What is BTB?

DRAFT: This is a draft of this new page. It is incomplete and unedited.

"BTB" or "By The Book" means different things to different people. In its simplest sense, it's playing a game "RAW", or "Rules As Written", where players adhere to the letter of the rules rather than changing or ignoring them.

In the current year, in the D&D world it's safe to say that "BTB" players appear to be the minority. The popular phrase is "rulings before rules". Rules are treated as being unimportant or evil. DM fiat is applied heavily. Hands are waived. As a result, gameplay is less meaningful and players lack rules they can rely on to judge scenarios and make game decisions. It is "storygaming", and stands opposed to classic, gamist, challenge-based adventure gaming.

If you're here, chances are you know something about this debate. If not, welcome to adventure gaming!

So, what does "BTB" mean for Demon Idol?

Demon Idol considers "BTB" to mean:

- When learning AD&D for the first time, one should strive to play the game rules-as-written. After mastery has begun to accumulate, one will intuitively know when and what rules to adjust to suit the campaign.
- Knowledge of another version of D&D does not translate to an understanding of AD&D.
- The game must be played in order to understand what or why rules are good or bad. It is not possible to gain this knowledge by reading forum or blog posts.
- When modifying or extending the game rules to suit the campaign and milieu, the spirit of the game must be paramount.
- It is not possible to understand the spirit of the game without playing the game properly for some time.
- Knowledge of the spirit of another version of D&D does not translate to an understanding of the spirit of AD&D.
- An understanding of OD&D lends itself to an understanding of AD&D, and vice-versa. Reading OD&D books, Judges Guild content, and the earliest zines earns one wisdom.

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