained later, but in the meantime Magus Norton needs time to get a grip on what is happening and on a *Per-t*; I need time to get the reality of all this into my brain; and he and I need time to put our Words together for the first phase in the construction of the new realm. Sound exciting? You might say that.

I was concerned about this odd notion of the Curse of the Magus being ended, and further about what I had heard - but not read as policy - that "now everyone could attain a personal V°". I decided that I had best remind both Barrett and Norton of the seriousness of the concept of Magus. To Norton [with a copy to Barrett] I wrote on 7/25/XVI:

From many of the Masters I have heard accounts of your Utterance of the Word of a Magus. While I was not fortunate enough to be present at the Set-III Conclave, I respect their Understanding and your own sense of Coming Into Being as expressed both at the Conclave and in your 7/13/XVI letter.

As was also the case at the time of my own and Anubis' V° initiations, I do not think that congratulations would be magically appropriate. While the path from I° to IV° is one of increasing exaltation and satisfaction, the V° is, like Satan's fabled fall from Heaven, a plunge into an entirely new environment. The Magister Templi can be an explorer, a teacher, a philosopher. All these pleasant pursuits are shattered for the Magus, as he must be a creator. That is his Task, and therein also lies his Curse:

And this is the horror that was shown by the lake that was nigh unto the City of the Seven Hills, and this is the Mystery of the great prophets that have come unto mankind, Moses, and Buddha, and Lao Tan, and Krishna, and Jesus, and Osiris, and Mohammed; for all these attained unto the grade of Magus, and therefore were they bound with the curse of Thoth. But, being guardians of the truth, they have taught nothing but falsehood, except unto such as understood; for the truth may not pass the Gate of the Abyss. - 666, 6th Æthyr, *The Vision and The Voice*

I know that there is a good deal of excitement and interest in the Temple at the prospect of witnessing the Coming Into Being of a new Magus. It is a rare and sublime occasion, and it is all the more stimulating because of its mystery. A Magus presents the magical universe with a new unknown factor which necessarily alters many, if not all preconceptions about the initiatory process. Witness the environmental changes from Crowley to LaVey to myself to Anubis.

You must recognize, however, that this initial excitement and interest on the part of onlookers is in ignorance of what your Word will actually imply for them. If this were not the case - if you fitted neatly into the existing magical universe, "making it perfect" - then you would not be a true Magus but rather a Magister Templi who had succeeded, perhaps, in making a major breakthrough in Understanding of the existing environment. Then you would not be Uttering *Per-t* but rather fulfilling *Xem*.

I have read carefully Anubis' #OS-93 comments on the ending of the Curse of the Magus, and a few evenings ago he and I were able to discuss this at some length. I have reflected on what he said and the reasoning behind it, and yet I still feel I should counsel caution and care on this point.

If Anubis' magical universe does not encompass what is meant by *Per-t* - and again that is necessarily the case if *Per-t* is a true V° Word - then Anubis' apprehension of *Per-t* is that of a Magister Templi [just as my apprehension and subsequent Understanding of *Xem* has been that of a Magister Templi].

At this moment, if you are in truth a Magus, **no one Understands you but you**. That is why a Magus is characterized as Uttering a "falsehood", and that is why the Curse: He encounters skepticism and then disbelief, and then even annoyance and rejection as he insists upon proclaiming the Word. Yet if he is a Magus, then he cannot help himself; he **must** continue to proclaim the Word, and that is the Task of the Magus.

Remember that it took our Initiates a long, slow, and often difficult process to make the magical switch from Indulgence to *Xeper*. Some fell by the wayside. Then it took a similar process to make the switch from *Xeper* to *Xem*. The word of Nuit - "inertia" - works for the Magister Templi (who streamlines and fulfills the existing magical universe) and against the Magus (who expands it and thus alters all preexisting formulæ concerning it).

It is most important that you are aware of this inertia distinction. Otherwise you might tend to interpret resistance and ignorance concerning your statements as petty, interpersonal antagonism.

That was a mistake made by Robert Ethel, who grasped after the V° and found that he was totally unable to stand the shock of the cold water after the comforting magical sauna of the IV°. He tried to save himself by "enforcing" belief in and understanding of the Word he endeavored to Utter; he tried to wrench the V° environment into a IV° semblance.

The only result was that he made it clear that he was not a true Magus, for a Magus is compelled to see the distance and distinction between his Word and the preexisting universe. He stresses it; he does not try to hide it or disguise it. And then he carries on despite the Curse, for a true Magus is also identified by his willingness to fulfill his Task. As it is written in *Liber B vel Magi*:

And woe, woe, woe, yea woe, and again woe, woe, woe unto seven times be His that preacheth not His law to men! And woe also be unto Him that refuseth the curse of the grade of a Magus, and the burden of the Attainment thereof.

Only you are in a position to know if you are in truth a Magus V°. All others, Anubis and myself included, can only offer you a "best possible" environment to undertake your Task - which is what the V° Recognition is in actuality.

I°-IV° Recognitions are decisions of certainty and validation. The V°, of course, is outside both of these concepts. So what the Temple actually does by a V° Recognition is to proclaim to the entire membership: "This is an Initiate who believes he is a Magus. The High Priest and the Nine see no apparent reason to disallow that claim and, from his statements to date to them, they are of the opinion that the claim has a reasonable probability of being true. Therefore they formally agree to Recognize him as a Magus, that his Task may be made easier and his Curse lighter for all Initiates will attempt to interpret him in a unique way once they are alerted to the purple medallion."

All these things I say to you now, as I said them less clearly years ago to Anubis, and as I learned them even more crudely myself years earlier. If you know that you are in truth a Magus, then consider them well, for this is the state of being that you now assume - a state of being attained by only eleven other beings. This is a distinction beyond perfection, for attainment of perfection is a characteristic of the Magister Templi. It is a distinction beyond all honor, beyond reward, beyond compensation. Others may honor you or they may not, but you will be a Magus just the same.

If on the other hand you know that you are **not** a Magus that the phenomena of Set-III and thereafter are IV° and not V°, then I warn you most emphatically not to accept the purple medallion, for to do so would destroy you.

The decision is yours, and as you decide, and as the Temple of Set Recognizes that decision, so I send you my encouragement, endorsement, and confidence.

Norton answered that he felt himself legitimately a Magus by these criteria. Hence I decided I had no reason to be concerned for the definition of the V°.

Norton's few communiques to the IV°+ concerning *Per-t* were vague concerning its definition, but he said that he was preparing a major presentation and explanation for Set-IV. Probably

the most coherent statement concerning *Per-t* was written by Magister James Lewis in a 7/28/XVI letter to III°s C. Moffatt, Cole, and Folkler:

... Our closest meaning will be "manifestation", because it is higher man who will be seen in Manifestation through man!

Per-t is a refinement of Indulging the Will to Come Into Being as one of the eternally evolving gods. *Per-t* is an occult (hidden) thing, for it must be an individual work first and foremost before it's done in concert.

The question which comes immediately to mind is: "What will Manifest?" And here it can get a bit ominous, for which of us is 100% free of some flaw, insecurity, or weakness? I'll be the first to admit that I have a few here and there, but I can also state with the voice of experience that initiation in *Maat* purifies. ["Is initiation so horrible?" Yes and no.]

At this point I would refer you to Key #1, 7th paragraph: I surmise it is possible to manifest an anomaly. Read that last again, and then go back to Key #1. Is it a sure thing that a mutant would horribly bloom? Not if initiation is used along with an awareness of the self and *Maat*. And not if one is constantly, actively reaching for the higher goals. But it seems it can happen though even a minor flaw is permitted to take root.

If this leaves you with a feeling of being at unknown and unmarked crossroads, let me suggest this: Be neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic. Utilize balance. Magister Seago once said: "For years I have been harping on the necessity of keeping one's balance." I personally feel there cannot be too much emphasis placed on the "balance factor". It is a basic necessity to living and one of the safeguards against mutation.

Upon Barrett's surprise resignation from the Temple in May XVII and my consequent reappointment as High Priest, I decided that the II° test and the "Order Without Law" policies as enforced, mandatory systems in the Temple should go immediately. "I do not consider that the **intent** of these systems was bad, or even that the systems as implemented were total failures," I said in my first official letter to the III°+ on 6/2. They could be retained as **voluntary** devices, in whole or part, for intelligent initiatory usage. I continued:

The immediate impact of my policy changes in these areas is to return the Temple to a "maximum freedom of action and expression" mode as it was in its earliest years.

In general, anything not explicitly prohibited by the By-Laws is O.K. This presupposes that each and every member of the Priesthood will use his or her powers with intelligence, maturity, kindness, discretion, consideration, openness, courtesy, common sense, and an ever-present regard for the sacred nature of the office he or she holds. As High Priest I intend to seek the greatest possible latitude for you to continue your own initiation and encourage that of others within the Temple's enhancing systems.

Only then were I and the entire Temple of Set to begin to see what an iron claw of dogma Barrett and Norton had been designing for the Temple during the past year. Norton and his two Order of Ptah III°s Folkler and A. Seago objected immediately and obstinately to the removal of that claw; and Norton, Barrett, and Magister L.D. Seago commenced an operation designed to defame me and to obtain the High Priesthood for Norton so that the claw could reassert its grip.

No one was more astonished or dismayed to see this than myself. At first I could hardly believe it was taking place at all. Then the amount of poison "under the surface" of the situation proved another shock. For the first time in 13 years, I found myself actually having to argue on behalf of my own integrity in the Temple. Some III°s behaved with unprecedented impudence and arrogance - not that Magus Norton and Magister Seago set a better example for them. When the poison was finally cut out after two months of agony for the Temple, everyone was badly shaken.

What was it that made Barrett and Norton create the iron claw and resist its removal by every means in their power, fair and foul? It was, I conclude, their ultimate failure to accept the Task of a Magus, which never ceases, and their decision to redefine *Xem* and to initially define *Per-t* not as **magical** terms, but as **mystical** dogma. In *The Dangers of Mysticism* (Equinox #I-6), Aleister Crowley wrote:

The mystic is solitary and shut up, lacks wholesome combat. We are all schoolboys, and the football field is a perfect prophylactic of swelled head.

When the mystic meets an obstacle, he "makes believe" about it. He says it is "only illusion". He has the morphine-maniac's feeling of *bien-etre*, the delusions of the general paralytic. He loses the power of looking any fact in the face; he feeds himself on his own imagination; he persuades himself of his own attainment.

If contradicted on the subject, he is cross and cattish. If I criticise Mr. X, he screams and tries to injure me behind my back; if I say that Madame Y is not exactly St. Teresa, she writes a book to prove that she is.

Such persons "swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw, Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread", as Milton wrote of a less dangerous set of spiritual guides ...

Corollary to this attitude is the lack of all human virtue. The greatest magician, when he acts in his human capacity, acts as a man should. In particular he has learnt kind-heartedness and sympathy. Unselfishness is very often his long suit. Just this the mystic lacks. Trying to absorb the lower planes into the higher, he neglects the lower, a mistake no magician could make.

The fulcrum of the degree system in the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set has always been the III° - the Priesthood. The non-ordained degrees - the I° & II° - had similarly possessed a dignity of their own. Barrett and Norton attempted to reduce all three of these degrees to mere "apprenticeships", to make the IV° a mere acceptance of the "mystical" *Xem*, and to grant a V° to anyone professing a "mystical" *Per-t*. After complying with my request for his resignation, Norton wrote to Priest Whitaker on 7/25:

I alone see *Xem* on a level higher than that of a Master. Second, the nature of my Task allows me a further vision that even an Ipsissimus lacks. Third, creation is the key to the manifestation of *Xem*, and so far only I am a working example of this *neter*.

Such blind megalomania is the fate of a Magus who refuses the Curse thereof, as admonished by Aleister Crowley in the previously-quoted passage from *Liber B vel Magi*. Mystics Barrett and Norton and those who worship at their feet have effectively cast from themselves the true essence of magical initiation.

The Masters of the Temple must now consider whether the pre-Set-III concept of *Xem* may retain its standing as a V° Word despite the fall of the Magus who Uttered it. As for *Per-t*, it is now apparent that it never was more than a mystical fantasy, clothed in the dignity of a V° Word by Norton and Barrett and accepted as such by a trusting Temple.

As Barrett's Recognition to the VI° proved a mockery due to his prior, secret decision to reject the Temple, so Norton's V° is revealed in the cold light of day as a mistake honestly and sincerely

accepted by the Temple, but a mistake nonetheless.

I can offer no better epilogue to the aftermath of Set-IV than the Book of Satan #II-12 from the *Satanic Bible*:

Whatever alleged "truth" is proven by results to be but an empty fiction, let it be unceremoniously flung into the outer darkness, among the dead gods, dead empires, dead philosophies, and other useless lumber and wreckage!

[2] Priestess Marie Kelly is the New Executive Director

- by Constance L. Moffatt III°

Priestess Marie Kelly of San Francisco was appointed the new Executive Director of the Temple of Set by Magister James Lewis, Chairman of the Council of Nine, effective July 1, XVII. The appointment was unanimously approved by the other Councillors at the Set-IV Conclave.

Priestess Kelly has a long history with the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set, and brings much ability and sensitivity to the executive administration of the Temple. A complete biography of Priestess Kelly will appear in the next issue of the *Scroll*. She succeeds Priestess C.L. Moffatt, who served as E.D. for a year and a half.

[3] From the Office of the Chairman

- by James Lewis IV°, Chairman, Council of Nine

One of the outstanding things one notices about the Temple of Set is its constant state of change. This is as it should be due to the product of our works; I refer to evolution. This, Setian, is what Setians do: They evolve beyond the average person, who never takes more than a passing hand in his own affairs.

From May XIV to June XVII Magistra Lilith Sinclair held the position of Chairman of the Council of Nine, and her dignity and integrity have ensured her a place of honor in the history of those holding the Chairman's Council Seat. She continues to function with the same honor, dignity, and integrity as both Councillor and Treasurer.

Speaking as the present Chairman, and in the Name of the Temple of Set, I wish to publicly extend to Magistra Sinclair our appreciation and thanks for the time and devotion she has unselfishly given to the Temple.

On July 1st, the honor and responsibility of the Chairman's Seat passed to me. It is exactly that: an honor and a responsibility. There is in the responsibility a protective and instinctive regard toward the Temple and the Council. I am not

unmindful of the special freedom being Setian entails. Though the Council normally functions very quietly, this freedom is exactly what will be protected by the officials of the Temple.

The Temple is returning to an open and freely functioning state. As I commented to the Council on assuming the Chair, this is not a time to expect fireworks. It is a year for quiet work and gaining again an appreciation of oneself, the Temple, and the Prince of Darkness. Any fireworks will then be as they should be: incidental to the true work done in the pursuit of evolution.

To each of you I extend my warmest regards.

[4] Temple Treasurer Appointed

Upon the resignation of L.D. Seago from the office of Treasurer, Magister James Lewis, Chairman, Council of Nine, appointed Magistra Lilith Sinclair as the new Treasurer of the Temple.

[5] III° Recognitions: Suzie Vandebussche & Dennis Mann

Dr. Michael A. Aquino, High Priest, announced the Coming Into Being of Suzie M. Vandebussche as Priestess of Set III° (Recognized by Magister Lewis), and Dennis K. Mann as Priest of Set III° (Recognized by Dr. Aquino), at the Set-IV Conclave, July 2nd, and personally conducted their ordination ceremony at the Ritual of the Priesthood that night. Magister James Lewis presided. Priestess Vandebussche resides in Toronto, Ontario, Canada; and Priest Mann in Malibu, California.

In a heartwarming ceremony conducted at the opening of the first general meeting of the Set-IV Conclave, Dr. Michael A. Aquino made a special presentation of the medallion of the Priesthood to his mother, Priestess Betty Ford. Priestess Ford was ordained in the year XIV. She lives in San Francisco, and in the year X created a working modal in clay of a planned sculpture of the head of Set. This impressive creation was unveiled for a brief time. The display was a fitting preliminary to Set-IV. While Setians present admired the work of art, Dr. Aquino explained its origin with justifiable pride.

[6] Overheard at the Set-IV Conclave

[Laboriously transcribed and then edited for syntax, clarity, and brevity by Priest Robert Moffatt from sound tapings of the open meetings.]

Robert H. Moffatt III°:

I object strongly to the policy of not allowing a potential Setian to join just because he has the wrong reason. I'm not talking about reasons that are subversive or dangerous to us. But people with wrong reasons for joining should be just as welcome to go into the I° probationary period; that's what it's for. Let's not be too anxious to keep someone out.

Michael A. Aquino VI°:

The position of the Temple of Set has been that whenever there is a grey area between saying something or not, releasing information or not, I have felt - and I think the Priesthood agree - that it is better to err on the side of speech or publication.

Privacy is a necessary feature of the Temple; secrecy is not.

The terms "laity/lay members", referring to the I°/II° have come into increasing use in the Temple. I don't like these terms; to me they connote "Christian sheep". We are **all** divinities, and I think that we should stress this. The notion of a "laddered" hierarchy is highly inappropriate.

Lilith Sinclair IV°:

Among us there are individual differences, of course, in levels of development, evolution, and state of being. That is why we have the degree system and the conventions of respect that accompany it. But the respect goes both ways; it is not similar to, say, a corporate structure with clerks, secretaries, and executives.

J. Bear Streat II°:

There's really no such thing as an "ultimate truth". There's only a point of reference from which you can ask further questions.

James Lewis IV°:

We are Temples of Set. We work together. We have goals. Often we can't say what the goals are, but we are all on the same Path. We are a group, but each of us is an individual Temple of Set.

Michael A. Aquino VI°:

What we got in 1975 was an opportunity; what we've done with it has been up to us. Set did not imbue the Temple with some sort of "supernatural inevitability"; rather there is something deep within ourselves, in our core consciousness, which has given us the power to make the Temple strong. It also gives us the power to shatter it, to do anything we want to it. Set would never cease to exist in the Temple, because he exists in all Setians. If he departs from you, you will cease to act with initiated insight and wisdom; you will act like a human

being. That's what happens when your lesser self becomes dominant.

Robert H. Moffatt III°:

We've all been informed by Dr. Aquino via letters as to what happened every step of the way with regard to Ronald Barrett's departure. To make a magical romance of it would only compound our problems. I have not seen a romance of any kind; I have seen only the defiling of *Xem*, although there is something of *Xem* still left for me, however. It was a failing of Barrett's human side.

It is time to be more tolerant of one another as we deal with the times ahead. Serenity and magic can indeed complement one another. Love implies **equanimity**; in that word you are touching on the Understanding inherent in Masters of the Temple.

Perhaps some of you expected some dramatic moment during this conclave - in ritual or in a meeting - when some magnificent idea about *Xem* would descend upon us. This will not happen. *Xem* is our ball to work with. We are not going to get any gift here. We've got to keep on struggling with it as we did before.

Robert Menschel III°:

We talk about the paths of *Xeper* without really visualizing it. I have come to visualize this "highway" which we have been following since X, and along it there are "service roads", "pit stops", "gas stations", and "cow paths". It is basically one route, but each of us travels along it in a different way.

Recently, be it two weeks or a year and a half ago, our highway started forking. We now follow more distinct paths of *Xeper*. As these paths diverge, we study different things; we become different beings. The paths will continue to diverge, and converge, as we grow.

Right now we appear to be more divergent than we have been previously, and we are not yet used to handling it. Therefore it is more work to understand one another. This accounts for the tension. As we learn to understand one another and to perceive the differences in our paths, we will again meld into the one Temple that we truly are.

Dennis Mann III°:

You had mentioned yesterday, Dr. Aquino, that as the Orders got under way with their different approaches to magic, that in the last analysis it had to depend upon the Masters of the Temple and their communications with one another, and their reiteration and reinforcement of understanding the principles and Forms that they work with, making sure that they were still speaking the same language to us.

I think Priest Menschel is right; I think we have come to a wider highway. That has its own implications - magical implications in terms of what goes into the Æon. It may be the old Justice Holmes line: A man's mind, once expanded to take any new thought, can never return to its old dimensions. Maybe we all ought to look inward, to that self in the mirror, and say, "Hey, maybe there's been a little stretching going on here." It has been painful for me.

Michael A. Aquino VI°:

I have a great deal of admiration for what you have just said. I have never had the feeling that the Temple of Set was "on a single highway". I have felt that many in the Temple were comfortable with the **illusion** that we are all on the same highway. Initiation is a highly personal, highly individualistic thing. From 1975 onward I have seen a tendency to a certain amount of "comfortable conformity": The Priests or the Masters are doing "this thing in general", so I will follow the "beaten path" because it is more relaxing.

Now we have enough strength and curiosity to go off the beaten path. I agree with you that much of what we mistake for distance and tension in ourselves is simply the first experience of others going off on different paths.

[Concerning the II° tests, as Dr. Aquino returned them to those who took them]: I have no general comment on the grades assigned [by Barrett] or on the marginal comments. There are no other copies of this examination. They are being returned to you as your personal property, to use as you see fit. I have read through all of them. There are many extremely fine essays, which you may wish to consider for submission to the *Scroll* or the *Ruby Tablet*.

[7] Hail NeferSet, One of the Nine!

At the Set-IV Conclave High Priest Michael A. Aquino announced the appointment of Priestess Colleen G. Huddleston to the Council of Nine. The Council subsequently confirmed her nomination.

In appointing Priestess Huddleston, Dr. Aquino cited her experience with the Church of Satan and Temple of Set, which "go back to our early history. She served with distinction as our Executive Director, and has been extremely active, known for her empathy and balance". Magister DeCecco, who re-Recognized her to the Priesthood in early XVII, expressed his admiration for her magical patience and resilience in the face of personal "ordeals by fire".

[8] The Æonic (V°) Words

- by Michael A. Aquino VI° [at Set-IV]

I'd like to make a comment or two on the notion of æonic Words:

With regard to V° Words, it is too soon to tell whether *Thelema*, *Indulgence*, *Xeper*, *Xem*, or *Per-t* is valid. We are making what amounts to an educated guess based upon whatever expertise we care to allocate to ourselves. The validity of any Word will be a function of history - not merely mundane but initiated history.

The force of *Thelema*, for example, is evident in the fact that after Aleister Crowley was dead, there is a procession of organizations that shattered into splinter groups, such as ourselves, which consider it a part of our heritage that the Word that he Uttered in its various implications is something which carries a great deal of force among us. That tends to suggest that it deserves æonic dignity, that it is indeed the Utterance of a Magus.

The same standard must be applied to Anton LaVey's legacy, and to *Xeper*, *Xem*, and *Per-t*. When we Recognize someone as a Magus according to our By-Laws, his word is not automatically a Word; we are not required to automatically "ennoble" it. Rather it must prove itself by its intrinsic quality.

No policy of the Temple, no By-Law, no medallion can take the place of the necessary excellence of the idea. Anton LaVey used to say that "there is nothing in the world so powerful as an idea whose time has come round". That was his way of summarizing this æonic Word concept. And this is what is considered by the Masters when they consider someone as a possible V°. They in effect say:

What you are saying seems to have a nobility, a potential, and a significance far beyond that of ordinary magical philosophy [not that magical philosophy is **that** ordinary!]. This is something apparently new, special, and unusually potent - and possibly extremely significant.

We use the catch-phrase: "to alter the initiatory climate of the magical universe".

A V° Recognition implies, in the opinion of the Masters, that when the person in question speaks concerning his Word, you should pay particular attention, because the concept is of extraordinary value. But the V° does not bestow "papal infallibility" on either the person or the Word. Indeed because of the Curse of the Magus, because of the distance between a Word and the existing

magical climate, the Magus has a tremendous Task: not to impress people with the Word, but indeed to explain and clarify it in the first place. If he does this successfully, appreciation will follow as a matter of course.

For example, *Xem* continues to have influence in the Temple of Set despite the departure of Ronald Barrett, implying that *Xem* is a valid V^o concept. I cannot assess the magical universe right now without considering it, which argues for its authenticity. But mine is only one viewpoint. Each of you must make the same type of evaluation.

[9] Hail Shetat, One of the Nine!

Dr. Michael A. Aquino, High Priest of Set, appointed Priestess Constance L. Moffatt to the Council of Nine at the Set-IV Conclave. The Council confirmed this appointment. Commented Dr. Aquino: "Priestess Moffatt has served with great distinction as a Priestess for years, and most recently as Executive Director. In her capacity as chief administrative officer for the Temple, she brought unsurpassed efficiency to that office." She was extended a unanimous vote of thanks by the Council.

[10] Exeunt

The following are no longer degreed or Recognized of Set, nor affiliated with the Temple of Set: Ronald K. Barrett, Stephen Bushey, Lynn Norton, Corey Cole, Phil Folkler, L. Dale Seago, Amber Shelley Seago.

[11] Councillor DeCecco Reappointed

Dr. Michael A. Aquino, High Priest of Set, reappointed Magister Amn DeCecco to another nine-year term in the Council of Nine at the Set-IV Conclave. The Council confirmed this appointment unanimously.