

This document contains the deity details for Ahriman, Lord of Death, and describes his followers and worship.



EDICT OF AHRIMAN

Bound to his throne of skulls

Ahriman sits

Lord of the barren Void

Death is eternal

Life is a mirage

Description: Ahriman, Lord of Death, Master and Prisoner of the Eternal Throne of Skulls, Denizen of the Void is a universal, ancient death god. In the far-flung past, when the Fates were just spinning the thread for the Skein of Destiny, he was a powerful demon lord, ruling over a desert kingdom of debased and mutated chaos worshipers. During the Wars of Balance he was tricked, his unchecked lust for power causing him to accept the Skull Throne and the domain of death of his own free will, binding him in the Void for eternity. For this cycle of creation needs death, and death follows its own inescapable logic: as Lord of Death, Ahriman must follow these rules, his power and chaotic hunger forever chained to the service of Balance.

Ahriman is a dark, demonic presence, depicted in art and statuary as a drake-winged and horned grand-demon. His domain is the Void: a dimension of pitch black darkness and osseous landscapes. At the center of the spiraling Void, stands his Skull Throne, the symbol of his power and imprisonment. The Void eats all the souls not bound to other afterworlds, as well as many of the ones set for other destinies. Death is eternal, the Void is hungry, and the Lord is spiteful.

Ahriman's cult is present in many cities, dealing with the unwanted dead. Temples can also be found in the countryside, usually in areas otherwise barren or useless for farming and industry. His worship is often seen as a necessary evil, an unavoidable reality of the cycle of creation. His clerics and priests are solemn, dark figures, shunned by most sensible men.

Despite his outcast status among civilized peoples, Ahriman is a mighty god. He has grown in power during his long imprisonment in the Void, drawing upon the souls of the most unfortunate to end up his demesne. All races and creeds at least acknowledge his power and domain. If he was freed from his servitude his

vengeance upon the other deities and godlings would wreak ruin upon all existence. A fanatic, chaotic sect within his congregation schemes to accomplish just this, their goals and allegiance born out of a lust for power, as well as a fear towards their deity's irrefutable power.

Aligned deities:

Nimlurun, the Unclean One
Klazath, God of War

Opposing deities:

Malotoch, the Carrion Crow God
Ildavir, the Goddess of Nature
Auranne, the Expectant

Services of the Cult: The church of Ahriman only offers healing services to followers, for they may yet advance Ahriman's plans. Non-members may access other divine favours in trade for wealth or sacrifice. Ahriman's cult is also often responsible for handling the dead from nearby regions, especially those not claimed by other deities. It should also be noted that Ahriman's domain allows his clerics some power over the undead, and some temples utilize them as labour or guardians.

Cleric description¹

Symbol: The symbol of Ahriman is the Skull of the Throne. His clerics wear it as a pendant, and the most fervent worshippers tattoo it as a mask over their gaunt features.

Weapon proficiencies: Daggers, words, axes, whips, staves, clubs, maces, hammers and mauls; for ranged combat clerics of Ahriman can use blowguns, bows, crossbows or slings.

Special: Ahriman rewards his faithful with the following boons.

- Followers of Ahriman can dedicate their kills to their god. For this, they must offer the creature's soul to Ahriman in prayer, and perform the final blow, committing the soul to Ahriman's bleak realm (only the deathblow counts as sacrifice, players are tasked with keeping track of these kills). Only sentient humanoid and monsters are worthy offerings to the demanding death god. Later, the follower can ask Ahriman for a boon: for each soul they've committed to the Void, they may add +1 to a single damage roll (the soul-points stack, but Judges should use their own discretion for capping this ability, perhaps situationally); the counter resets after the boon is used.
- Ahriman may permit his clerics the spells (from the wizard spell lists in the DCC rulebook, pgs. 127 and 128): *Charm undead* (as *Charm person*, but only pertaining to undead creatures), *Undead summoning* (as *Monster summoning*, but only for undead creatures), *Ray of Enfeeblement*, *Scare*, *Consult spirit* and *Blade of the Void* (as *Blade of Atropos*, but the effect targets undead creatures)
- Ahriman NEVER grants his clerics the spells *Restore vitality*, *Cure paralysis* or *Neutralize poison or disease*.
- For each lay on hands action successfully completed by a cleric of Ahriman, the recipient must dedicate their next kill to the Lord of Death. If a character has 5 uncompleted dedications to the death

¹ Note that at my table Ahriman is a (borderline) neutral god, and accepts mostly neutral worshippers.

god, they cannot receive healing until they kill again. Only sentient humanoids and monsters, and other living creatures of merit count for this act, which may obviously be seen as a desecration by other deities (all Judge's discretion, obviously).

Turn unholy: Angels, demons, devils, Lords of Law, Lawful Primes and mundane animals; clerics of Ahriman can turn undead, but cannot smite them; treat auto-kill results as charm effects.

Disapproval Table: Clerics of Ahriman use the following disapproval table.

Table A: Ahriman's disapproval	
Roll	Disapproval
0 or less	The cleric must atone for their sins. They can do nothing but recite the mantras of Ahriman, and offer their blood to Ahriman in atonement for the next 10 minutes, starting as soon as they're not in immediate danger.
1	The cleric must atone for their sins. They can do nothing but recite the mantras of Ahriman, and bleed for Ahriman (suffering 1 point of HP damage) for the next 10 minutes, starting as soon as they're not in immediate danger.
2	The cleric must dedicate a soul to Ahriman as soon as they're able. This dedication need not happen as a sacrifice, but should be approached as a curse: the recipient's soul will be destined to the Void, unless they take steps to avoid it. Failure to complete the dedication within 120 minutes incurs a -1 penalty to all spell checks until a soul has been dedicated to Ahriman (the recipient needs to be made aware of this deed; they can avoid the dedication either by the cleric's death or by petitioning for aid from another deity).
3	The cleric must increase Ahriman's power with a new follower. They incur a -1 penalty to spell checks until they convert a new follower to the faith.
4	The cleric incurs Ahriman's ire: a -1 to spell checks for a day, and they are struck with a morbid sense of malaise for the duration of the effect.
5	The cleric is struck with an arrogant mood. For the remainder of the day they will not obey the commands or directions of anyone. If they do so, they lose all spellcasting ability including healing for the remainder of the day.
6	The cleric incurs an immediate -1 to all spell checks until they commit a soul to Ahriman, striking the final blow and sending them on their way to the Void. Additionally, they suffer nightmares for the duration, dreaming of the endless dark beyond.
7	The cleric immediately incurs a -4 penalty to the spell or ability that caused the disapproval. This lasts until the next day. Additionally, they reek like the dead for the duration.
8	The cleric loses access to 1d4 randomly determined 1st level spells for the remainder of the day. Additionally, for the duration of the effect they appear as a semi transparent, ghostly form (the effect is mostly cosmetic, but can be unnerving).

9	The cleric immediately incurs a -2 penalty to all spell checks until the next day. Also, they suffer horrid nightmares, sent by all the creatures they've consigned to the Void. They must roll a DC 5+CL Will save, or suffer -1d to all actions the following day, caused by lack of peaceful rest.
10	The cleric must endure the test of understanding. Their Stamina is set to 1; the damage only starts to heal once they've committed a soul to Ahriman, and struck the final blow.
11	The cleric is ordered to meditate upon the necessity of death. They incur a -2 penalty to all spell checks. The only way to lift the penalty is to meditate: each full day of meditation in a suitable necropolis the cleric can make a DC 15 Will save to remove the penalty. After the meditation is complete they are followed by an eerie chill permanently.
12	The cleric loses access to 2d4 random 1st level spells for the remainder of the day. Also, Ahriman's domain encroaches on their dreams every night, filling their dreams with the Void.
13	The cleric is temporarily unable to turn creatures, the effect persists for 1d7 days. Additionally, the Skull of the Throne appears on their body as a large, indelible mark of dead skin.
14	Calculate the cleric's net worth in gold pieces. The cleric incurs a permanent -4 penalty to spell checks, which persists until they have rid themselves 40% of this value; each 10% increment drops the penalty by -1. The wealth has to be used to further the domain of death. Also, the cleric has no body temperature from now on: their body is as cold as death.
15	The cleric is temporarily disowned by Ahriman. They cannot gain XP until they consign a soul to Ahriman's domain and send it on its way. Additionally, from now on they appear pale and sickly.
16	The cleric's ability to lay on hands is restricted for 1d14 days. For the duration, they may only rest peacefully when in the company of the dead, suffering -1d to all rolls otherwise. Also, they exude an aura of depression and malcontent permanently.
17	The cleric loses access to spells until the next day. Also, for the duration they must respond to any challenge with violence. Finally, they are followed by the stench of the grave wherever they go, permanently.
18	Ahriman is not pleased. The cleric's disapproval does not reset for the following d7 days. Also, their blood turns to foul, blackened rot; this effect is permanent.
19	Ahriman withholds the cleric's healing powers for 2d14 days. Also, for the duration they must consign each of their kills to Ahriman, or suffer a -1d to all actions which persists for the end of the effect. Finally, they cease to understand human suffering, becoming completely insensate to the misery of others.
20 or more	Ahriman deems the cleric unworthy, stripping them of their earthly power. The cleric's physical attributes (STR, STA and AGI) are all set to 1. For each soul the cleric consigns to the Throne of Skulls, sending them on their bleak way by his hand, the cleric may reclaim a single point from one of the stats, this drain does not heal otherwise.