

## Return To Hatheg-kla

Bal-Sagoth

[3:28] [Instrumental]

(The Sixth Key: The Omega Axiom)

Some would call it an epiphany, others would deem it the final descent into madness... whatever the case, the last vestiges of those tenuous palisades which had previously, and blessedly, safeguarded my reason and prevented my mind from accepting the full and staggering magnitude of the naked truth then crumbled, fading into nothingness like the dissolution of a night-mist. At length, on one oppressively miasmic night, with such malefically portentous lore preying pitilessly upon my sanity, I began to descend through a myriad veils of sombre and swirling shades, finally surrendering my grip on wakefulness. And on that fitful, fateful eve, the last of the dreams came...

A waking dream? I dare not speculate. The vision was mine, the soul too... but the time, the place, the very flesh, all this and more was unknown to me. I stood upon a nighted vista... unfeasibly alien, and yet at once wholly, unnervingly familiar. In my hand I grasped a glimmering crystal which although beautiful in its shimmering radiance, was as black as the impenetrable depths of the most stygian midnight sea. As I gazed into the obsidian heart of the gem, a needle of black light lanced forth from its multi-faceted surface and filled my eyes with a panoply of fantastic hues, revealing to me in between its pulses of masing darkness certain fleeting glimpses of places and things so fantastically terrifying that I could not faithfully begin to recount their hideous and yet grimly compelling nature. A terrible sound filled my ears... an insidious resonance which sent waves of excruciating pain coursing through my mind... a sound which inexorably coalesced into a recognizable but entirely inhuman voice, a voice which slowly, inevitably, formed approximations of words which I could discern...

THE CRYSTALLINE ORACLE: Hearken, o' manling of the Tellurian orb... the Circle closes. Prepare to embrace the agony of enlightenment. Know you of the Six Cataclysms?

THE ASPIRANT: I do. Six times has the world perished and been reborn!

THE CRYSTALLINE ORACLE: You have discovered the true meaning of the six coruscating rings of arcane power?

THE ASPIRANT: Praise Klatrymadon and Zuranthus! The Six Keys!

THE CRYSTALLINE ORACLE: Know you of the blackened orb which burned bright o'er ancient Lemuria? Know you of the sidereal flame which engulfed the high seat of power in Ultima Thule? Know you of that martial sorcery woven in the pitiless throng of epic

battle? Know you of the astral power permeating the multiverse and the might of the cosmic codex? Know you of the rise and fall of glorious Atlantis? Know you the blasphemies contained within the Chthonic Chronicles?

THE ASPIRANT: I know all this, and more!

THE CRYSTALLINE ORACLE: Have you, o' hybrid child of the cosmos, gazed into the Great Eye of the Universe?

THE ASPIRANT: I have.

THE CRYSTALLINE ORACLE: And what did you see there, young Xerxes?

THE ASPIRANT: I saw oblivion, and damnation. I saw truth, and enlightenment. I saw the closure of the Great Circle Without End. I saw the Sixth Great Cataclysm. I saw the alpha and the omega, I saw the beginning... and I saw the end. The end of all there is!