



The Satanic Bible

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The Satanic Bible was first published by Anton LaVey in 1969. It is a collection of essays, observations and rituals, and outlines LaVey's Satanic ideology. It contains the core principles of the Church of Satan and is considered the foundation of the philosophy and dogma that constitute LaVeyan Satanism.

The Satanic Bible Details

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Author : Anton Szandor LaVey

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Megan says

I feel the need to explain myself on this one. While this book does include spells, they're in the back of the book, and frankly, after reading the rest, I didn't find them worth perusing. The book is more philosophy than religion, with self indulgence at the core. I have seen some of LaVey's terms, like "emotional vampires", in fairly common usage lately, which goes along with my thoughts that he has some valid points in his arguments. Unfortunately, those valid points are overshadowed by gobbledegook (yes, that's the technical term). I also couldn't give too much attention to a theory that tries really hard to become the antithesis of one religion, thereby effectively confirming those characters existed.

Jeppe Møller says

This book is most definitely worked through grammar- and language wise, and the british-flavoured language of Anton LaVey makes for dynamic reading, descriptive metaphors and some great additions to my english vocabulary. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in this sort of philosophy. Epistemology, psychology, sociology and the "spiritual awakening" oft-times mentioned in these chapters of radical, anti-right hand path philosophy. I would also recommend not giving in to the prejudices which this branch of philosophy is often met with, and keeping an open mind.

Anton LaVey included The Enochian Keys in The Satanic Bible and verses from Ragnar Redbeard's "Might Is Right" (1896). It has been mentioned by the author, that The Satanic Bible should not be taken too literally. For example, the first part, The Book of Fire, is phrased in such a way as to emancipate the readers who are morally and philosophically entangled in oppressive, fundamentalistic Christian doctrines from these very shackles which close their minds. It may seem quite harsh at first, but take the words of Anton LaVey with a grain of salt, and you'll be good to go. Anton LaVey has also stated, that because this book had to reach the market quickly, the quality of composition may be unsatisfactory and seemingly amateurish at times, because the verbose language does not correspond too well with the arrangement. This was also the reason, that material from other authors was frequently used when this book was written.

In this book, you will find a lot of praising of the mundane human instincts, which could be perceived as naturalistic from time to time, as the basic worldview asserted in this book is very simplistic, "Survival of the fittest", etc. It teaches the art of being human, and breaking the shackles of the holier-than-thou morality of Right Hand Path religions. Satanism is liberalism in individualistic philosophy. Do what you want as long as no one is hurt, and treat others as they treat you, is the most basic rule of Satanism.

This book covers many different topics and has influenced my train of thought greatly, even with the chapters about Satanic Magic and rituals, although I myself am quite skeptical about the authenticity of claims of "magic", it is a nice and interesting touch, and the theatrical symbolism brings a wonderful atmosphere. This book can liberate you, and I choose to believe it is very much a "like it or hate it"-book. I gave this book 4 stars, and I started reading it immediately after I got it for my birthday from my girlfriend. I definitely recommend this book.

Kit Fox says

I grew up on the same block that Anton LaVey lived on. To me as a kid he was, "that old guy who only wore black leather, drove a black Jaguar, and lived in a big, black house with an equally big fence in front of it." Can't say I ever recall seeing him talk to anyone, though my mother would occasionally chat with his daughter and his girlfriend at the corner store. My parents also told me that in the '70s he had a pet lion, but the neighbors complained about the noise so the zoo took it away, or something. After he died, his house remained untouched for a few years, but was eventually torn down—which was a real shame, especially since that building was allegedly an old speakeasy. Then, for a few more years, the lot stood vacant until someone without any taste built an ugly—yet nondescript—prefab piece of junk there. I'm also pretty sure that either the building directly adjacent to his, or one or two houses away, had a beauty parlor on the first floor and a brothel on the top floor. Anyway, him being a local celebrity and all—in addition to being a neighbor—I figured the least I owed the guy was to check his book out.

It was pretty much what I heard it'd be, namely that "Satanism" as he saw it was more or less a philosophy based on the power inside of people as opposed to prostrating yourself in front of religious icons or praying to the image of some anthropomorphic god. He also rejects the old notion of "do unto others as they would do unto you" and instead says "do unto other as they do unto you." That is, if someone's a real jerk-off to you, don't forgive and forget, get them back. And twice as hard.

On a purely grammatical note, I think he went a little over-budget in his use of exclamation marks, but other than that, the book is well written and fairly easy to follow. I highly recommend reading this on the bus or in a very crowded coffee shop for maximum effect.

mark monday says

+ =

Hannah Eiseman-Renyard says

De-Mystifies All Shock Value

So, I read this when I was about fifteen and liked to see the looks on people's faces when they saw me reading it. Look at that big inverted pentacle. OoooOOOooooh. It wasn't *completely* without merit as I then went out and read its even more tired sister book The Satanic Witch, but the fact that I was reading a book called The Satanic Bible - and pissing off people around me as I read it on public transport - was worth far more to me than anything I was actually reading in it.

The one bit I found interesting was about 'psychic vampires' also known as people who use you up. This

phrase does seem to have been adopted more widely. One point to Mr. LaVey.

However, for the majority, this book is part gibberish, part self-aggrandisement and part nihilism. Takeaway morals were pretty much 'do what you want, but don't be an idiot: the police will still come after you if you do a murder.' It's also disappointingly thin on magic. It claims pheromones are magic, acting sexy is magic, 'psychodrama' is magic, and that any kind of big satanic ritual thing has power if the people involved are getting off on it - but that's where it begins and ends. So... no magic then?

While this is probably true, if you're sceptical about the existence of any occult powers then why bother with all the occult imagery? If you don't believe Satan even exists then why call yourselves 'Satanists'? It's some unpleasant philosophy paired up with some shock value images and a smugness that anyone who *is* shocked just doesn't understand you 'cause they were too stoooopid to read the disclaimer.

Mazel tov, you little scamps. And what will you be doing for your A-levels?

Meh. If you're a teenager in the suburbs then by all means consider having this on your bookshelf to shock & annoy, but for the intellectually curious there are better books you could read on just about any topic this touches on: philosophy, sociology, psychology, the history of the occult, magic, Christ - even read Marilyn Manson's autobiography if you have to.

This book is the textual equivalent of those 1950s B-movie posters that promised so much and delivered so little.

11811 (Eleven) says

I read this before electricity was invented so it's not exactly fresh in my mind but the most interesting thing I remember is that the author went on to sell used cars and eventually declared bankruptcy. First class charlatan.

The book is basically a promotion of self-indulgence. Not much more than that from what I recall. A disappointing read if you're looking to be shocked and a hollow read if you're seeking deep philosophical insight.

Still glad I read it. It helped launch my interest in philosophy at the time along with Mere Christianity.

Garrett Cook says

Needlessly blunt, socially irresponsible, poorly written. The work of a person who knows nothing about human nature and assumes man's greatest evil is receiving handjobs from a peepshow tent girl. Anybody who needs a book to tell them that it is within their power to do a ton of drugs, have sex with whomever they choose and have cake for dinner will not go far in life.

Ed Johnson says

All religion is theatre and self-deceit, so why not have fun with it? Those who take this book literally (And LaVey's brand of Satanism) miss the point entirely.

Michael says

I wrote the below review almost 8 years ago, when I was still quite new to goodreads. If anything, my feelings about this book have mellowed, both in the positive and negative, so that I see it as more mediocre than anything. It is a starting point for young people, and not much else.

However, I've always meant to come back and update the review with a discussion of the different editions. Since goodreads (still) won't let you post separate reviews for different editions of a single book, I will just discuss those differences as a preface to the full review.

The only significant difference between editions that I can see (apart from the legibility of the typeface) lies in the Introductions, which have steadily declined since the 1960s. The first edition of the book contains the shortest of the three versions: An introduction by then-Magister Templi Michael A. Aquino, who would leave the Church in 1975 to found the Temple of Set. His version is optimistic and eloquent, and goes so far as to compare the work to that of Machiavelli and Plato. He still buys into a number of falsehoods regarding LaVey's personal biography, which he would later expose in his history of the Church of Satan (The Church of Satan I). The next, and thus far longest-lived, introduction was written by Priest Burton Wolfe, a pop-culture journalist who indulged a brief flirtation with the Church of Satan but never really regarded it as more than a hobby. He is the first to deny the literal existence of the deity to which the Church was dedicated, and he inflates a number of the biographical falsehoods to make LaVey appear more dramatic. The third version was written some years after LaVey's death by Magus Peter Gilmore, who ascended after the brief succession struggle to become the new High Priest of the Church of Satan. He dials back some of Wolfe's more flagrant exaggerations, but maintains the position that the Church is an atheistic organization with some ritual trappings for psychological effect. His is the longest and least captivatingly written of the three.

Love him or hate him, everyone's got an opinion of Anton LaVey. I actually feel a little bit of both.

I first read the "Satanic Bible" at the target age - about fifteen or sixteen, I believe. I could poke holes in some of the philosophy even then (if it's a religion dedicated to survival of the fittest, why is it so small and frail?), but I could not deny the frisson of the outrageous that it induced. I wound up going a different direction for my induction into the esoteric, however, and shortly thereafter chose Discordianism as my chief paradigm.

Years later I was ready for a revaluation of values, and the time had come to consider what LaVey's project had offered historically. His church having long since degenerated into a fan club, there was little need to bother with its present-day manifestation, but examination of the historical events of 1966-75 indicated that there was something more to it than strip shows and cliche'd Black Masses, a current had been awoken in understanding forces that have lurked at the back of human consciousness for millennia.

The problem remained, so far as this book is concerned. As a representation of the exoteric philosophy of

CoS, it gives little insight into its esoteric meaning. Books such as "Uncle Setnakt's Essential Guide to the Left Hand Path" gave far more genuine insight to the possibilities of self-Initiation through the paradigm of spiritual revolt, but there remains something emotionally satisfying in LaVey's peculiar, and seminal, assault on the good taste of the mass.

Jason Koivu says

For my 666th review I couldn't think of a more appropriate book than *The Satanic Bible*!

I bought this about 25 years ago and just now got around to reading it. Thanks for the motivation, Good Reads!

Why did I buy *The Satanic Bible* way back when I was a teenager? Well, it's like this...

Rock music has always been seen by some as a source of evil and there's a history of musicians who supposedly sold their souls to the devil.

There were rock & roll "gods" like my hero Jimmy Page, who it is rumored followed occultist Aleister Crowley. As a guitar playing teen I idolized them and wanted to be them to the point of buying a book like this. I wondered, was there magic within? Would the devil make me a rock god, too? Or just getting me laid would be cool...

I expected sex, blood, magic, horror, demons, and more sex and way more magic.

Then I read it and what I got was more like...

(Just to the left of the clock I believe is George Bush #2 and that's pretty satanic in and of itself.)

Honestly, this book is just not as exciting as I'd hoped. I'm sure it would scandalize a churchy type, but it didn't do much for me.

It didn't start well. Right up front you learn that Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan, was a carny. A carny who gets his panties in a bunch because he sees men being pious hypocrites, so he shaves himself bald and starts a cult, no sir, that is not a good start to a new religion.

There's a foreword by a journalist, who describes meeting and getting to know LaVey. I thought this was a nice touch. It showed a more human side to the story. I'm one of those people that believe journalists should be unbiased, people who you can rely on to give you the facts, just the facts. But then you learn this particular journalist became a high priest in the Church of Satan, and well, that kind of crushed his unbiased

credibility.

Moving on to LaVey's theories and ideas, we see some ridiculousness and some common sense. On the one hand, I very much doubt LaVey would want to live in the world of chaos that his vision would create. "Do whatever you want" sounds fun, and certainly some people do need to lighten up, but when you live in a world of chaos (I spent sometime living in a house run by anarchist punks, so I got a taste of what that'd be like) you learn the value of a few basic societal rules. LaVey's militant eye-for-an-eye-and-then-some (Meaning he believes you strike down those who offend you with even greater force) outlook coupled with a world of chaos would've put LaVey himself in harm's way very quickly.

The first half of the book expounds upon his theories. This section is much more relaxed than I expected. He speaks off the cuff, using slang and humor. It's an interesting approach to the writing of a religious text. Definitely a relief from the stuffy Holy Bible. By the way, any Satanists reading this can relax. Yes, I'm bagging on your boy a bit here, but I also think Christians are ridiculous, too. I'm one of those people who has faith in themselves, that they will do the right thing. So far I'm doing all right. Haven't murdered any one yet!

Later *The Satanic Bible* gets into the whole "spell casting" thing, the reason I bought the damned book in the first place. Much is made of sex, blood essence, speaking accursed names aloud and none of it was as cool as I'd hoped. I did like that LaVey calls out the people who sacrifice animals as cowards for not having the balls to draw their own blood for these rituals.

The last half of the book is a very short, quick read. There's barely more than a dozen lines on some of the last hundred or so pages. Sometimes it's just a title page or one simple sentence and blank space on the back side. This was done for aesthetics and it's a big waste of paper. The book would be a lot smaller otherwise.

All in all, I think Christians get their panties in a bunch over nothing much here. And as LaVey says, they need Satan. It's the Yin and Yang. God, Jesus and the other goodie goodies have to have a counter point. The good guys need the bad guys.

Philip Gomez says

Before my Christian friends freak out about this one, they should know that "Satanism" is not the same as "Satan Worship", and that the former is actually an atheistic philosophy (albeit a very theatrical and confrontational one), as opposed to the latter which is a religion.

No Satanist actually believes in heaven or hell, good or evil, God or the Devil. Satanists believe that religion has turned mankind into passive sheep, and seek to undo the "damage" they feel religion has caused.

Satanism is, I feel, Nietzsche's philosophy filtered through a lesser mind. I'll be honest, I bought the book both for shock value and intellectual interest when I was in high school (which is when I feel most people will buy this book), read it once, was unimpressed, and never picked it up again.

It's not a bad book, and some of what LaVey has to say makes sense, in a morbid, angst-ridden, angry kind of way, but LaVey was no genius, and anyone interested in this kind of stuff is probably better off picking up a book by Nietzsche or Sartre instead. You'll get far more food for thought and far less silliness, while still winning points in high school for being rebellious and angst.

Paul says

I read this book in high school. The reason for the one star is that it serves at least some positive use in that it corrects some Christians belief about what "philosophical Satanism" entails. LaVey doesn't believe in anything like the biblical concept of Satan. It's meant to be something like the antithesis of Christian morality. So whereas Jesus says "Turn the other cheek" LaVey says, "If a man smite you on the cheek, smite him twice as hard on the other." LaVey obviously never bothered to consult any standard commentaries on that verse, showing his rather ubiquitous ignorance of all things Christian.

LaVey holds to some kind of ethical egoism. But one wonders why he tries to advocate for that thesis.

If one has a good moral theory, it seems that it should be pronounced. Taught to others. Publicized. But if Ethical Egoism is true, it would seem that its adherents, those who have grasped and understood its truth, shouldn't teach it to others. It would seem that if most people were taught the ethics of altruism, this would be the best situation for the egoist. Thus it would seem that if Ethical Egoism were true, its adherents should teach that it is false and that Altruistic Ethics is the correct theory. But this seems to undermine a feature of morality. Moral principles serve as action guides that inform us how to act in situations. Moral precepts should be teachable. Teach others how to act (this would be a necessary but not sufficient feature, character/virtue ethics and teleological ethics would also need to be included). Publicized so that others are morally informed agents. But if Ethical Egoism were true, not only would it be unwise for me to teach it, it just might be immoral for me to teach it. Teaching others to be egoists could easily turn out to be not in our best interest. And, principles should be taught since moral principles serve as action-guides to help resolve (among other things) interpersonal conflict. Furthermore, since Ethical Egoism isn't so crass as to say that we should do what benefits us in the here and now, but is a long-term plan, spanning across all of our future selves, it might not be in our best interest, considering all our selves, to promulgate Ethical Egoism to ourselves. Thus we shouldn't teach Ethical Egoism to ourselves. And, if we should, what is the morally relevant reason that allows us to discriminate between ourselves and others? This is one reason why ethicist Russ Shafer-Landau has pointed out the Ethical Egoism seems to imply that we should discriminate against people. Treat ourselves as special over against other humans. But this radical prejudice seems unfounded. If a moral principle P cannot be universalized, then I shouldn't teach it to myself even. If it can't be universalized, it doesn't even seem like a moral principle.

But of course LaVey dislikes altruism. But we can quickly see the moral problems that pop up real quick:

Mr. Smith: "Thanks for saving my life, good friend, I almost drowned out there."

Anton LaVey: "Don't mention it. I did it for myself. After all, my life would suck if you weren't in it, and there's that matter of the 1,000 dollars you owe me. It wouldn't be beneficial for me to lose out on that. So, you're welcome, friend."

Who out there, if you were in Smith's shoes, would think this act of LaVey's was a good, moral, and altruistic act? Not many, I'd wager.

But, don't those adhering to ethical egoism say that they can account for "altruism?" That helping and saving others is actually good, for them? That their system doesn't do away with our moral responsibility to help others, for the sake of helping others?

But, isn't this a trick? Doesn't this, in fact, fail to distinguish between pseudo and genuine altruism? The latter has, as its goal, purpose, and intrinsic value, the benefit of another irrespective of benefit to one's self? (And, as an aside, that there may be personal payoffs and side effects does not logically entail that the moral action was done for egoistic reasons as its basis. Sure it is nice to have your friend around and to collect on the 1,000, but an altruistic act is done solely for the sake of the other; even though there might very well be side effects and outcomes that are good for you, personally.)

Of course egoists like LaVey try to make altruistic acts fit within their moral philosophy. But above I've pointed out that the cost is to defend *pseudo* altruism over against genuine altruism. And, the argument from side effects does not imply ethical egoism. Indeed, most of us, including Smith, might rightly look down on LaVey's actions. Speaking to intention, altruistic acts, done on and for egoism's premises, are morally repugnant acts.

There's plenty other dubious ethical statements. For instance: "Do not make sexual advances unless you are given the mating signal." And of course with no philosophical discussion of what the rather vague and ambiguous term 'mating signal' means, he's opened the door to rape.

And he also seems a bit arbitrary. For example, he says: "Do not kill non-human animals unless you are attacked or for your food." What about *human* animals? Apparently we can kill them, after all, at one place he writes, " If a guest in your lair annoys you, treat him cruelly and without mercy."

He also advocates injustice. For example, he claims: "When walking in open territory, bother no one. If someone bothers you, ask him to stop. If he does not stop, destroy him." But what is the content of this "bothering?" Why does it deserve a "destroying?" There's also that comment about "smiting twice as hard." Obviously LaVey doesn't believe the punishment should fit the crime. LaVey fails with regard to having a just ethical system.

LaVey also makes suspect metaphysical claims, and that's putting it mildly. We could call it sophomoric, but that would be unfair to sophomores!

He advocates practicing magic and advocating its power.

Puh-lease

I probably would have rated it 5 stars in high school because I was a big tough-guy who had a superiority complex, just like LaVey. Oh yeah, I was unregenerate too.

Shannon says

So my current impression of Satanism is that it is selfish atheism. I kind of hope this "bible" (sorry, it just doesn't feel official to me, the bible-writer looks too goofy and pretentious) will prove me wrong. On the other hand, if my suspicions are confirmed... then Satanism is a bunch of lame, and I totally called it. Just saying.

I mean... like.. can't you just be an atheist? You don't need to be a dick! But you know, most atheists are dicks any way, quoting Dawkins and Harris and smugly referencing the flying spaghetti monster. God, I'm so fucking sick of that shit. I'd love it if everyone could jump off their collective pedestal and sit criss- cross-

apple- sauce on the ground and just chill the fuck out.

Anyway! I'm not angry! People think I'm angry when I say "fuck" repeatedly, in typing, but for fucking real, it just flows from me naturally and without anger.

REVIEW/CRITIQUE OF SATANISM/ALL RELIGIONS EVER (WHICH I WILL BASE SOLEY ON MY NARROW EXPERIENCE WITH THEM STFU) TO BE CONTINUED...

Cwn_annwn_13 says

Lavey was a con artist that did everything with a wink and a smirk. The idea of worshipping Satan, even in the symbolic way that Lavey was into, seems completely retarded to me. Why replace one Jewish diety with another Jewish diety? Laveys take on Satan himself is more along the lines of Satan as a kinky horny party animal with an intellectual side as opposed to the Christian interpretation of some ultimate evil conspirator bent on tricking you into roasting in hell for eternity. Some of his take on magic is interesting, some of it is stupid. The "Enochian Keys" section of the book, which is close to half of it, is a waste. More Lavey showmanship than anything else.

All these negatives however are overrided by the great observations on Christianity and all the guilt ridden pathologies it causes. Also many dead on observations of human nature as well as sexuality. I find it really funny that many people took Lavey seriously as this sinister figure and I'm sure the humor of this wasn't lost to him either. But whats good in the Satanic Bible is so great that it overrides the stupidity and showmanship/con game he was playing. Overall this was a fun book to read that contained some real gems of truth.

Jason says

I found this in a charity shop many years ago, a little book that fits nicely in your pocket, I didn't steal it cos I wasn't evil then as I hadn't purchased this book, duh! Try and keep up! I am not a religious person, I have too many unanswered questions to believe in anything. what questions you ask? Here's one, "Why did God kill all the dinosaurs? When it's obvs that they were totes amaze-balls!"

I was blown away by how good it was, by how much Anton's thoughts were similar to mine, he didn't seem that evil either, for example, he says do whatever you want as long as nobody innocent gets hurt. His essays are entertaining, maybe not the best writing style but good enough that I instantly read the book two more times after reading it and also purchased his other essays from WHSmiths, who had to order them in, this was all before I was on the Internets.

The downside to the book was the magic and rituals, sure a naked lady alter appeals to me but the rest? Not so much. It was interesting to read about the rituals though and they don't affect the flow of the book.

One thing to note, my teacher at school forbade me from using this book in the "write an essay about your favourite book" I was forced to read/write the essay on a book picked by the teacher as I refused to pick another. So this review might have been that stunning essay instead if my teacher wasn't such a bastard.

Gonna hunt this out of the loft for a re-read methinks.
