

## The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa

By Kenaz Filan

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### The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa By Kenaz Filan

A working guide to the proper methods of interacting with the full Vodou pantheon

- Includes the myths, cultural heritage, and ancestral lineage of the lwa and how to honor and serve them
- Provides an introduction and guide that is especially useful for the solitary practitioner
- Discusses the relationship between Vodou, Haitian culture, and Catholicism

In *The Haitian Vodou Handbook*, Kenaz Filan, an initiate of the *Société la Belle Venus*, presents a working guide to the proper methods of interacting with the full Vodou pantheon, explaining how to build respectful relationships with the lwa, the spirits honored in Haitian Vodou, and how to transform the fear that often surrounds the Vodou religion.

Until recently, the Haitian practice of Vodou was often identified with devil worship, dark curses, and superstition. Some saw the saint images and the Catholic influences and wrote Vodou off as a “Christian aberration.” Others were appalled by the animal sacrifices and the fact that the Houngans and Mambos charge money for their services. Those who sought Vodou because they believed it could harness “evil” forces were disappointed when their efforts to gain fame, fortune, or romance failed and so abandoned their “voodoo fetishes.” Those who managed to get the attention of the lwa, often received cosmic retaliation for treating the spirits as attack dogs or genies, which only further cemented Vodou’s stereotype as “dangerous.”

Filan offers extensive background information on the featured lwa, including their mythology and ancestral lineage, as well as specific instructions on how to honor and interact fruitfully with those that make themselves accessible. This advice will be especially useful for the solitary practitioner who doesn’t have the personal guidance of a *société* available. Filan emphasizes the importance of

having a quickened mind that can read the lwa's desires intuitively in order to avoid establishing dogma-based relationships. This working guide to successful interaction with the full Vodou pantheon also presents the role of Vodou in Haitian culture and explores the symbiotic relationship Vodou has maintained with Catholicism.

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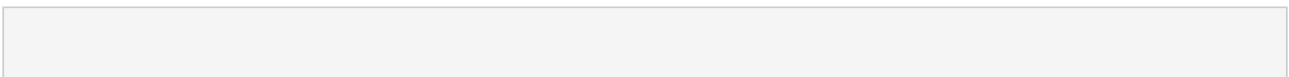
In *The Haitian Vodou Handbook*, Kenaz Filan, an initiate of the Société la Belle Venus, presents a working guide to the proper methods of interacting with the full Vodou pantheon, explaining how to build respectful relationships with the lwa, the spirits honored in Haitian Vodou, and how to transform the fear that often surrounds the Vodou religion.

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## **The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa** By Kenaz Filan Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Vodou is not what most people think. It's not "devil worship, dark curses, and drumbeat-driven orgies performed at midnight," poking needles at dolls or simple superstition. With over a decade of service to the lwa (the deities of Vodou) and membership in Soci  t   la Belle Venus #2, a Vodou temple in Brooklyn, Filan sets out to right these pulpy perspectives of what in reality is a complex African diaspora spirituality and a form of worship that marries the secular and the spiritual. Of course, Vodou is not without its dangers, since "the lwa can wreak a frightening vengeance." It's not foolproof, either; without proper initiation into addressing the lwa, they will simply ignore you. But Filan aspires to give potential initiates the proper tools for communicating with the deities of Vodou (like Mama Danto, who protects, and Papa Damballah, who brings peace). In the process, he shares the rich and at times disturbing history of its practitioners (especially the oppression and racism faced during slavery) and offers a litany of everything necessary to practice Vodou on an individual level, from knowledge of the tradition's most important symbols, rites, myths and spells to an extensive list of further resources and Vodou-related Web sites, music and even charities. (*Jan.*) Copyright    Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Vodou (as Filan prefers spelling *voodoo*) is more misunderstood than appreciated in contemporary America, but Filan does an excellent job of presenting his religion to the lay reader. Although written especially for those who hope to practice vodou, the book is also a good introduction for armchair *hougons* and *mambos* (male and female celebrants). Start, Filan advises, by understanding the social reality in which vodou arose. In chapters of excellent, readable history, he describes the slave trade and the bloody slave revolts that led to the eventual establishment of today's Haiti. He doesn't flinch from describing the vodou connections of the frightful Tonton Makout, "Papa Doc" Duvalier's personal militia, nor does he pretend that vodou is invariably a route to peace and harmony. Like any religion, it can be employed negatively, too. After his comprehensive introduction, Filan goes into some of the major *lwes* (roughly translated, "gods and goddesses," but *lwes* could also be considered to indicate saints, though never human saints) that a practitioner might encounter. A good, respectful resource. *Patricia Monaghan*  
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Review

"Refreshingly original, well-documented, and just plain fun. Kenaz brings just the right combination of insider insights and skeptical observations to this must-read for anyone fascinated by the world of Afro-diasporan religious movements. Highly recommended." (*Anne Newkirk Niven, Editor in Chief, SageWoman, PanGaia, newWitch*)

"Filan's clear and sensible approach shares the rudiments of Vodou, and gives us a fascinating introduction to the history and culture of Haiti. This book will be important to all who feel that religious practice makes a practical difference in our lives." (*Judy Harrow, author of Devoted to You: Honoring Deity*)

"This highly readable book will be valuable to every reader interested in Haitian Vodou, and essential for those who want to make the transition from intellectual knowledge to personal experience of a profound and unfairly neglected religion."

(*John Michael Greer, author of The New Encyclopedia of the Occult, A World Full of Gods, and The Drui*)

"Vodou is not what most people think. It's not "devil worship, dark curses, and drumbeat-driven orgies performed at midnight," poking needles at dolls, or simple superstition. With over a decade of service to the lwa (the deities of Vodou) and membership in Société la Belle Venus #2, a Vodou temple in Brooklyn, Filan sets out to right these pulpy perspectives of what in reality is a complex African diaspora spirituality and a form of worship that marries the secular and the spiritual. Of course, Vodou is not without its dangers, since "the lwa can wreak a frightening vengeance." It's not foolproof, either; without proper initiation into addressing the lwa, they will simply ignore you. But Filan aspires to give potential initiates the proper tools for communicating with the deities of Vodou (like Mama Danto who protects, and Papa Damballah who brings peace). In the process, he shares the rich and at times disturbing history of its practitioners (especially the oppression and racism faced during slavery), and offers a litany of everything necessary to practice Vodou on an individual level, from knowledge of the tradition's most important symbols, rites, myths and spells, to an extensive list of further resources and Vodou-related Web sites, music and even charities." (*Publishers Weekly*, 11/13/06)

"There is a sense of excitement which runs through this book, and the reader is caught up in its facts and material in an enjoyable manner. This is a good reading experience about what Haitian Vodou truly is, with nothing left out." (*Lee Prosser, Ghostvillage.com, Feb 2007*)

"This book made me think. And because it did, I give it my highest recommendation. Great for anyone who has an interest in this subject." (*Sapphoq Reviews, Feb 2007*)

"Kenaz Filan has succeeded where many before have failed. *The Haitian Vodou Handbook* (emphasis on the "handbook") is a highly practical and informative starter's guide. . . . Filan's book provides all the necessary information, and then some, to get one started in serving the Lwa. For those wishing to continue their exploration of the subject, the author provides extensive references and pointers to sources of information, internet resources and suppliers. (*Ashé Journal, Vol 6, Issue 1, Spring 2007*)

"I wasn't sure what to expect when I got this book, but I was very pleased with it, even the parts I disagreed with. It is informative, well-written, and well worth the price." (*Mike Gleason, Witchgrove, Mar 2007*)

"This is an excellent introductory text for folks of any background. . . . honest and respectful, and has a good balance of information and respecting of oathbound material. If you've any interest in this religion whatsoever, even just curiosity, this is a great place to start." (*Pagan Book Reviews, April 2007*)

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Stephen Hawkins:**

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive at this point, people have to do something to make all of them survive, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice through surrounding. One thing that often many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a e-book your ability to survive enhance then having chance to stand than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading a new book, we give you that *The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa* book as beginner and daily reading guide. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

**John Mallery:**

The book with title The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa includes a lot of information that you can study it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. This particular book exist new information the information that exist in this publication represented the condition of the world now. That is important to yo7u to be aware of how the improvement of the world. That book will bring you within new era of the glowbal growth. You can read the e-book on the smart phone, so you can read it anywhere you want.

**Silvia Washington:**

Why? Because this The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap this but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I have been you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

**Frederick Palazzo:**

This The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa is completely new way for you who has intense curiosity to look for some information because it relief your hunger of knowledge. Getting deeper you upon it getting knowledge more you know otherwise you who still having little digest in reading this The Haitian Vodou Handbook: Protocols for Riding with the Lwa can be the light food in your case because the information inside this kind of book is easy to get through anyone. These books acquire itself in the form that is reachable by anyone, sure I mean in the e-book type. People who think that in e-book form make them feel drowsy even dizzy this guide is the answer. So there is not any in reading a book especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for a person. So , don't miss this! Just read this e-book variety for your better life along with knowledge.

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