



## **Apostolic Guardian Church of Grace and Blessing**

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### **A short history of the Devil**

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#### **A Short History of the Devil**

**By Michael Freedman**

The Devil was born not long before the year 588 Bce. He was conceived by a prophet of the Medes, Zoroaster, on the body of the ancient Iranian religion. The name first given to this dark child was Ahriman, but he was also called Druj the Lie.

Zoroaster persuaded the king of Chorasnija to adopt both Ahriman the Dark One and his Light twin, Ohrmazd, the Wise Lord. While the Kings of the Medes and Persians decided that the revisions that Zoroaster had made to the ancient Iranian religion would be good for the people of their empire to follow, they themselves continued to worship in the old way.

In turn, the teachings of Zoroaster were revised so often for political purposes over the centuries that it is difficult to find out what he originally taught, but it seems to have been something like this:

Twin Gods of Ught and Dark; out of Zurvan Akarana, primordial time, twins were born, Ohnnazd, Light, and Ahriman, Darkness. Ohrmazd was the good god worshipped by the herders and pastoralists of Media; while Ahriman was the evil god of lies, strife and destruction, who was worshipped by the

marauding nomads who swept out of central Asia to raid the good pastoralists.

Although, in a sense, this dualism was supposed to be eternal, the Zoroastrians believed that in the long run the good god of light and his forces would win and the evil god of darkness would be consigned to hell, together with all 'followers of the Lie.'

It should be stated that Zoroaster, who is often said to have been a monotheist might not have taught anything like this at all. The important thing is that this dualism was what the Zoroastrians believed. The Zoroastrian religion became the established religion in the Middle East, after the Persians had conquered the older empires of that area.

This was a period when thousands of the upper ranks of the Jewish people had been transported to Mesopotamia by various conquerors. When the Jews were eventually returned from their exile to Judea, they took back with them a Hebrew faith that had been powerfully influenced by the dualism of Zoroastrianism, nearly as much as the old Iranian religion had been influenced by it.

### **The Adversary**

It is only in Jewish Scriptures written after the return to Jerusalem, that there are references to a spiritual being, described as a Satan, which means adversely. Nowhere in the Jewish scriptures is the word Satan a proper name. It is always used as a term descriptive of the function of the being concerned.

Nor is the Satan, in the Jewish scriptures, an enemy of God. He is an angelic prosecuting attorney or warrant-of-fitness inspector, whose function is to put human beings to the test, to tempt them and to highlight their misdeeds at the judgment.

It is a very different matter in Jewish writings outside of the Scriptures. The legends, folk tales and mystical writings of the Jews generally adopt the Zoroastrian view of Good and Evil. The universe is seen as a battlefield between the eternally contending forces of Good and Evil.

The commander-in-chief of the Armies of the Lord, 'the good side', is usually an Archangel, frequently Michael, but often some other Archangel. The commander-in-chief of the Legions of Hell, 'the evil side', goes by a bewildering variety of names, but Satan is the commonest.

Christianity emerged out of Judaism during the first century Ce. under the inspiration of the Rabbi Yehoshua" and grew into a religion by means of the organizing ability of Saul, also called Paul, who never actually met Yehoshua'. It was founded in a culture that accepted as a matter of fact the existence of the Devil or Satan as the source of all evil. Sickness or wickedness was usually blamed on a possessing demon who could be driven away by appropriate words from a healer.

There were untold legions of demons of every kind, even one called Ukobach by the omens, who was believed to be responsible for the invention of fried food. There is another similar demon, invoked by the name Cur Nilsaan Durs. There isn't space to consider Islamic attitudes to the Devil, but their scenario generally parallels that of the Jews, with different names for the various antagonists.

### **'My name Is Legion'**

The story of the Rabbi Yehoshua" driving a demon called 'Legion" out a madman and into a herd of pigs, who promptly went mad themselves and raced over the edge of a cliff, is typical of the stories told of many healers in those days in that area of the world.

The demonic name 'Legion', meaning 'a multitude', is of interest to me as a 20th century psychologist, for it is very suggestive of the illness described as 'multiple personality syndrome', in which in some cases, the individual manifests a very large number of independent personalities, in bewildering succession. Nowadays, the cure is not usually to try drive out the competing personalities, but to re-integrate them into a single personality.

An American fundamentalist pastor has recently been successfully sued for damages by a woman with a multiple personality disorder. She sought counsel for her problem from him. He then, without her permission, subjected her to a series of rigorous exorcism procedures in order to 'drive out the demons who were expressing themselves as different personalities through her.

Christianity has shaken itself free of many of the superstitious assumptions of the Judeo-Ormeco-Roman era in which it was born. However, a belief in a Satanic Overlord with hosts of demonic soldiers, has survived the centuries in popular custom and belief, if not in the formal theology of mainstream Christianity. In both Protestant and Catholic wings of the Church, belief in the Devil is rarely expressed nowadays, except by extreme fundamentalists and charismatic's who are as big a pain in the arse to mainstream Christians as they are to Pagans.

### **The Church of Satan**

A phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century has been the emergence of a Church dedicated to the worship of Satan. Its founder, Anton La Vey, did not know what he was getting himself into, and he has recently announced his retirement from it all. "I haven't conducted a black mass in 20 years,' he says.

He began the Church of Satan in San Francisco in 1966, partly as a joke to take the mickey out of all those moralistic Christian fundamentalists who were trying to suppress Haight-Ashbury, the hippies, and the new age as work of the Devil. He also needed a vehicle for selling his increasingly popular course of lessons in witchcraft. Soon, these were to be expanded and transmogrified into The Satanic Bible, 'a romantic celebration of indulgence, vengeance and existential doubt'.

The Satanic movement burgeoned, although its Satan bore little resemblance to the Great Enemy of the Christian God or the adversarial crown-prosecutor of the ancient Jews, or indeed to Ahriman as revealed by his creator, Zoroaster.

In fact, if you 'want to know who LaVey's I Satan is most like, you had best look to the I Greek God of Nature, the Great God Pan. But LaVey's Satan is a god in his own right, and is not to be confused with any other god.

Unfortunately, the god of the Church of Satan has picked up some bad habits from his Judeo-Christian-Iranian ancestor. The various priests and sects of modern Satanism are engaged in perpetual wordy quarrels in the pages of their magazines, in which accusations of lying, cheating and

pederasty flow freely between them. Well, Satan is said to be the Father of Lies and Lord of strife.

Satan would probably have died of old age and neglect by now, if he was not continually being resurrected to new life by his adversaries, the fundamentalists.

**Satan is alive and well in Kurdistan**

On the other hand, the quarter of a million Yezidiz of Kurdistan claim that the Devil repented of his sins about a thousand years ago. He was welcomed back into heaven with his followers, who continue to worship him alongside of the One God, under the name of King Peacock!