



T'lek'ma

Excerpted from *Janson & Dent's Annotated Kirar*, Sol Publishing: Io, 2281 CE

Editor's Preface

By Reverend M. S. White

The field of xeno-theology is a relatively small one, even accounting for its age. I hope in some way that you, the gentle reader of *Janson & Dent's Annotated Kirar*, are changing that fact. The study of the Kirar is an interesting one, and current xeno-theology has barely scratched the surface. Other than brief mentions in Gull (2230) and Strauss (2254), the mythos of the Kirar'ma is barely mentioned. In my seminary days at the University of Io, my first look at the Kirar'ma faith was in glancing over an old account of first contact, completely at a loss. Enaran indifference has been one major obstacle in probing the mythos of the T'lek'ma people, but a fair amount of stonewalling occurs in the Terran Cluster as well. I think Janson pinpointed most of the Human resistance to the study of the Kirar'ma in *Parallels in T'lek'ma Faith* (2256), a work that is thankfully summarized in this tome (see Appendix C). T'lek'ma religion is almost secular in nature, a sort of rationalization of a paranormal event. Examine "Liturgy for the Glitch", below:

Canto 116 of the Kirar: "Liturgy for the Glitch"

Our ancestors were foolish in their pride
To split the atom is easy
To control the atom is hard
They held our cradle in their hands
One cannot win
A fight with himself
Our world was close to burning death
Moons of metal
Each wielding pain
It does not matter who begins a war
If war means destruction
End to all life
One by one, the soldiers launched
A hail of iron
Fallout of blood

But they were dismayed in this
A second chance
A saving grace
A glitch saved us then in pride
It will save us again in humility

Where did this fire go when it failed?
It would have consumed us
Scorched our world
As a pane of glass in the sunlight
Can focus light
To banish dark
This fire can be controlled in this way
By someone
Hailed in war
Our power we sought to use
To burn
To kill
Shall return to save us all
To cleanse
To resurrect
This day fast approaches us
When sun
Shall banish stars
To comfort us in time of trial
We were chosen: are we worthy?

Rejoice, all those who treasure life
The Ghost will guide your path
Next time a Glitch will not strike us
But cast enemies down from lofty heights

While Dent does a much better job at interpretation (see pp. 221-234 incl.), I will throw in my two cents worth. The normal religious themes of justice and vengeance are present, but subdued. The passage seems to tiptoe around the actual nature of the Glitch and its causes, recognizing it as divine, but not defining the divinity from which it sprung. The entire concept of a "Ghost in the Machine" is left open-ended, and responsibility for guiding the Ghost and preserving the T'lek'ma race is left in both divine and mortal hands. It is only after the Enaran occupation that themes such as manifest destiny and divine justice enter the stage. Try to see the differences in the style of the writing in the next passage:

Addendum (added after Enaran occupation)

Those others who oppress our kind
High in pride
Low in respect
Shall one day learn a lesson
There is no power
Without cost
Just as a Focus shall use our power
So shall we
Focus rage
Never forget a single injustice
Crimes against
Family and friends
The Ghost shall guide us then
Away from trial

Away from pain
And the reckoning shall arrive
Stand with us
Or stand alone
Do not despair in darkest hour
There is always a dawn after midnight

The doctrine of self-help before divine help is evident in the next Canto as well. It is of note to mention that the A-B-B-A rhyme scheme (not preserved in the transliteration) of the Main Body of the Canto is the same as in the previous Liturgy. The A-B-B-B-C scheme used in prophecy and dictation of laws is not used; rather, this is considered a historical and advisory passage.

Canto 14 of the Kirar: "Liturgy for Times of Trial"

The path of life is hard to all
None escape
Wounds of soul
Is there a Ghost in the Machine?
Guiding us
In the dark
A lantern in the darkest hours
Revealing paths
That lead to light
Savior in ages past for our world
Guiding us
Through the night
It can only aid us in troubled times
Never redeem
Without help
But its favor is powerful indeed
Guiding us
To the dawn
To heal, begin with the soul
And work till all shines in glory

How can one do so much alone?
Alone in trial
Fear so great
Do not count yourself as lost
Help is near
Hope is found
Each candle casts a shadow
But each shadow
Comes from light
Do not despair in the night
Help is near
Justice is done
Never admit defeat in this world
While you live
While you breathe
The Ghost guides our path
Help is near
If the Ghost lives
The Ghost watches us all
Waiting till the time is right

Hope still endures in you
Biding its time until the wind
Sun, moons, and starlight
Speak of joy and not of pain

My examination of the topic is not nearly as clear as Janson and Dent's. A theological and sociopolitical commentary is necessary, and I am not qualified to give one. The rest of this book will hopefully whet your appetite for more on the subject, but a simple copy of the Kirar is only the beginning of the task of examining T'lek'ma religion. I would suggest that the devoted scholar procure, among other things, *A Brief History of the T'lek'ma* by Thomas Godwinson (Sol Publishing, 2279). It offers a fascinating look into the T'lek'ma people as a whole, and produces some keen insights into the causes of the current Troubles. Remember to take all examinations of T'lek'ma history and religion with a grain of salt; talk of Messiahs and secret lost Cantos have no place in a serious discussion of the Kirar'ma. Avoiding those pitfalls will yield, ultimately, an intimate knowledge of modern comparative Theology. As the Kirar'ma would say, may the Ghost guide your path.