

Tharizdun

"Light must be snuffed, perfection decayed, order dissolved, and minds fragmented."

— Creed of Tharizdun

Tharizdun, the Dark God, He of Eternal Darkness, is an evil [deity](#) of decay, insanity and darkness. He is part of the [Greyhawk pantheon](#).

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Unlike most deities of [Oerth](#), who take humanoid shape, Tharizdun appears as a dark, amorphous form reminiscent of a sentient [sphere of annihilation](#). Contact with the deity brings insanity and death, and no accurate surviving descriptions or depictions of him remain. ^[1]^[5]

Alignment  [Edit](#)

With his goal of destruction, Tharizdun is Chaotic Evil. Historically, he has been considered Neutral Evil^[1]. No beings have encountered Tharizdun for over a millennium, and his alignment can only be be inferred from that of his insane followers.

Titles  [Edit](#)

Tharizdun is known by one name or another across countless worlds. He is called the Ebon God,^[5] the Dark God, He of Eternal Darkness,^[1] Lord of Decay,^[6] the Ender,^[7] the Patient One,^[7] He Who

Tharizdun

Titles	The Dark God, ^[1] The Ebon God, He of Eternal Darkness, ^[2] the Lost God ^[3]
Aliases	Elder Elemental Eye, the Forgotten God ^[4]
Realm	Demiplane of Imprisonment
Pantheon	Greyhawk pantheon , Dawn War pantheon
Rank	Intermediate Deity
Portfolio	Darkness, destruction, entropy, insanity
Gender	Male
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
Holy symbol	Spiral of Decay, Obex
First appearance	The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun (1982)

Waits,^[7] the Anathema,^[7] the Father of Elder Evils,^[7] the Author of Wickedness,^[7] the Eater of Worlds,^[7] the Despised,^[7] the Undoer,^[7] the Chained God,^[8] and the Lost God^[3].

ADVERTISEMENT

Portfolio Edit

Tharizdun is a evil god of eternal darkness, decay, destruction, entropy, malign knowledge, and insanity.^[1]

Worship Edit

Dogma Edit

Tharizdun's followers are united by a single ancient creed, found inscribed within one of his dark pyramids:

"Light must be snuffed, perfection decayed, order dissolved, and minds fragmented."^[5]

The rest of his religion consists of a sporadic collection of terrible holy texts, secretly guarded even from other sects and detailing terrible rituals and extraplanar horrors.

The clergy of Tharizdun preach that all things eventually crumble, and in time Tharizdun's victory over the gods will be complete.^[9]

Followers place great importance on the number three. For example, there are believed to be **333 Gems of Tharizdun**, each an minor unholy artifact. Tharizdun's clerics cannot draw power from him unless they are in contact with an artifact such as these.

Worshippers Edit

Tharizdun's few followers are almost all insane, and those who are not are extremely dangerous.^[1]

Contact with the imprisoned Dark God is only possible in proximity to one of his remaining artifacts or forgotten unholy sites, and even then his blessings come at the cost of madness.

Many cults are unaware that the entity that they worship is Tharizdun. Unable to act upon the world directly, he dispenses his power from cover identities and aspects, such as the **Elder Elemental Eye** responsible for the infamous **Temple of Elemental Evil**.

Tharizdun's followers are highly secretive, and his temples are well hidden. Many follow him in the

optimistic belief that he will spare his loyal servants when he destroys the multiverse. Their goal is to bring together all of his artifacts, and to free the Ebon God from his imprisonment, where he will destroy the multiverse. Although the cult's leaders are fully aware of this, many low-ranking members merely seek revenge against society, and are unaware with the full extent of the Dark God's destruction, should he be freed.^[10]

Tharizdun is followed by the **Black Brotherhood**, a dangerous sect of the **Suloise Scarlet Brotherhood**.^[11]

Clergy [Edit](#)

Clerics of Tharizdun cannot gain spells from him in the normal way, due to his imprisonment on some unknown plane. They must be in contact with one of his few holy artifacts, or one of his ancient holy sites.

His clerics traditionally wear black or purple robes. Clerics of his aspect, the Elder Elemental Eye, typically wear ochre-colored robes, sometimes altered to represent one of the four elements.^[12]

Many temples are led by charismatic high priests known as the Witnesses of Tharizdun, who live in opulent surroundings and partake in lavish food, drink, and other base desires at the expense of their underlings.^{[9][10]} The leaders of the cult at the **Temple of Elemental Evil** are known as the Doomdreamers.^[12]

Rituals [Edit](#)

Followers of Tharizdun conduct terrible rituals of sacrifice. Most of their rites involve failed attempts to commune with their deity, or learn the secrets to unlocking the chains that bind him.^[1]

Orders [Edit](#)

Tharizdun's cult is scattered across the world. He has cults in **Verbobonc** and southern **Furyondy**.^[13]

His most dedicated followers are the **Doomdreamers**, a high-ranking caste of priests who receive visions from Tharizdun. They collect rare and esoteric knowledge, such as the names of demons.

Tharizdun is followed by the **Black Brotherhood**, a dangerous offshoot of the **Scarlet Brotherhood**. The majority of the Scarlet Brotherhood do not worship him, and he is not considered a **Suel** deity, at least not by the current Brotherhood. However, the Brotherhood intentionally spreads rumors to the contrary, sowing fear and misinformation among their enemies.^[14]

Midnight Darkness, a cult of **assassins** dedicated to **Nerull**, god of death, is secretly led by **Karniquaza**, a follower of Tharizdun and member of the **Scarlet Brotherhood**.^[15]

Holy sites [Edit](#)

Those forgotten temples which survive are in dark, underground places, kept freezingly cold by ancient magic placed by the fanatics who built them.^[16] They make heavy use of black stone and an archaic trapezoidal building pattern. Newer temples to Tharizdun exist in the abandoned buildings of cities, disused sewer chambers, and the cellars of converts. A few operate more openly in remote wilderness areas where the locals are too few and too cowardly to challenge them.^[9]

By far the greatest of Tharizdun's ancient temples was located in the **Kron Hills** of **Oerth**. In recent times, the forces of Tharizdun built a new temple on this most profane site, known as the **Temple of Elemental Evil**.^[17] Wielders of a dark blade called **Druniazth** find themselves drawn here.^[18]

In recent years, Tharizdun's cult built a new temple in an extinct volcanic crater in the **Lortmil Mountains**, known as the **Temple of All-Consumption**.^[17]

A **forgotten temple of Tharizdun** exists in the **Yatil Mountains** on the world of **Oerth**. In cold chamber deep underground, called the **black cyst**, a black mist squirms within a floating hemisphere of black **needlerock**.^[2]

A temple to Tharizdun exists in the **Drachengrabs**, a mountain range of **Oerth**.^[3]

An ancient, but inert temple of Tharizdun survives in **Erelhi-Cinlu**, the drow city. It is located in the Ghetto of Foreigners, and resembles a black ziggurat.^[19]

The frozen ruins of a temple to Tharizdun exist in a vast cavern in the underground waterways beneath the town of **Narwell**. Its entranceway is in a massive demonic face, sixty feet tall, and permanently frozen over with ice.^[16]

Another ruined temple is located in the **Jotens**, a mountain range of **Oerth**.^[18]

There is a temple to Tharizdun hidden in the **Free City of Greyhawk**. Another exists in the sewers below **Verbobonc**, whose membership numbers 55. It is led by **Damargath**, a human cleric/fighter from the cult's Greyhawk chapter.^[10]

A temple exists near the upper **Jewel river**, from which occasionally pour forth horrible giant beetles

with skeletal heads. The beetles are mutated by feeding on the waste of **otyughs** within the temple, who possess horrible tentacles and beaks like that of a **grell**.^[20]

The **Ziggurat of Black** is an ancient tower in the **Tilvanot Pensinsula**, constructed of flat black metal. No entrance to the ziggurat has been found.

It is rumored that a temple of Tharizdun exists in the **Gull Cliffs**. The albino **gnomes** beneath the hills here are said to dig caverns to steer visitors away from the temple.^[21]

A false rumor claimed that an abandoned shrine to Tharizdun existed in **Veluna City**.^[22]

Holy days Edit

The followers of Tharizdun are few and secretive, and most people do not even know that he was once worshiped. If he has holy days, they are unknown to all but perhaps some of his followers.

Holy symbol Edit

Tharizdun's holy symbol is a jagged counterclockwise dark spiral rune known as the Spiral of Decay.

Some of his clerics also use a two-tiered inverted ziggurat, known as the Obex.^[23]

Under the aspect of the Elder Elemental Eye, his holy symbol is a downward-pointing black triangle with an inverted yellow Y within it. His followers under that identity also use a symbol of a golden flaming eye.^[24]

Favored weapon Edit

In as far as the enigmatic Tharizdun favors any one weapon, most concur that it is the dagger, and followers of the Dark God often carry sharp, curved daggers with which they conduct terrible rituals of sacrifice.^[5]

At least one sage believes that Tharizdun himself wields the Spiral of Decay represented in his holy symbol, for which no equivalent weapon exists in human knowledge.^[1] Yet another (almost certainly insane) source claims his weapon to be something called a "Check Toe".^[25]

Relationships Edit

Enemies Edit

Tharizdun is hated by nearly all other gods, who would gladly put aside their differences to stop the

Dark God from escaping his demiplane prison.

Rao, god of light, is particularly opposed to Tharizdun. Rao's followers believe that the **Crook of Rao** was originally crafted by that god for the purpose of banishing Tharizdun's dark forces.

Boccob, god of magic, actively opposes Tharizdun and works to ensure that he remains imprisoned. The power of magic is very gradually waning in the world of **Oerth**, and Boccob suspects that Tharizdun is responsible.^[26]

Allies [Edit](#)

Tharizdun has no allies among the gods. The evil **Archomental**s, five powerful beings believed to be his offspring, are possible allies in his plots, and were intended to be accomplices during **The Return to the Temple of Elemental** module.

Minions [Edit](#)

Avatars and proxies [Edit](#)

Tharizdun's greatest servant is **Shothragot**, the Herald of Tharizdun^[27], a disconnected avatar of the Dark God. It is a massive sphere of black tar, buried beneath the world for a thousand years.^[7]

Creatures [Edit](#)

The **black cysts** are amorphous spheres of pure blackness, formed from the coagulated nightmares of sleeping Tharizdun. These creatures grow as cultists perform ritual sacrifice to it. Reality warps in its wake.^[7]

The **elhoriams** are blackened, undead skeletons with a deadly entropic touch. They are typically used to guard temples, and were created by the cult by combining the art of necromancy with the power of one of Tharizdun's dark artifacts.^[28]

Artifacts [Edit](#)

The cult of Tharizdun possesses numerous artifacts and lesser magic items sacred to the Dark God, and devotes considerable resources to finding more. Even fragments of destroyed artifacts are priceless to the cult, since clerics cannot receive spells from Tharizdun without being in proximity to such an artifact. Many items crafted more recently are etched with a vortex symbol.^[29]

Lament for Lost Tharizdun is a book bound in black scaly hide, written in silver ink on black paper. Merely reading this text is damaging to the mind of any but the mad followers of Tharizdun. It is presumed to have been written by one of his followers after the deity's banishment.

Tharizdun's followers seek to reclaim the **333 Gems of Tharizdun**, a collection of gemstones sacred to the Dark One, sacrificed to him by cultists in ages past. Mostly looted or sold off after Tharizdun's imprisonment, they have spread across the world by traders unaware of their connection to that evil deity.

The **Spear of Sorrow**, a cursed polearm seven feet in length and carved entirely from black stone, is sacred to Tharizdun. Its purpose is to locate and restore that god's ancient and forgotten temples and awaken his sleeping guardians.^[30]

Druniazth, the Claw of Tharizdun, is a sword made from black **ruinite** metal by cultists centuries after his banishment. Its purpose is to spread a prophecy of Tharizdun's return, and ultimately to unleash him upon the world.^[18]

The **Weeping Hexgram**, discovered near the **Ziggurat of Black** in the year 576 **CY**, is a ten foot diameter black iron ring inset with a bowed hexagram, which seeps blood when exposed to sunlight. In 581 **CY**, a paladin of **Heironeous** broke the ring into three pieces.^[31]

Over a thousand years ago, Tharizdun gifted the **Scorpion Crown** to **Shattados**, king of the empire of **Sulm**.^[6]

Realm  [Edit](#)

Tharizdun has been imprisoned in a distant demiplane for longer than anyone can remember. Its location in the multiverse is a closely guarded secret, even among gods.

It is speculated that the Dark God floats powerlessly through the **Astral Plane**, all but dead due to lack of followers.^[32]

Tharizdun is speculated to be the malign entity known to be trapped within the **Demiplane of Imprisonment**, a massive mile-wide crystal floating through the **Ethereal Plane**. That plane's prisoner is an insane entity from another reality dedicated to the destruction of all things, his nightmarish thoughts occasionally bubbling through and leaking into the dreamscapes of his worshipers.^[33]

History [Edit](#)

Prehistory [Edit](#)

In a time before surviving record, forgotten temples of Tharizdun were built by evil cultists of that dark god, who gathered in his name to undertake terrible deeds. Tharizdun and his servants grew ever more powerful, until the other gods set aside their differences and colluded to banish his presence from the world. Tharizdun has been imprisoned in some unknown demiplane ever since.^[23]

Ancient history [Edit](#)

The ancient **Flan** people knew of Tharizdun. Around -700 **CY**, the ruler of **Sulm** invoked the Dark One in hopes of uniting his feuding subjects. Instead, his people mutated into scorpion-like monsters, and his realm decayed into a desert.

The ruined Suel Imperium of **Oerth** knew of Tharizdun and considered him a god of magic and mysteries.^[4]

Although Tharizdun still has limited influence outside of his demiplane of imprisonment, he has not been heard from for over a thousand years.^[1] Tharizdun's servants last called forth his avatar in the year -422 **CY**, during the **Twin Cataclysms** which destroyed the **Suel Imperium** and **Baklunish Empire**.^[7]

Recent history [Edit](#)

Cultists of Tharizdun made ritualized attempts to contact their imprisoned deity, but over centuries they became disillusioned and complacent. The followers at his temple beneath the Yatil mountains gradually embezzled the sacred **333 Gems of Tharizdun** by replacing them with less valuable gemstones, and the last of his high priests there died over a hundred years ago.^[2]

Numerous smaller cults have risen since then. In 591 **CY** a cult to the Elder Elemental Eye, an alias of Tharizdun, captured the **Temple of All-Consumption**.^[23]

Myths and legends [Edit](#)

The **Book of Incarum**, holy text of the church of **Rao**, tells that Rao is the creator of mankind. Humans in ancient times turned to Tharizdun for magical power, and brought upon an era of despair and eternal night. Rao created the two moons of **Oerth** to create light for those who repented, and sent his servant Incarum with the **Crook of Rao** to cast out the forces of Tharizdun from the world.^[22]

Publication history [Edit](#)

AD&D 1st edition [Edit](#)

Tharizdun first appeared in Gary Gygax's adventure, [The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun](#) (1982).^[2]

AD&D 2nd edition [Edit](#)

Tharizdun is named in such second edition Greyhawk books as [Player's Guide to Greyhawk](#) (1998) and [The Scarlet Brotherhood](#) (1999).

D&D 3rd edition [Edit](#)

Tharizdun does not appear in the [Player's Handbook \(3.0\)](#) (2000), which made Greyhawk its implied setting, but is listed in the [Living Greyhawk Gazetteer](#) (2000). His cult appears prominently in [Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil](#) (2001).

D&D 4th edition [Edit](#)

Tharizdun is one of the core deities in the [Player's Handbook \(4e\)](#) (2008).

D&D 5th edition [Edit](#)

Tharizdun appears in the [Player's Handbook \(5e\)](#) (2014) as a warlock patron, appearing as a Great Old One alongside such entities as Great Cthulhu.

Creative origins [Edit](#)

D&D creator [Gary Gygax](#) named Tharizdun after Tharzduun or Tharzdu'un, a deity created by [Rob Kuntz](#).

"I contributed the idea for Tharizdun by informing Gary of my Dark God, Tharzduun."
— Rob Kuntz

It is speculated that this was in turn inspired by the deity Thasaidon, from the works of Clark Ashton Smith. A quote from that author's work *The Eldritch Dark* appears in the introduction to [Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil](#) (2001).

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3. ↑ [3.0](#) [3.1](#) [3.2](#) *Risen from the Ashes*, [Dragon Magazine](#) #191, p.67.
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20. ↑ [From the Ashes](#) (1992), Campaign book, p.49.
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24. ↑ *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil* (2001), p.4.
25. ↑ A printing error in [Complete Divine](#) led Tharizdun's weapon to be listed as "check tooe", referring to the adventure module [Temple of Elemental Evil](#).
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33. ↑ *Multiple Dementia*, [Dragon Magazine](#) #353, p.36-41.

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