Diabolical Authority: Anton LaVey, The Satanic Bible and the Satanist Tradition

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ABSTRACT

The status of The Satanic Bible as an authoritative scripture—or, perhaps more accurately, as a kind of quasi-scripture—within the Satanic subculture was initially brought to my attention during my first face-to-face encounter with Satanists in the Spring of 2000. Via the internet, I had found a small Satanist group in Portage, Wisconsin, which was about an hour south of where I resided at the time. This group, the Temple of Lylyth, distinguishes itself from Anton LaVey’s brand of Satanism chiefly by its emphasis on feminine nature of the Dark Power. I arranged to meet with them in Portage on a Friday evening in connection with a research project on which I was working at the time. Over the course of our conversation, the founder and then leader of the group mentioned that on Friday evenings he was usually downtown where a small group of fervent Christians regularly set up what might be called a “preaching station” to spread the Gospel. This young fellow (he was nineteen at the time) would confront them as a practicing Satanist. He always carried a copy of The Satanic Bible with him, not just so he could quote some of accusations LaVey leveled against Christianity, but also so he could correct anything these evangelists might say about Satanism by citing an authoritative source. I’m sure this is something of a caricature, but I was left with the impression of dueling religionists, Christians hurling Bible verses at my informant as he matched blow for blow with quotes from The Satanic Bible. This experience led me to pay attention whenever other Satanists mentioned The Satanic Bible.

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The Satanic Bible and The Satanic Rituals are the only books that have demonstrated, in a way that is authentic and true to relevant traditions, how all of that can be done. There have been many imitators, never attributing their source, and with good reason; because once the shabbiness and shallowness of the imitators have been compared to LaVey’s pioneering work, there can no longer be any market for the ripoff artists. I first encountered Anton Szandor LaVey through The Satanic Bible, at the age of thirteen when I was an avowed atheist. Not being partial to literature promoting faith of any sort, I was pleasantly surprised that this was no rant by someone claiming direct contact with Satan. The Satanic Bible has always held particular appeal for rebellious adolescents. No. LaVey was a charismatic individual who appealed to the authority of reason and attacked the authority of tradition. For example. The Legitimation of Authority Satanists do not consciously regard The Satanic Bible in the same way traditional religionists regard their sacred texts. LaVey’s work advocates a blend of Epicureanism and Ayn Rand’s philosophy. includes everything from direct revelations from 2 I discovered that The Satanic Bible is treated as an authoritative document which effectively functions as scripture within the Satanic community. flavored with a pinch of ritual magic. LaVey. practice or social arrangement by attributing it to the authority of tradition. Couched in iconoclastic rhetoric. LaVey performed Satanic baptisms (including the first Satanic baptism in history for his three-year-old daughter Zeena, dedicating her to Satan and the Left-Hand Path, which garnered worldwide publicity and was originally recorded on The Satanic Mass LP)[26][27][28][29] and Satanic funerals (including one for naval Machinist-Repairman Third-Class Edward Olsen, complete with a chrome-helmeted honor. “Diabolical Authority: Anton LaVey, The Satanic Bible and the Satanist “Tradition”” (PDF). Marburg Journal of Religion. 7 (1): 1–16.