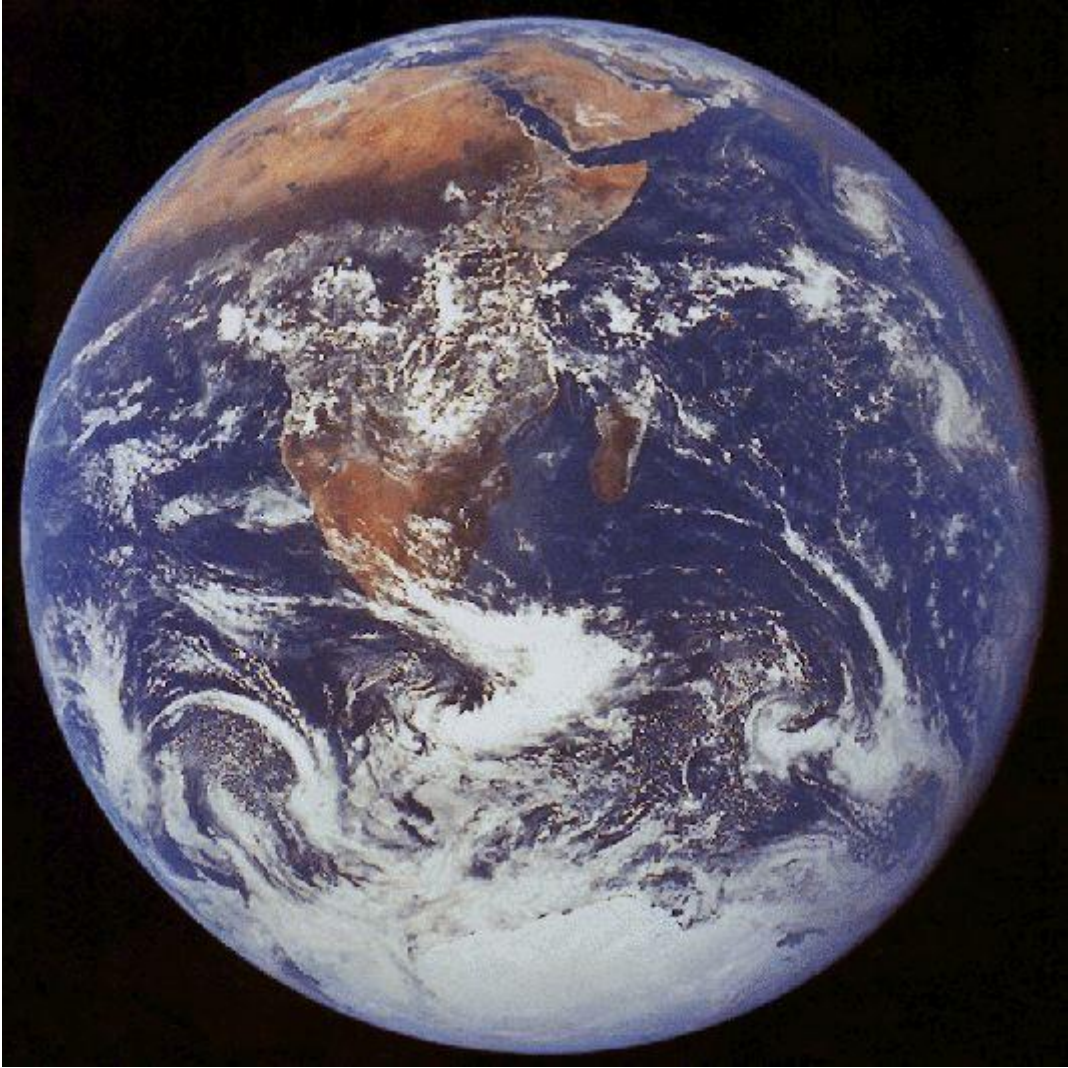


BOOK OF LEARNING



By Nia MacMannon



Gaia from Space, NASA

BOOK OF LEARNING



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Ross MacKae and the American Pagan Church bring you this work by Nia MacMannon. Nia is the Hight Priestess and a co-founder of the American Pagan Church.

INTRODUCTION

I have been a natural witch all of my life. I was always outdoors when I was a child. I would gather snakes, frogs and horned toads, hold them in my hands, study them, talk to them, and let them go. I would listen to the stories the Wind told, thrill at the sound of Thunder, and dance in the Rain. When I was in danger I would envision a protective circle around me. All of these things I did as a child, without ever having met a witch.

As I grew older, I discovered that I didn't fit the norm. I was more comfortable in nature than I was in a crowd. As my siblings made homes in cities, I headed for the country. I was even able to find a job that allowed me the freedom to explore eastern Washington State, discovering places of solitude that spoke to my heart.

It has been within the last ten years that I became Wiccan. As a solitary practitioner I came to recognize the call I heard within, that of passing on the knowledge and joy that I have found within my chosen religion. Even as a solitaire I heeded the call, volunteering as Wiccan priestess for the prison ministry. My path as a Wiccan has taken me from solitaire to coven neophyte, from neophyte to High Priestess, eventually initiated as a Third Degree Wiccan Priestess and Minister.

Understand that this is not a definitive book on Wicca or Witchcraft. It would be impossible to write such. Both are intuitive in nature and can only be experienced on a personal level, hence each individual has a unique experience. The information I have gathered here is to give you a starting point from which to begin your journey. I expect you to question everything that I have written. Turn it around, study it, and compare it to what others have to say. Use your mind and your heart, follow your intuition, and gather knowledge to you that you may make an informed decision that feels right for you.

There are many paths to the Divine. It is important to recognize that respect for ALL paths is important to an individual's spiritual growth, as well as the spiritual growth of our world. As such we must also respect those who walk a different path than the one we have chosen. Many are still on the search, seeking a spiritual home that feels right to them, perhaps you are one.

Though you have not found a certain path to be fulfilling to you, does not mean that it is not entirely valid for another person.

Although I have found joy, fulfillment, and peace on my path as a Wiccan, there are those who feel otherwise. Not everyone has an open mind or a familiarity with Wicca. Using the word ‘witch’ can send many people packing. People could lose jobs or homes because of uninformed prejudice. A family member may see a book in your home that says “Wicca” or “Witch”, and suddenly you are banned from family gatherings, even though you are neither a Wiccan nor a Witch. Because of the risk some may face, it is vital that we observe strict confidentiality. You, yourself, may chose to say that you are Wiccan, but your neighbor may have reasons to keep quiet about his beliefs. Leave it up to the others to say whether or not they are Wiccan or Pagan. You may trust your friends completely, but it is not fair to place others at risk. Above all, I ask that you keep an open mind about the discussions that occur. Do not denigrate or speak harmfully about another’s beliefs or ideas. Wicca is an intuitive mystery religion, how it affects each of us is unique and individual, even in a group setting.

I dedicate this work to my husband Randy and my children; Aimee, Josh and Jesse, for their love and support. To Kris, for her knowledge, wisdom, intuition, help, and love. To past, present, and future coven mates. Most of all I dedicate this work to the Lord and Lady, and ultimately to the Divine.

I hope that you are amazed and enlightened by at least a small part of what you read within. I hope you enjoy this experience.

Blessed Be,

Nia

*Mighty Hecate, bless this work.
Cerridwen teach these chicks.
Cernunnos touch our souls.
Flutes of Pan bring us joy.
Blessed Be!*



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NEO-PAGANS, WICCANS AND WITCHES/ HISTORY OF THE CRAFT

Animism, belief in a spirit world, is believed to be the first endeavor at religion. It is considered the most basic aspect of religious belief. Animism usually includes a belief that all objects contain spirit. However this is not a definitive rule.

Theism is the belief in a Supreme Being of some kind. Theism can be divided into monotheism, pantheism and polytheism. *Monotheism* is the belief in a Supreme Being transcendent, or superior and beyond all things. *Pantheism* is the belief that all things are Divine, and that the Divine is all things. *Polytheism* is the belief in many Gods. The Gods may represent various aspects of human life and of nature. They may come in human or non-human form. Monotheism and polytheism are the most common forms of religion found on our world today.

Animism, pantheism and polytheism are usually found in one combination or another in most pagan religions. My belief as a Wiccan can be seen as being polytheistic in that I worship both the Goddess and the God as *manifestations* of a Supreme Source. I believe that all creation is the manifestation of the Supreme Source, which is pantheism. I also believe that all things are instilled with some measure of that spirit, which is a form of animism. Since I believe in a Supreme, Sacred, and Divine Source, I am also monotheistic.

What has this to do with Neo-Paganism, Wicca, and Witchcraft?

Wicca is a religion. It is considered a pagan religion. A pagan religion is any religion other than Christianity, Judaism or Mohammedanism. Those three religions only cover a small portion of the Earth's total population. That means that Hindus, Buddhists, and any other religion is considered 'pagan' according to this definition.

The word Pagan is Latin and means 'from the countryside' or 'country dweller'. Those who were called *Neo-pagan* often practice a modern recreation of older, nature-oriented religions with a focus on the turn of the year and cycle of the seasons. Some of these practices can find their roots in 30,000-year-old goddess religions. Very often neo-Pagans are eclectic, gathering aspects of many religious beliefs and incorporating them into a system that fits their system of spiritual worship. Neo-pagan religions include Wicca, Druidism, Goddess Religions, and modern shamanism.

Most Pagans agree on many of these commonly held beliefs:

- Divinity is immanent or internal, and transcendent or external.
- Divinity is just as likely to manifest itself as female as it is male. Because of this many women are attracted to Neo-pagan beliefs.
- Many pagans believe in numerous gods and goddesses, whether as individual deities, as aspects of the Divine, or as components of different archetypes.
- A deep respect and love of Nature, believing that Nature, i.e. Mother Earth, is divine in Her own right.
- A dissatisfaction with male-oriented Supreme Being religious organizations and a distrust of would-be Messiahs and prophets. This makes Pagans hard to organize, and leads to constant mutation and growth.
- The principle that human beings were meant to live lives filled with joy, love, pleasure and humor. The concepts of guilt, sin, jealousy, greed, etc., are seen as imbalances in one's nature and are aspects of the ego's shadow.
- A simple set of ethics and morality based on the golden rule: the avoidance of harm to other people. It is also often extended to all living beings and the planet as a whole.
- The understanding and belief that with proper training and intent, human beings are capable of performing miracles with their own psychic, magical abilities.
- The importance of celebrating the solar, lunar and other cycles of our lives as sacred for our own health and well-being.
- A willingness to examine new ideas and old beliefs, through investigation. There is also a willingness to embrace those ideas into a belief system of their own making. A result of this is a greater understanding and tolerance for other religious beliefs.
- A strong commitment to personal growth and a further commitment to universal growth. This is further expounded with a conviction in personal responsibility and ability to solve their own problems on all levels, public and private.

- A belief that one can progress far towards achieving spiritual growth and development through the careful alteration of one's consciousness, using meditation, visualization, and intent.
- The knowledge that for the individual to progress on the evolutionary ladder the human community must also progress, therefore we must all work together to achieve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth for ourselves and all of mankind.
- The understanding that they must be true to their calling, acting with honor and love at all times, making their lives consistent with their beliefs.

So what, specifically is Wicca?

Wicca is a modern reconstruction of nature-based religions, with ties to ancient Northern European fertility beliefs. Wiccans, a follower of Wicca, believe in both the masculine and feminine aspects of deity. They don't recruit or proselytize. They often hold rites in the evening, considering dusk to be a sacred time. They prefer natural surroundings to worship in, but often will hold ritual indoors. Children are encouraged to explore other religions so that they may make an informed choice of which to follow when they are mature. Wiccans do not perform sacrifices, nor do they worship the devil. They hold all life as sacred and many are vegetarians.

Wiccans believe in the Wiccan Rede and the Three-fold law as rules of conduct. The Wiccan Rede:

An it harm none, do as ye will.

This means that a person should feel free to do what ever they want to, as long as it does not harm themselves or anyone else. The Wiccan Rede tells us to consider ALL of the consequences of our actions and binds us to do the right thing at all times.

The Three-fold law states that the good that a person does eventually returns to the doer, multiplied by threes. Any harm one does also returns in the same ratio. This seriously encourages Wiccans to behave ethically. The Wiccan Rede and the Three-fold Law prevents them from doing harm to themselves or to others, even with spiteful words. Words, as we know have the power to harm just as a physical blow would. However these laws, though seeming simple enough, are complex in nature. It is hard not to respond with an angry

backlash when you are hurting. As a result, when we do inadvertently harm someone or something, Wiccans are expected to accept responsibility for their actions and to deal with the consequences in a mature manner.

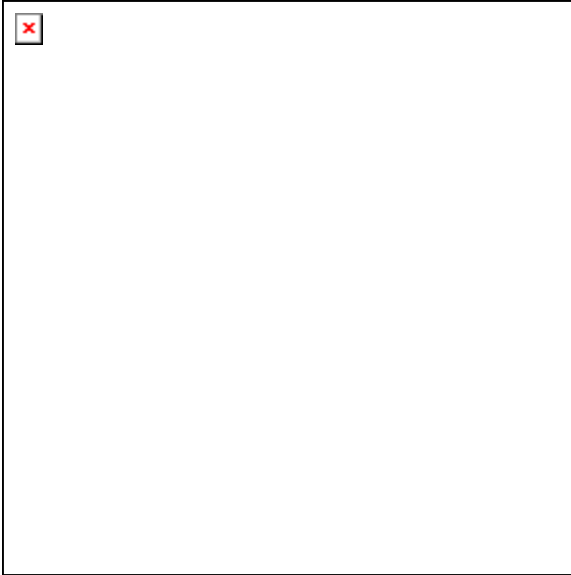


Palouse Falls

History of the Craft

Joanna Hautin-Mayer has written:

"We know tragically little about the actual religious expressions of the ancient Celts. We have a few myths and legends, but very little archeological evidence to support our theories. We have no written records of their actual forms of worship, and the accounts of their culture and beliefs written by their contemporaries are often highly biased and of questionable historical worth."



Silver RavenWolf wrote in 1998:

"Wicca, as you practice the religion today, is a new religion, barely fifty years old. The techniques you use at present are not entirely what your elders practiced even thirty years ago. Of course, threads of 'what was' weave through the tapestry of 'what is now.' ...in no way can we replicate to perfection the precise circumstances of environment, society, culture, religion and magick a hundred years ago, or a thousand. Why would we want to? The idea is to go forward with the knowledge of the past, tempered by the tools of our own age."

Gerald Gardner is said to be the father of modern Wicca. He was a British civil servant who lived from 1884 to 1964. In 1939 he joined an existing Coven in 1939, taking the usual vows of secrecy. In 1949 he wrote a book called "High Magic's Aid" under the name of Scire, which described some of the practices of British Witchcraft. After the repeal of the Anti-witch laws in 1951 Gerald publicly came out as a witch. He wrote "Witchcraft Today" in 1954, in which he described additional details about the faith. Gardner also wrote "The Meaning of Witchcraft" which described the history of Wicca in Northern Europe. Gardner added many elements from ceremonial magic, Freemasonry, and other sources to help expand the coven's belief system. With information on Wicca and Witchcraft becoming available, a new religion, based on old beliefs, came into being.

Many, perhaps most, Wiccans and Witches are solitary practitioners who practice their chosen religion alone. Covens are informal groups of Wiccans

who study and worship together. The covens that have a High Priestess, are usually run with the High Priestess as the leader.

Wiccans, in general, usually consider themselves to be Witches, though not all Witches are Wiccans. Being a witch or practicing witchcraft does not designate your religious preference. Wicca is a religious belief system. Witchcraft is using your will to manipulate the environment around you to bring forth desired results. Witches are people who practice Witchcraft. You can be a witch and belong to any religious order. However, you cannot be a Wiccan, and a Christian too.

Wiccans are often asked, “Do you worship Satan?”

Wiccans do NOT believe in Satan. The Devil is a Judeo-Christian myth and is not Pagan. Satanists do use symbols which are common to Christian, Wiccan, and other religious beliefs, which help to lead one to that conclusion however. Satanism, or Devil-worship uses the inverted cross as a religious symbol. An upright cross is a Christian symbol, and equal-armed crosses are Wiccan and Native American symbols. The pentacle is a Wiccan symbol and is often inverted and used as a Satanic religious symbol. There are a few modern Satanic organizations, which tend to be small. The most famous is Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan. LaVey’s Church is basically an organized form of self-indulgent hedonism.

Many Wiccans do recognize the Dark God or Dark Goddess. The difference is one of Polarity versus Duality. Duality is the belief in two opposing forces such as Good and Evil, which can be found in religions like Christianity and Mohammedanism. Polarity is the belief that each force has its equally vital and balancing opposite; Yin and Yang, Birth and Death, Youth and Age, Male and Female. Kali, the Destroyer, is just as important as the Corn Maiden. The God of the Harvest is just as important as the God of Fertility. Wiccans believe that harmful things, usually designated as evil, happen when people become disconnected from their source, not at the prompting of an Evil force bent on the destruction of mankind.

Wicca is the largest single religion within Neo-paganism. There are many different traditions within Wicca, just as there are many denominations within Christianity. Each has its own unique beliefs, practices and rituals.

All have a common belief in the God and Goddess. All have a commitment to personal growth and a tolerance for other religious beliefs.

“An ye harm none, do what thou wilt.”

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BASIC THEOLOGY/ MACROCOSM & MICROCOSM

BASIC THEOLOGY

Why do we *believe* the way we do? Why do we search for a higher ‘*something*’ for our answers? What *are* we looking for? Somewhere, some when, we looked up from our day-to-day struggle for survival and ‘noticed’ the world around us. We began to ask questions. We searched for answers. We began to put our faith in something beyond our understanding. This faith in something bigger than ourselves has many names: God, Supreme Being, the Divine, the Creator, the Infinite. The list goes on.

As Wiccans, we see “God”, first and foremost, as the sum total of ALL THINGS. An All-Encompassing Being, which includes each and every one of us, the earth upon which we stand, the stars in the night sky, the very breath we take. Words fail when trying to describe this concept. Therefore, we are forced, because of our limitations, to break down the concept of the Divine into images, which we can understand.

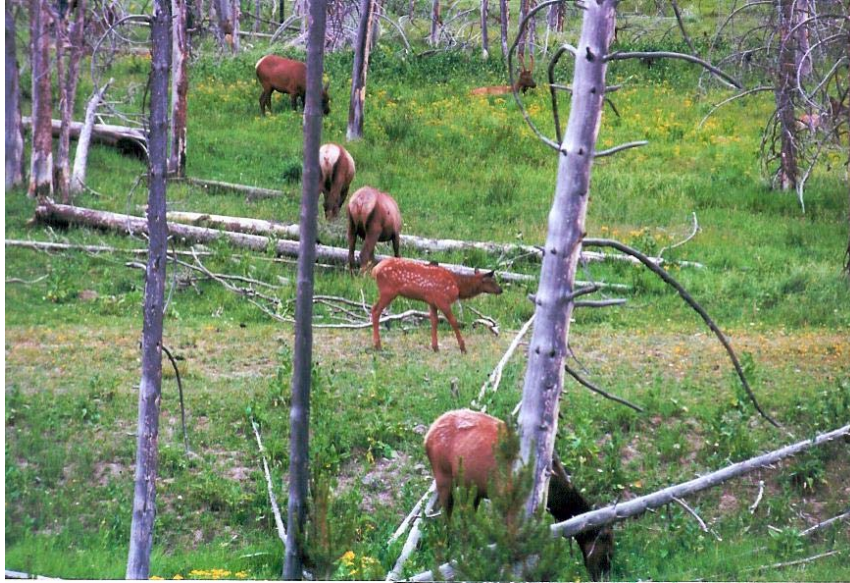


The first of these images is the God and Goddess, the male and female manifestations of the Divine. A natural division for us to imagine, we see both the male and female reflected throughout the natural world. The God represents the masculine, physical strength, the warrior, the wise old man, the king, the builder, and the destroyer. The Goddess is the feminine, the nurturing aspects of the Divine. The Great Mother, and the harbinger of death. She is virgin in the old sense of the word, the feminine that is independent and capable. But, because we are still limited by our minds, we break down these symbols into more ‘human’ terms to help us grasp the concept of this Infinite, All-Encompassing Being.

The Goddess is usually seen as three aspects; the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. The Maid represents the newness of a babe, the young at play, the inquisitiveness of a child, the beginning of all things. Her color is white, symbolizing innocence and the dawn. The Mother is the creator, bringing forth life from her womb. She represents patience, self-discipline and responsibility. Her color is red, the color of blood and the life force. The Crone has been the least understood of the Triple Goddess aspects. She is called Hag, Dark Mother, and Witch. The Crone is the ultimate Teacher, taking us through the doors of death and leading us to rebirth. She is the Wise One, who knows all and sees all. Her color is black, the darkness in which we rest before rebirth. We can call upon the Goddess as Maya, the Mother of Buddha, who was also known to the Celts as Maga, the Scandinavians as Maj, and the Greeks as Maia. Or Cailleach/Scathach of Scotland/Caledonia, the Crone, who was also Kali, the Dark Mother of the Hindus. We can call upon the Virgin Huntress when we invoke Greek Artemis, Egyptian Neith, or Roman Minerva. And through them, we can begin to grasp the concepts of the Infinite Being we are a part of.

Let us not forget the Masculine side of the Supreme One. The horned one of the wild Herne/Cernunnos, who bears a striking resemblance to early images of Shiva. The Oak and Holly Kings, who represent the cycle of the seasons, the turn of the wheel, self-sacrifice and love. Loki and Coyote, both Tricksters who teach us about ourselves. With these aspects of the Masculine, we are able to grasp a larger picture, only to find our own selves within.

Each of these Gods and Goddesses are separate, yet encompassed by the Whole. They speak to each of us in ways we can understand, yet barely begin to describe the vastness, which is before us. There is the ONE, which enfolds the masculine and feminine within all of us. Who cradles each of us as an essential part of the Divine, for we Are part of the Divine. It does not matter who we call upon, or what god or goddess we believe in. They are images, which we use to help us understand the Cosmos around us, and ourselves. As we evolve, grasp these concepts, and work toward higher understanding, we identify with the One Source. And, as humans with limited knowledge and comprehension, we work in terms of Many Gods who exemplify the One. As Wiccans, we recognize our need to identify with symbols we can understand in our reverence for the Divine. For all paths lead to the Divine.



Elk herd, Yellowstone

THE MACROCOSM AND THE MICROCOSM

How do we explain the universe around us? One model, which we can use, is the magician's model. This does not mean that it is the "One and Only" model and all others are false and should be thrown out. That would be the same as throwing out the baby with the bath water. Just as there are many different cultures and many different people in the world, there are many different cosmologies to choose from. Who is to say which is right and which is wrong, they are all guesses after all. This is just one way that I choose to look at the universe.

Let's say there are 5 different levels of reality or experience (which can be easily matched to the 5 elements), our *Macrocosm* or outer reality. They are the *physical*, *etherical*, *astral*, *mental* and *spiritual*. (On a more spiritual note, there are also two more levels, *cosmic* and *nirvanic*, which address our connection to the Universe and our connection to the Divine, respectively. Since there are very few people who achieve the cosmic and nirvanic levels at this stage of our evolution we will work with the first five levels). Each of these levels can be seen as a different level of experience or realm of existence.

1. The *physical* is experienced through the five ordinary senses; sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. It consists of our physical body and the physical world around us. Symbolically it corresponds with Earth.

2. The *etheric* level is experienced through a different set of senses which parallel ordinary sight and touch. It can be thought of as a level of immaterial substance, which shares some qualities with both energy and matter, but which is closely connected to biological life. Some people can see the etheric body as a colored light next to our skin. It can also be called '*chi*' or '*prana*'. Symbolically it corresponds with Water.

3. The *astral* level is the level of concrete consciousness and is experienced through what we normally think of as the mind; intellect, emotion, imagination, will, and memory. The astral level can be thought of as a realm of flowing energies linking mind to mind, images or sensations that appear to our awareness as thoughts, feelings, images, etc., and that are shaped by our own consciousness and that of others. It is your astral body that may sometimes journey out from the physical body on what is called 'astral traveling'. Symbolically this level corresponds with the energetic and transforming element of Fire.

4. The *mental* level is abstract consciousness and intuition. It can be thought of as a realm of abstract patterns that exist beyond space and time, and that provide the organizing principles on which the first three levels are based. These patterns appear to our awareness as basic insights into the nature of things. Symbolically this corresponds to the element of Air.

5. The *spiritual* level is experienced through higher consciousness and the essential core of the self. It relates the self to the unity of all things. Symbolically this corresponds to the unifying and transcendent element of Spirit.

There are certain underlying patterns that connect these levels of experience. Each level interacts with each of the others, and is affected by what goes on in the other levels. If you affect Fire, then you will also affect Water, Earth, Air and Spirit. This is one way to explain the outer world or reality that we experience.

Now let's look at our bodies, which surround our consciousness, our own *Microcosm*. These bodies are only our physical manifestations. We also have other layers of energy, which encompass our souls or spirits. First there is the physical body. Next is the etheric body, which we see as colored light and is made of ether or life energy. The astral body is third. This we use when we are dreaming and when we astral travel to another place, though

our physical body stays in one place. It is the body of concrete consciousness shaped by thoughts and feelings. Fourth is the mental body, it is the body of abstract consciousness perceived by pure awareness which opens on realms of experience not bound by space and time. The spiritual body is next. It is the root of consciousness and the innermost essence of Self. As with the levels of the microcosm, each body governs the body below it. So the Spiritual governs the mental, that in turn governs the astral, which governs the etheric, while the etheric governs the physical. Remember the axiom, 'As above, so below'? Here is a prime example of this in action. When you affect the Spiritual, 'as above', you are also affecting the Physical, 'as below'. Therefore, when you want to change something in your life, be sure to work in all levels of existence for the best results.



The Divine

Let us look at the Divine Source again. Or at least my perception of the Divine. For me, the Divine contains everything ever conceived and brought into existence and beyond. It is all things, named and unnamed, seen and unseen, believed and unbelievable. The One (Divine Source) has ten thousand names, and none at all. It is nameless and unnamable. How can you describe the connecting threads that unify each of us to everything? How can you give name to the first thought of creating? The first act of creation, the first impulse to create? It is unimaginable to give name to that which we cannot imagine. In the beginning, the All Created. How it created,

or what it created in the beginning is unknown. Somewhere down the line, humans and the earth we live on, was created. We were given life, death, and choices. We live, love, laugh, and cry, with seldom a thought to what lay beyond our existence. Yet we did think about it, and we have loved, warred and given our lives for our many beliefs.

We strive everyday, living our lives lost in our own pain and lost in our own feelings of loneliness. Yet we do not need to feel lonely. The Divine surrounds us and encompasses us entirely. Each and every thing around us has spirit. Each and everything is connected to us, and we are connected to them, we can communicate with them. And they can communicate with us if we open our hearts and minds. This is the connection that we can actually feel if you still your mind and listen.

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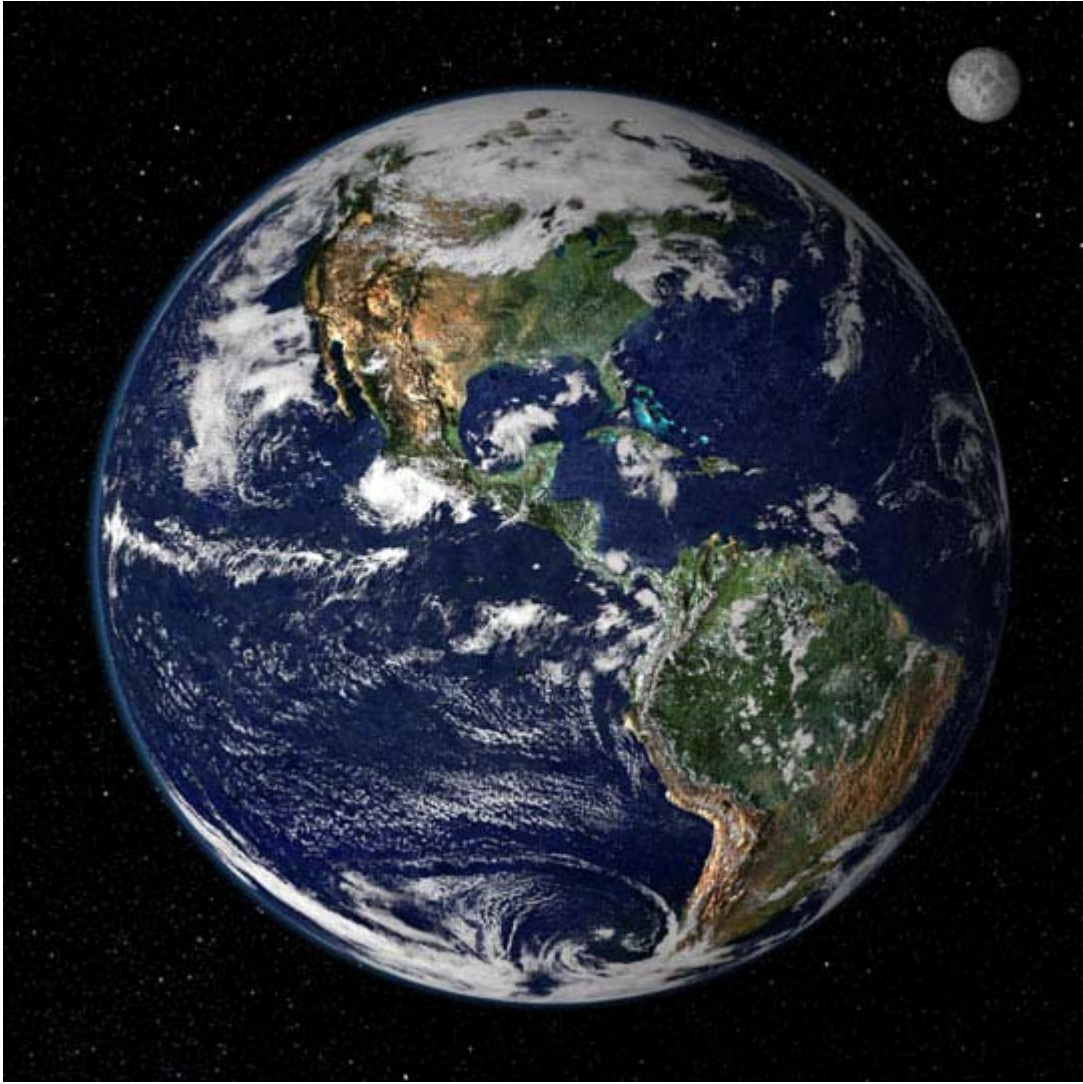
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Gaia and the Moon from Space, NASA

WICCAN REDE, KARMA & THE LAW OF THREE, REINCARNATION

Wiccan Rede - An it harm none, do what you will.

Do what you will. Simple words. The words some people seem to live by. They imply such freedom. They seem to give you permission to do what YOU want, as long as you harm no one. You can take the things you want. You can joke around and laugh. You don't have to do any work that you don't want to. You can do whatever you want. Or can you?

An ye harm NONE. In actuality, the Wiccan Rede is hard to live by. The goal of a Wiccan and of a witch is to take responsibility for his or her own actions. Every action you take, even the simplest one, has a reaction. When you follow the Rede you are under an obligation not to harm anyone, including your self. It means you have to be aware of HOW you may harm another, and how you may harm yourself. Hitting someone is an obvious harmful act. But what about the subtle effects we have on others? Words can hurt. How are your words perceived? How you express your emotions can also be harmful. Anger is an emotion, which can hurt someone's feelings. So can indifference. Sometimes having pleasure can be harmful. For example, you wish to participate in a pleasurable act with another person. What if that person has ties to someone else? The third person can be hurt. Forgetting to fulfill obligations can hurt others. If you fail to pay your bills, the people you owe the money to go without. Perhaps they need the money to buy medicine, or to help a child go to school. You didn't fulfill your promise to pay them in a timely manner and they end up hurting. And the immediate consequences of your actions may end up harming you.

Those four words, 'an ye harm none', hold a lot of responsibility. By following the Wiccan Rede, you become responsible for not harming any one. Every action you take, from the simplest nod of the head to the most powerful emotional outpouring has consequences. Which brings us to Karma and the Rule of Three.



Red-tailed Hawk

Karma and the Law of Three

*“An ye bide the Rule of Three,
what ye send out comes back to thee.”*

Karma. The word is filled with mystery. The American College Dictionary states that *karma* is the cosmic operation of retributive justice, according to which a person's status in life is determined by his own deeds in a previous incarnation. The doctrine of inevitable consequences. Fate. Destiny. In other words, every thing you have ever done has consequences in your life. Many believe that your actions will have threefold repercussions, or rather, the consequences will be multiplied by factors of three. Every kindness will be repaid three times. Every disservice will also be repaid three times. What ye send out comes back to thee. The law of cause and effect, Karma and the Three-fold Law, will affect you!

When you follow the Wiccan Rede you are taking responsibility for your actions and accepting the consequences. By trying hard not to harm anyone in your daily living you are affecting your karma. The Charge of the Goddess states: *Keep pure your highest ideals; strive ever towards it; let naught stop you nor turn you aside. Sound advice any day. And therefore let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence within you.* Good words to live by.

As practitioners of magic we must guard ourselves from harming others, for we know we are responsible for our actions and the consequences there of. Some say there are different kinds of magic. White, Black, and Gray. I strongly disagree. There is only Magic. It's all in how you use it. Does that mean I can do magic for revenge, to manipulate, or to hurt someone? Not unless I am willing to take the consequences of those actions, which can be severe and long lasting! The Wiccan Rede and the Rule of Three apply here even more so. For we know what we do when we are harming others.

Universal law, also called Karma, doesn't care about your standing in society. It does reflect on who you are as a person. Are you good or bad? Do you sometimes make mistakes? Do you help others? Are you kind? The Rule of Three says that, if you do good, you will get good in return. Harm others and harm will come to you. There is a kind of spiritual bank balance of one's deeds. The concept is that everything that we do sets up a chain reaction of effects that we have to live with. A pebble dropped into a pond causes a ripple effect. The ripples we cause may not bounce back on us until many lives later, but they will bounce back. Sometimes we do not get ripples, we get tidal waves, which is the magnifying effect of the Three-fold law. What you send out returns times three. And as a magician, you must have more scruples, more virtue than others because you are aware of what you are doing and the Gods know it!

Reincarnation – Life, Death and Rebirth

What happens to us after our bodies die? Do we just disappear? Do we go to a 'heaven' or 'hell' as some religions believe? In actuality, I can not tell you what truly happens to that part of us that we call 'spirit' or 'soul' when our physical bodies loose that which animates them. I can tell you that I, and many of my fellow Wiccans and Witches, believe that our spirits go on, that our souls do not end suddenly when our body is dead. We believe in 'reincarnation', that our spirits come back and live again.

Some of us have experienced a type of deja vue, where we experience a deep familiarity with people or places, or even periods in time. For the most part we call this "*past life experiences*". By these feelings and visions we encounter, as well as the cycles we observe occurring in the world around us, we believe that we have lived before, and will experience living again.

For us, death is not something to be feared, but a time of rest to reflect on our past life and to prepare for our rebirth, a new life to come.

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THE LADY AND THE LORD

By Wren

Discussing how to develop a relationship with the Divine Source is not the easiest task. First let's look at the Divine Source. The Divine Source is a power or Spirit that is neither masculine nor feminine, yet is both. It is neither positive nor negative, yet is both. The Divine Source is present in all things at all times, and can be seen in all events that occur throughout our lives, if we are open and receptive to the signs that show us this presence.

A relationship with the Divine Source for a human is not very easy, but we can have a relationship with the different aspects of the Divine. This relationship with the aspects of the Divine is how we see the masculine and feminine aspects, through the God and Goddess. Some of us will worship more Gods than Goddesses, while others will only worship a few. Remember that we all worship the same Source or Spirit. This relationship with the Differing aspects of the Divine is essential to our continued spiritual growth.

So how do we develop a relationship with the Lord and Lady? This too is not going to be easy. Developing relationships among humans is challenging enough, but with the Gods and Goddesses there are more obstacles to overcome than in a relationship with other humans. How many truly open relationships do you have with other humans? Be honest with yourself. How often do you really open up and express your most secret fears, desires, and inner emotions, to another person? When a relationship with another person fails because of communication, or lack of it, do we readily accept the responsibility of the failure? Are we to expect it to be easier with the Goddess and the God? Most people do, but many times it is more difficult because you cannot hide things from them and you cannot lie to them. Our path begins when we open ourselves to the Lady and Lord. How do we do this? **Be Sincere.** Be sincere with yourself first. If you can't be sincere with yourself, you won't be able to be sincere with the Lord and Lady. Always remember that the Lord and Lady can see right into your very heart and soul, so do not try to fool them with insincere pleas.

When you ask for help, be sure to follow the Rede, “an it harm none, do what you will.” If all you want is a relationship, be sure you are truly open to one.

How open would you be to a relationship with someone that has lied to you? Therefore, **Be Honest!** Whenever you try to communicate with the Lord and Lady be Honest, particularly when you are asking for something. If you are untruthful, they will know and the answers you seek will not come easily.

If you can be honest and sincere, you are ready to begin a relationship with the Lord and Lady. Now, *Talk* to them. Introduce yourself to them. This is usually a good place to start when you meet someone for the first time. Talk about yourself, what you like to do, perhaps some of the things you would like to change about yourself. They will listen, without judgment, with complete understanding and compassion. They will listen in our times of need, and they will answer our pleas. Although not always as we would like. If you are open and receptive to the signs and symbolism of the Lord and Lady, they will answer direct questions as well.

Many people adopt a specific God or Goddess as their patron. Some may adopt more. Where you find your patron God or Goddess is a personal journey. The only guide you need is your heart. Follow your heart and the Goddess and the God will show himself or herself to you, if you are paying attention. Be alert to all of the symbols around you. Pay attention to symbols in your dreams as well. You may find that many deities are trying to get your attention. These deities may be from several different pantheons; Greek, Celtic, Roman, Native American, Hindu, Buddhist, and Norse are all possibilities, and there are many more. The point is to open your heart and stay alert for the signs that they are trying to get your attention.

Once a God or Goddess has your attention and you have seen this aspect of the Divine, find out as much as you can about them as possible. Research them, read the mythology behind their history. Pay close attention to their story, both positive and negative aspects. All Gods and all Goddesses have both a positive and a negative aspect. Ask yourself if the positive aspect is worth having the negative aspect invoked into your life. Sometimes the negative aspect is what we need in our lives. One example, to dispel and illness we might invoke the Dark God of the Waning year.



Our nature is to try to emulate those deities we are connected with, and we must be aware of all of the possibilities associated with any specific deity. If you find you are trying to make yourself into your deity's image, both positive and negative, try to correct yourself. Do not try to be a *copy* of the God or Goddess, but rather inject their influence into your life. Before you do something, ask yourself how would this deity help with this if I were to ask for help? Remember that our goal is not to have the Gods and Goddesses live our lives for us, but to become better humans through their influences in our lives. The gods expect you to accept responsibility for your life. They also expect you to work toward spiritual development, and to grow to become the best person you can be.

The benefit of a personal relationship with the Divine is where many religions agree. Humanitarian love, peace, understanding, compassion, unity, and harmony. A perfect calm develops within each of us as we become filled with the love and unity that comes from a personal relationship with the Divine. Whether we relate to a Greek God or a more difficult to define Divine Source.

The next step in our relationship with the Divine is to begin to recognize that all of us are connected, no matter what our religion. As the Goddess and God are manifest in each of us, so do they manifest on all other levels of existence, and are present in all of creation. As we recognize this macrocosm, we see that our Lady and Lord are much more than a specific deity, rather a much larger Divine Spirit. The Gods and Goddesses we talk to, pray to, and invoke into our lives are but symbols we use to better understand and relate to the unknowable and unnamable Divine. As the Lady and Lord are steps to a greater understanding of our own nature in relationship to the Divine, we can also learn from them to obtain a greater understanding of the Divine. The symbols that have developed in our relationship with the Lord and Lady can be used to obtain a greater understanding of our relationship to the cosmos and the Divine. Each of us will develop this relationship differently and each relationship we have with these aspects of the Divine will be very personal. Without this relationship it would be impossible or near impossible to further develop spiritually.

*Wren, an initiated member of The Gathering, an open coven of the Washington State Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, wrote this chapter. It is printed here with his permission.

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SACRED THINGS/ BASIC EQUIPMENT/ ALTARS

FIVE SACRED THINGS

The world around us is made of five different elements: Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and Spirit. They are an essential part of each of us, of the life around us. Without the integration of all five of the elements, we could not live, we would not breath, we could not think. Our bodies would not be able to hold this physical form.

The Five Elements are considered Sacred. They are the basic building blocks of the Universe around us and the universe that we are a part of. If we took out one element, the entire structure would collapse. If you were denied Air, you would no longer live. If you took the Fire from your heart, you would have no Will. Without Water you would not feel the joy of a baby's smile. Take away Earth and you would lose your physical form.

The elements are a necessary component of magic. Without all five sacred elements working together then magic would not exist. We would not exist. There would be neither magic, nor would there be life. The Elements are distinct forces and energies, which have form, power and force. Each of the elements have positive and negative energies and characteristics that are distinctively their own.

The elements align themselves with the four directions. Air aligns itself with the direction East. Just as the East is the birthplace of the rising sun, Air is the intellect and the birth of new ideas. The South is the place of Fire. South is the heat of the noonday sun, which reflects the fiery passion of Fire. The setting sun in the West is the home of Water. It is the abode of our emotions, the dwelling of our subconscious. In the North we find the Earth. In the dark of midnight we find the dark soil of the Earth to comfort us.

Few elements occur in a pure form in nature. They are a combination of each element in varying degrees. They add subtlety and depth. By adding

different amounts of one element or another, we add flexibility and distinction to our magic.



Moon over Wenas Canyon

AIR

Air can be found in the East, with the morning sun and Springtime. It represents new birth and the Maiden. Air is Mental and represents the power to Know, the Mind and Thought. It is intellect, inspiration and imagination. It is ideas, dreams and wishes. It's tool is the Athame and Sword. To cut with mental clarity and focus. Air is intuitive and psychic, full of knowledge and learning. It's places are windy beaches, high mountain peaks, wind and breath. Air aids us in visualization and is a masculine element.

Air-Air: Gas Air

Air-Fire: Laser/Incisive Intellect

Air-Water: Rain Fog/Intellectual Decay, Confusion

Air-Earth: Dust/Instinct

Air-Spirit: Elemental Air/Spirits of Air

Direction: East

Rules: The mind, mental, intuitive & psychic work, knowledge, abstract learning

Time: Dawn

Season: Spring

Nature: Sanguine (hot & moist)

Colors: White, bright yellow, crimson, blue-white

Zodiac: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
 Tools: Athame, sword, censer
 Spirits: Sylphs, ruled by King Paralda
 Angel: Michael
 Wind: Eurus
 Sense: Smell
 Jewel: Topaz, agate
 Incense: Cinnamon
 Creatures: Birds, eagle, hawk, butterfly
 Plants: Frankincense, myrrh, pansy, primrose, vervain, violet, yarrow
 Tree: Aspen
 Goddesses: Aradia, Arianrhod, Cardea, Nuit, Urania
 Gods: Enlil, Khephera, Mercury, Shu, Thoth
 Magic: Visualization, divination, locating objects
 Phrase: Noscere – To Know
 Major Arcana: 0 Fool
 Minor Arcana: Swords
 Ritual Symbol: Phallus
 Esoteric Symbol: Whirlwind
 Age: Child

FIRE

Fire is in the South, the noon day sun, Summer. It is Energy and Drive, Passion, the Will. Fire is the element of change and passion, creativity, motivation, drive and sensuality. It's tool is the Wand and is used to channel energy. Fire is a masculine element.

Fire-Fire: Raw Energy
 Fire-Air: Fire Storm/Unstoppable Will, Rage
 Fire-Water: Steam/Dissipating Energy
 Fire-Earth: Lava/Commitment
 Fire-Spirit: Elemental Fire/Spirits of Fire

Direction: South
 Rules: Energy, spirit, heat, flame, blood, sap, life, will, heat, healing & destroying, purification, bonfires.
 Time: Noon
 Season: Summer

Nature: Choleric (hot & dry)
 Colors: Red, gold, crimson, orange, white
 Zodiac: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
 Tools: Censer, wand, candle
 Spirits: Salamanders, ruled by King Djin
 Angel: Ariel
 Wind: Notus
 Sense: Sight
 Jewel: Fire Opal, lava, obsidian, ruby carnelian
 Incense: Saffron, copal, juniper, cinnamon
 Creatures: Fire-breathing dragons, lions, horses, phoenix
 Plants: Garlic, hibiscus, mustard, nettle, onion, red peppers, red poppies
 Tree: Almond
 Goddesses: Brigit, Hestia, Pele, Vesta, Persephone
 Gods: Agni, Hephaestus, Horus, Vulcan, Prometheus
 Magic: Tantra, healing, candle magic
 Phrase: Velle – To Will
 Major Arcana: Judgment
 Minor Arcana: Wands
 Ritual Symbol: Consciousness
 Esoteric Symbol: The Sun
 Age: Youth

WATER

Water is the West, Twilight, Emotions, the Autumn season. It is the power to Dare. Water is courage, love, purification, intuition, and compassion. It is psychic abilities and the inner self. Water is the subconscious. It's tool is the Cup and Chalice. Water is a feminine element.

Water-Water: Water
 Water-Air: Rain, Fog/Emotionally Overwhelming
 Water-Fire: Steam/Emotional Release
 Water-Earth: Mud/Emotional Grounding
 Water-Spirit: Elemental Water/Spirits of Water

Direction: West
 Rules: Emotions, feelings, love, courage, daring, sorrow, intuition, the unconscious mind, the womb, generation, fertility

Time: Twilight
 Season: Autumn
 Nature: melancholic (cold & moist)
 Colors: Blue, blue-green, green, gray, indigo, black
 Zodiac: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces
 Tools: Cup
 Spirits: Undines, ruled by King Niksa
 Angel: Raphael
 Wind: Zephyrus
 Sense: Taste
 Jewel: Aquamarine, moonstone, lapis lazuli, sodalite, amethyst, pearl, coral
 Incense: Myrrh, jasmine, chamomile
 Creatures: Dragons, dolphins, porpoises, fish, seals, sea mammals, water-dwelling snakes, sea birds, all water creatures
 Plants: Ferns, lotus, mosses, rushes, seaweed, water lilies & all water plants
 Tree: Willow
 Goddesses: Aphrodite, Isis, Mariame, Mari, Tiamat, Yemaya
 Gods: Dylan, Ea, Llyr, Manannan, Osiris, Neptune, Poseidon
 Magic: Fertility, mirror, purification, healing, divination, dreams
 Phrase: Audere – To Dare
 Major Arcana: Hanged Man
 Minor Arcana: Cups
 Ritual Symbol: Womb
 Esoteric Symbol: Triple Luna
 Age: Mature adult

EARTH

Earth is in the North, Midnight, the Dark Mysteries. It is the Crone in all her wisdom. It is the power to manifest in the physical. Earth is stability, wisdom, strength, growth and prosperity. It is fertility. It's tool is the pentacle. Earth is also used for grounding and centering. Earth is a feminine element.

Earth-Earth: The Earth
 Earth-Air: Dust/Physical Decay
 Earth-Fire: Lava/Physical Drive
 Earth-Water: Mud/Physical Decay

Earth-Spirit: Elemental Earth/ Spirits of Earth

Direction: North

Rules: The body, growth, nature, sustenance, material gain, money, creativity, birth, death, silence

Time: Midnight

Season: Winter

Nature: Phlegmatic (cold & dry)

Colors: Black, brown, green, white

Zodiac: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn

Tools: Pentacle

Spirits: Gnomes, ruled by King Ghob

Angel: Gabriel

Wind: Boreas, Ophion

Sense: Touch

Jewel: Rock crystal, salt, jet, onyx, emeralds, amethyst, peridot

Incense: Sandalwood

Creatures: Cow or bull, bison, earth-dwelling snakes, stag, spider, bears, wolves

Plants: Comfrey, ivy, nuts, grains: barley, corn, rice, wheat, rye

Tree: Oak

Goddesses: Ceres, Demeter, Geae, Mah, Nephthys, Persephone, Prithivi, Rhea, Rhiannon

Gods: Adonis, Athos, Arawn, Cernunnos, Dionysus, Marduk, Pan, Tammuz

Magic: Fertility, tree, herbal, prosperity, rune casting, knot magic

Phrase: Tacere – To Keep Silent

Major Arcana: Universe

Minor Arcana: Pentacles

Ritual Symbol: Death

Esoteric Symbol: Dragon

Age: Elder

SPIRIT/AKASHA

Spirit is the center of all being, the Void, Transcendence. The spark which brings forth life when combined with the other four elements. Without Spirit there would be no life, no magic. Spirit is the point of transformation and

change. It's tool is the cauldron, the mystical holy grail of transformation and rebirth. It is the Akashic Records of Life which we can call upon.

Direction: Center & circumference, throughout & about

Rules: Transcendence, transformation, change, the void, immanence

Time: Beyond time, all time is one.

Season: The turning wheel

Colors: Clear, white, black

Tools: Cauldron, wheels

Sense: Hearing

Jewel: Amber, jet

Incense:

Creatures: Sphinx

Plants: Mistletoe

Tree: Flowering almond

Goddesses: Isis, the Secret Name of the Goddess, Shekinah

Gods: Akasha, IAO, JHVH, Shiva

Magic: Enlightenment, finding life path, spiritual knowledge, understanding, karma

Phrase: To Be

Major Arcana:

Minor Arcana:

Ritual Symbol: Infinity, Godhead, The Creator

Esoteric Symbol: The Cosmos

Age:

TOOLS/ELEMENTAL TOOLS

In "A Witches Bible" by Janet & Stewart Farrar, they state: "... a ritual tool is a psychological aid to concentration and to synchronize the psychic effort of a group working together; its symbolism is archetypal in nature and therefore activates the Unconscious in partnership with the purposeful Ego; and through consecration and constant use, it acquires a helpful psychic charge of its own."

This statement explains how our ritual tools work. Tools work in partnership with our psyche. By consecrating them and making them sacred, using them ONLY in a blessed way for sacred rituals, we make the connection that we

are doing important and holy work with these tools. They become charged with our energy and intent in a sacred manner.

The next question is... do we really need these tools? Yes and no. When beginning to work magic, of creating ritual, I have found the tools to be necessary for training my mind. Much like the pen and paper is important when first learning how to count, and then to add and subtract, using these tools teaches us of the energies we tap into in ritual. With repetition, we are able to do it in our mind, without pen and paper, or fingers and toes. When you have been trained in the use of these tools, of their purposes and the focus of their energy, then we may put them aside when the occasion arises, to work magic within our own Self. Eventually, with much training and practice we can work magic without tools, without an athame or magic wand. We will work magic with only our mind, intent and will.

When in a group, using these tools helps each of us to combine our will and intent to work with the ritual in harmony. When working with a group it is important to use tools so that everyone can focus their intent and will in the same direction at the same time. So, yes, tools are valuable, but are not entirely necessary to carry out the work needed.

The tools I am going to discuss tonight are the five basic elemental tools: athame, wand, cup, pentacle, and the cauldron.



Sunset over Frenchman Hills Wasteway

⌘ **ATHAME: Air Element; Mind/To Know**

The black handled knife, or athame, is a ritual knife used to perform magical acts. It should not be used for any other purpose, and is seldom, if ever, used to actually cut anything. Many athame tips are purposefully dulled to prevent accident in circle. There are those who follow the tradition of the sharp athame equating a sharp mind and focus, however caution should be exercised if working in the vicinity of others. Nor does the athame have to be black handled though it is traditional. It should have personal meaning to you, be filled with your intent and energy, and be cleansed and consecrated for ritual work.

The athame has ties to the mental plane and the quickness and agility of the mind to gather data, access its worth, discern and cut out the chaff, and to direct energy and focus with purpose and will. The athame symbolizes the Air element; it also embodies communication and all things mental. It is a male oriented tool and is usually placed on the right side of the altar if not being worn.

⚡ **WAND: Fire/South; Action/To Dare**

Wands are associated with Fire action and daring. They are the instigators of change and transformation. Wands also representative masculine energies and can be used like athames, focusing and directing energy.

γ *CUP: Water/West; Emotion/To Will*

Obviously female with its womb-like abilities, the Cup or Chalice represents water, birth, fertility and nurturing. Also called the Grail, it is representative of the Sea and the cycles of the Moon. It is abundance, the cup runneth over. The Cup is emotions and feelings. It also characterizes the West, a place of death and resting before rebirth. In circle it is used to hold the wine or juice for cakes and ale and resides on the left side of the altar.

σ *PENTACLE: Earth/North; Material/To Be Silent*

A symbol of the Earth, the five pointed star enclosed in a circle is seen as feminine. It is used as a sign of protection and is often the centerpiece of the altar. Used to charge as well as protect, the Pentacle is also used for consecrating, cleansing, and blessings. Many wear Pentacles in jewelry for protection, empowerment, and as a religious statement.

Salt is also a representation of earth and has close ties with the Pentacle. It represents stability, nature, the physical realm, and the body, hard work and reward.

The five points of the Pentacle are said to represent the five elements. The human form outstretched is also symbolized within the pentacle.



In Europe an inverted pentacle represents the descent into the Shadow realm, a journey of the 2nd degree, therefore 2nd degree initiates will wear it. The inverted pentacle has also been used by other religions to signify evil or devil worship. The knight Gawain, of Arthurian legend, used a pentacle on his shield as his emblem, and was associated with Avalon and the Lady of the Lake.

1 CAULDRON

The cauldron is a symbol of the Goddess, feminine and mysterious, life and death boiling from its dark depths. The cauldron can represent both the water element and spirit itself. Magical transformations occur within the cauldron. It is inspiration, immortality and renewal. It can be used for scrying, gazing into its dark, liquid-filled depths. The cauldron can hold fire, as well as water, and is often the focal point of Sabbat rituals. It sits either in the center, or on the left side of the altar. The cauldron, along with the broom and pentacle, is most often seen as a symbol of the witch.

There have been many famous Cauldron in Celtic mythology. There is the "Cauldron of Rebirth", which renewed the dead placed in its steaming depths. There is the "Cauldron of the Dagda" of the Tautha De Danann, which produced a renewable and an inexhaustible supply of food and supplies. There is also the Cauldron of Cerridwen which brewed a magical potion or '*greal*' (grail), giving knowledge to Gwion Bach who became reborn as Talesin/Merlin.

ALTARS

Altars are used for many different things. Some use altars solely for worship. Others use altars as ritual work areas that help focus and call forth, or to help get banish. Some people use an altar as a special place to put mementos. An altar should represent the individual or the group, what they believe in, and what they are trying to bring forth in their lives. What matters most is that the altars, and what is on them, mean something to the people who use them.

Altar arrangements can vary between covens, individuals, and even between rituals. The basic components of coven ritual altars are: a representative of Deity be it a candle, statue, or other item(s), items which represents the five sacred things, a censer for incense, a dish for water and a dish for salt, and a dish and chalice for cakes and ale. Many covens also use bells, wands, pentacles, and athames, as well as decorate their altars with candles, flowers, antlers, etc. Whatever you put on your altar is up to you. The important point is that it speaks to you symbolically.

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SABBATS/ESBATS/ CONSECRATING TOOLS

SABBATS

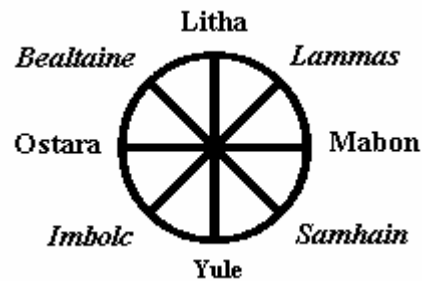
Wiccans, and many pagans, use the Wheel of the Year to represent our Holy Days. We call these special days of worship and ritual *Sabbats*. There are eight Sabbats in all, four Great Sabbats and four Lesser Sabbats. The Lesser Sabbats coincide with the equinoxes and solstices; the spring and fall equinoxes and winter and summer solstice. The Greater Sabbats are the cross quarter days, those days which fall in-between the equinoxes and solstices.



Palouse fields

If you are in the Southern Hemisphere you may celebrate Yule in June, and Litha in December, for that is when the natural occurrences of Winter and Summer occur. In the Southern Hemisphere the Sun and Moon appear to move in a widdershins or counterclockwise direction and the Sun is further away from the Southern Hemisphere in June than it is in December.

In the Northern Hemisphere the Sun and Moon move in a deosil or clockwise direction and we celebrate the Winter solstice in December and the Summer solstice in June. Placing the eight Sabbats together we create a wheel of time, or Wheel of the Year.



Traditionally the times of the Sabbats seem to be time of psychic occurrences and otherworldly phenomenon, and as such are great times for divination and contacting the departed. Especially the Cross-quarter or Greater Sabbats. They are called Cross-quarter days because they are equidistance from the equinoxes and solstices and are the actual beginning of the seasons. Ancient Celts believed the day began at dusk and ends the following evening. Wiccans, and many other Neo-pagans, follow the same custom. Consequently festivities will usually begin in the evening and continue till dusk of the next day. Also keep in mind that the equinoxes and solstices are not set dates like the cross-quarter days, and usually falls between the 19th to 21st of the month.

December 19~21 -- Winter Solstice -- Yule

The sun is at nadir, the furthest distance away from the earth. It is the longest night of the year. We internalize and process the external activities of the previous summer months. There are a number of myths that are used at this Sabbat. There is the myth of the Goddess as Mother giving birth to the Sun God. There is the Oak King and Holly King myth, which at this time plays out as the Lord of Light being victorious over the Lord of Darkness. The name "Yule" derives from the Norse word for "wheel", and many of our customs at this time derive from ancient Norse and Celtic customs (the Yule log, the decorated tree, the custom of Wassailing, etc.). The colors of Yule are traditionally red and green. Corresponding plants are the Yule Log, mistletoe, holly, pine and pinecones, and nuts.

February 2nd -- Imbolc (Oimelec) or Brigid

As Spring begins to we find ourselves wishing for the warmth of the Sun after it's long absence. Imbolc is a Fire Festival and many candles are lit

on this day to symbolically hasten the warming of the earth. "*Imbolc*" is from Old Irish, and may mean "in the belly" and refers to the pregnant state of many of Mother Earth's creatures. "*Oimelc*", means "ewe's milk", as this is the lambing time. It is the holiday of the Celtic Fire Goddess Brigid (who later became Saint Brigid), also known as Brigit's day or Candlemas. Brigid is a triple goddess who rules smith craft, poetry, inspiration, and healing. Brigid's fire is a symbolic transformation offering healing, visions, and tempering. Brigid is also a goddess of sacred wells. "All that was hindered is let flow at this season" as seen in the thawing waters of a warming Spring. The colors of Imbolc are red and white. The early plants of Imbolc are daffodils and narcissus, and blossoming fruit trees. It is also a time of preparing Bride's beds to ensure fertility of the land.

March 19~21 -- Vernal Equinox -- Ostara

Day and night are equal as Spring begins to enliven the environment with new growth and more newborn animals. Many people feel energetic after being shut in by the cold of winter. The Germanic Goddess Ostara or Eostre, for whom Easter is named, is the deity of this holiday. As Goddess of the Dawn, She heralds the return of the sun, and announces the jubilant return of life to the earth. Witches in the Greek tradition celebrate the return from Hades of Demeter's daughter Kore/Persephone. The enigmatic egg is especially symbolic at this time. Laid by the regenerating snake or the heavenly bird, it is a powerful symbol of the emergence of life out of apparent death. The colors of Ostara are green, white, and silver. The foliage includes all spring flowers and seeds. Colored eggs are a traditional favorite at this time.

April 30 -- May Eve -- Beltaine

Life is passionate and vivacious at this time. Covens dance around Maypoles, fertile symbol of the union of the God and Goddess. It is the time of Beltaine, Bel-fires and fertile rites. It is the time when couples were free to explore their sexuality as the Lord and Lady celebrate their love (in some traditions, their marriage). Celts would drive cattle between the bonfires to bless them, and people leaped the fires for luck. Dances are performed to ensure bountiful crops and the continued fertility of all nature. This is the time when the God and Goddess meet as lovers and She becomes pregnant with the child to be born at Yule. At this time the

God gives the governing of the year to the Goddess till Samhain. At Samhain, She will give the responsibility to Him. The entire rainbow is associated with Beltaine, as are all flowers, garlands, trees and fresh leaves.

June 19~21 -- Summer Solstice -- Litha or Midsummer

The longest day of the year heralds our first harvest. The power of the sun can be felt bright and hot above us. We are focused outward, our life is filled with summertime activities: picnics, boating, swimming, and camping. We experience abundance, as food is now plentiful. In some traditions the sacred marriage of the Goddess and God is celebrated. Litha is the other half of the Oak King/Holly King myth, when the Dark Holly King wins over the Oak King. We give thanks for the bounty of the Earth and the abundance of Nature. The color of Litha is green, and plants associated with this day are roses, vines and leaves.

July 31 -- August Eve -- Lughnasadh or Lammas

The Second Harvest, this day is sacred to Llew Llaw Gyffes, Lugh Long Hand, Lugh the Bright One. Called Lughnasadh in his honor this festival is a fire festival honoring the Celtic Solar God. Lugh also represents the first grains of harvest, which are baked in loaves and ritually consumed. He is the sacrificial Barley (or Corn) King, giving his life so that others may live, and as such vegetative representations of him are cast into bonfires. This speaks of transformation from death to life. Lammas is a time sacred to the Goddess of the Moon and of the Hunt, Artemis/Diana. Also called "First Fruits" because of the offerings we make at this time, we give thanks and offer the first fruits of our labor to the Gods. The colors for Lammas are green, yellow, and red. Plants that are symbolically used at this time are corn, grains, tomatoes, berries and flowers.

September 19~21 -- Autumnal Equinox -- Mabon or Harvest Home

We see equal day and equal night at Mabon, heralding the Autumn equinox. The crops have been gathered and a third harvest festival is held. We thank the Goddess for Her bounty in giving us enough sustenance to feed us through the winter. The colors of Mabon are

orange, brown, yellow and red. All crops are associated with this festival, as well as colorful fall leaves.

October 31 -- November Eve -- Samhain

It is time for a fourth harvest, that of culling the herds and preparing meat to last for the long winter ahead of us. Many consider this the eve of the new year (the Celtic day begins with sundown, and the year begins with the first day of Winter). At this time the barriers between the worlds is thinnest. The dead are seen to walk among us. We welcome them and feast with them as they bestow blessings upon us. It is a good time to use divination and psychic abilities. It is the Festival of the Dead, Hallows Eve, Halloween. The Goddess rests now, giving the year to her consort, the God, to govern. Here Death presides, and the gates between the worlds are very thin. Now is the time to remember those we love that have died in the past year. Colors for Samhain are black, red and orange. Plants associated with this celebration are Indian corn, pumpkins, gourds, apples and corn stalks

Those who are open and aware can feel the flow of the year. Wiccan seasonal festivals often coincide with holidays of other faiths and customs. The seasons and cycles of Earth speak to all of us and we answer Her, each in our own way.

"Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn - birth, growth, fading, death - the Wheel turns, on and on. Ideas are born, projects are consummated, plans prove impractical and die. We fall in love; we suffer loss; we consummate relationships; we give birth; we grow old; we decay. "

"The Sabbats are the eight points at which we connect the inner and the outer cycles: the interstices where the seasonal, the celestial, the communal, the creative, and the personal all meet. As we enact each drama in its time, we transform ourselves. We are renewed, we are reborn even as we decay and die. We are not separate from each other, from the broader world around us; we are one with the Goddess, with the God. As the Cone of Power rises as the season changes, we arouse the power from within, the power to heal, the power to change society, the power to renew the Earth. "
from "The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess" by Starhawk.

ESBATS

Esbats are rituals performed during different phases of the moon. As there are thirteen full moons in a year, there are thirteen Full Moon Esbats to celebrate. When there are two full moons in a month, the second full moon is considered the “*Blue Moon*.” Esbats are usually the times to perform magic, as the phase of the Moon will influence the spells outcome. Sabbats are the usual times to perform worship, as we call upon the greater influence of the cycle of the Sun. Some traditions will base all of their rituals around the Esbats. The following is a general description of the appropriate times in which to perform certain types of magic based on the cycle of the Moon.



1st quarter moon

The Moon rotates around the Earth approximately every 28 days or so. Although this is not exact, it gives us a good working base from which to plan our Esbats and our spell work.

Working with decreasing energies of the Moon means that you are working during times in which the Moon is decreasing in size. This period lasts from just after the full moon to the dark moon, a period of 14 days. Working with increasing energy means that you are working during times of increase. This period lasts from just after the new moon to the full moon, again a period of 14 days.

It is generally accepted that there are 4 phases of the Moon: Full Moon, New Moon, Waxing Moon, and Waning Moon. Each phase consists of 7 working days for a total of 28 days in a lunar month. Each ‘moon’ has specific energies and spells that are considered appropriate for that particular moon

phase. However, I have had considerable success working with the Dark Moon, and as such I will describe it as well.

The Moon has five specific phases that you can work in: New, Waxing, Full, Waning, and Dark. When working specifically with the Moon's energy, it is best to do so three days before, the day of, and three days after the preferred phase. This gives you an opening of seven days in which to do your work, with the exception of the Dark and the New Moons.



Dark --- New --- Waxing -----To Full ----- Waning -----Dark

The **Dark Moon** is usually a three day time period because of the energy involved. It covers the day before, the day of, and the day after the Dark Moon. Its energy is dark and shadowy. The Dark Moon is used for divination, scrying, delving into the subconscious, and searching out the unknown. Some people chose not to work with the Dark Moon, considering the transformative energy of the Crone too dangerous for them.

The **New Moon** also covers a three day time period. It is a good time for birthing new ideas and new beginnings. The New Moon is the time the Maiden. Works of increase are done now, such as increasing good health and drawing money to you. The New Moon is three days after the Dark, a bare crescent in the West, with her horns facing East.

The **Waxing Moon** is increasing in size and so is Her influence. It is also called the 'first quarter moon'. The Moon is increasing in size and so is Her influence. This is a time for spells of prosperity, healing, and drawing money to you.

The **Full Moon** is when the Moon is large and bright in the sky, rising in the East. She is the Mother Goddess, bringing her bounty and abundance into our lives. This is a time to purify and consecrate items, charge stones and crystals, divination and scrying, prosperity, healing, and fertility magic.

The **Waning Moon** is the ‘third quarter moon,’ a time when the moon is changing from full to dark. The Moon is decreasing in size and withdrawing Her energy, Her horns are pointing to the West. Spells of decrease are done now, such as banishing a disease or decreasing your difficulties, and decreasing your bills.

The Moon has different energy depending on the time of year as well:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| November: | Snow Moon |
| December: | Cold Moon |
| January: | Wolf Moon |
| February: | Ice Moon |
| <u>March:</u> | Storm Moon |
| April: | Growing Moon |
| May: | Hare Moon |
| June: | Mead Moon |
| July: | Hay Moon |
| August: | Corn Moon |
| September: | Harvest Moon |
| October: | Blood Moon |

CONSECRATING TOOLS

Consecrating is the act of purifying and empower your altar items and magical working tools for ritual and magical purpose. It is recommended to have all of your altar items cleansed and purified before use. It is also recommended and that they be used only in a holy and sacred manner once consecrated. Depending on the use you have in mind, you would coincide your consecration with that of the appropriate phase of the moon. A boline for example, would most likely be consecrated during the Waning Moon, since it is a tool used to harvest plants. When in doubt it is best to use the Full Moon for consecration rituals.

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RITUAL/CIRCLE CASTING/ CIRCLE ETIQUETTE



RITUAL

Everyone has a ritual they perform. The ritual of getting out of bed. The ritual of brushing your hair. Ritual is a way to express ourselves, joyfully or sorrowfully. Ritual is also a means of connecting with the Divine and is the focus of this discussion. We wish to connect with the Divine through ritual. We have spoken of using altar tools and having items on an altar, but we do not have to have tools to do this. Tools are a means of helping our consciousness to connect with our subconscious and can be a means to help us connect with our higher selves. Some of the tools one might use in rituals are incense, candles, decorations, God/dess figures, special clothing or jewelry, an altar and cloth, special stones. We may wish to ritually bathe and fast before ritual. The use of these assists us to go beyond our ego selves.

Anything done with respect, mindfulness, and spirit consciousness is a form of ritual. Movement in circle is made clockwise to raise energy, counterclockwise to dissipate energy. Why would energy need to be raised in ritual? It is a means of evoking sacred power. To evoke is to perceive a sacred energy. Evoking this power enables us to focus on the work at hand by accessing our subconscious archetypes.

The components of creating ritual space are: Gathering all of the tools needed or called for in the ritual. Creating sacred space, first cleansing and purifying it. A way to do this is to purify every person, as well as the space,

by smudging. Tracing the circle with earth, air, fire and water is a means of building energy as well as cleansing. The quarters (directions) are called as a protection and witness to our service. The God and Goddess are invoked (called down) into the High Priest and High Priestess. Invoke means to become. So, to those in ritual space, the High Priest and Priestess become imbued with the spirit of the God and Goddess. We celebrate the Sabbat mystery and share Cake and Ale as a means of grounding ourselves of the energy. We thank the God/dess for attending our service and close the circle by thanking the quarters and chanting. Everyone's individual job is to show up, pay attention, tell the truth, and not be attached to the outcome. It is of the utmost importance to thoroughly ground after any kind of energy raising. Singing, eating, laughing, sitting on the ground, sending energy into the earth, etc, can help you ground. It is of vital importance to find a way to ground after any ritual act because you have raised energy outside yourself as well as inside. The natural high, which often accompanies ritual, can leave one feeling spacey and disoriented and can lead to injury. Grounding brings us back down to earth, and the energy we have raised as well. We will still feel the 'high' that may be an affect of ritual, but we will be more attuned to the world around us and less likely to bump into something.

Intent, purpose, and focus are the key ingredients to a successful ritual. A good book for learning how to create a ritual is Blacksun's "*Spell of Making*" published by Eschaton Productions. In it Blacksun lists eight important steps to creating a ritual.

Blacksun's Eight Steps:

1. Decide on and refine the purpose of the ritual
2. Establish the area
3. Consecrate the area and all within
4. Crystallize the vision
5. Raise the energy
6. Focus, direct, and release the energy
7. Ground the stray energy
8. Return everything to the previous condition

Circle Casting

Casting a Circle is an important part of Wiccan ritual. By casting the circle we are bringing energy into our chosen area, defining it and making it

sacred. When we cast a circle we are giving our ritual space 'walls', a room where the Lord and Lady can come to be worshipped that is not part of the mundane. We are creating our 'church' so to speak.

How do we bring energy into the circle? By visualization and intent. As the High Priestess walks the boundary of the circle, she is visualizing a blue-white flame leaving her sword or athame and becoming the walls of protection around the edge of the circle. Coven mates will also be envisioning this same blue-white flame. This flame will also become a sacred bubble encircling the entire ritual area, above and below, when the cone of power is raised. Because you, and your coven mates if there should be any, have invested personal energy into this visualization it may feel like a sledgehammer was taken to your wall if someone should happen to break the boundaries of your cast circle. You may actually suffer physical discomfort. Because of this effect, it is important to treat your circle with respect. Try to have all of your supplies in the circle area before ritual starts so that you will not have to disrupt the boundaries of your circle. If, there is a need to go through the circle, open a doorway (with visualization), and close the doorway when finished. As a rule, I try to do without the item I have left behind. If there is an absolute need then I will not go through more than three times.



Snake River

As with creating a ritual, there are steps usually taken within the ritual itself.

1. Cleansing the area; usually sweeping with a broom (besom).

2. Purify and bless the area with the energy of the Elements; usually Water and Earth (water and salt combined), Air-incense, and Fire-candle.
3. Cast the Circle.
4. Call the Quarters; invoking Air, Fire, Water, and Earth to witness, guard and protect the ritual.
5. State the purpose of the ritual; is the ritual for Sabbat worship? An Esbat? For spell work? To attune to a particular myth and deity?
6. Invoke the Goddess and the God (or particular deity which you are working with).
7. The Mystery Play, or actual work of intent that you are performing.
8. Cakes and Ale; for grounding.
9. Thanking the Deities for their presence.
10. Thanking the Quarters.
11. Opening the Circle and grounding the energy.

Remember your intention as you write and perform the ritual. Let Divine inspiration guide you. Trust your intuition as well. Remember that a ritual should benefit all and harm none. Keep your ritual simple and balanced. Have you balanced it with all four of the elements? Do you have enough water/emotion, fire/passion, earth/grounding, and air/knowledge in your ritual creation? Do you have the supplies that your ritual calls for? Honor the intent of your ritual. Your ritual is a sacred act, honor your words, the intent and purpose of your ritual. As above, so below. If you believe in your ritual, then the ritual will be a powerful and moving experience, which will reflect in your life as well.

Circle Etiquette

Each coven or tradition has their own way of performing ritual. Sometimes outsiders are invited to participate in their rites. Sometimes circle etiquette is not as obvious to the newcomer as we would like. To help you through those uncomfortable moments, here are a few rules of thumb to follow.

1. Do not touch another's magical items without the owner's *explicit* permission. If an item is shown to you, look, admire, but do not touch. A consecrated object easily absorbs energy (becomes

- charged). This would apply to such items as tarot cards, tools (athame, wand, cup, etc.), ritual jewelry, altars, etc.
2. Your ritual bath should be taken before you depart for the gathering, unless told otherwise.
 3. A Circle is a religious rite and you should conduct yourself with respect due to the Divine. Pay attention to the people around you. Once pre-ritual grounding begins the time for socializing is over and the time for silence and spiritual and magical focus begins.
 4. When moving around in a circle, always move clockwise, unless directed otherwise.
 5. If you are drunk, stoned, drugged or on very strong prescription medication, you don't belong in Circle. If you do show up for Circle under those circumstances, you may be escorted out and asked never to return.
 6. Once the Circle is cast, no one leaves until the end. If you find you are uncomfortable and faint, unable to participate further, ask to have someone help you, or even to escort you out.
 7. A Circle is not for observers. If you are not ready to focus your attention on the task at hand then it is best that you do not participate in the ceremony. Do not watch from outside, as your presence will be distracting and disruptive.
 8. Once the rite begins, that is where the focus of your attention belongs. Talking, joking, laughing etc. is extremely rude and break the concentration and continuity of the ceremony. Such behavior is disrespectful and may cause you to be removed from the Circle.
 9. There is often a brief time within the ritual that is informal, usually after Cakes and Ale have been served. This is the time for a small amount of socializing but not a time for horseplay.
 10. **PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE AT ALL TIMES FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR.** If children are allowed at the ritual, then they are expected to act with the same respect and discipline as everyone else. If they are not able to act in such a manner they should not attend. Unruly children and their parents are often asked to leave.
 11. If you find yourself in a coven in which sharing a common cup for Cakes and Ale is the rule then take note: If you are ill, or have a communicable disease, please refrain from participating in the Ale portion of the ceremony so that others do not become sick as well.
 12. If you are not serious about spiritual development or expression, the Craft is not for you.

Suggested reading:

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JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY/MYTHS

JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY

One of the purposes of ritual is to invoke the power and presence of the Divine. This is accomplished using symbols and stories that help us to access our higher and collective consciousness. The most dramatic is the Drawing Down of the Moon and Sun into the High Priestess and High Priest. Through invocation, symbolism and ritual the Lady and Lord are joined, for a brief time, with the spirit of the High Priestess and High Priest. Invoking Deity in this way can have a physically, emotional and psychic effect on the participants, both those who are the vessels for Deity, and those witnessing the act. This can be a very powerful and moving experience for all involved.

As with all ritual and magic, the images, personality and thought forms which embody Deity must be created first and then sent forth. The thought forms are taken from archetypal images within the subconscious minds of those taking part in the ritual.

Archetypes are universal images and symbols that have existed since the beginning of time. The concept of archetypes was first made popular by C. G. Jung, a Swiss psychoanalyst. Archetypes are images that appear to us when we speak the words: 'mother', 'father', 'teacher', 'crone', 'warrior', 'baby', etc. What we see are universal symbols and images that convey the idea which encompasses the whole of 'mother', 'father', 'god' or 'goddess'. If I were to speak the word 'mother' in a general sense, you would envision a woman who was nurturing, caring, punishing when need be, indulgent, and loving. She would also be cook, housecleaner, teacher, counselor, nurse and more. All of this is conveyed by the archetypal image 'mother' which we find in our collective conscious.

Archetypes are amorphous, or lacking definite shape and or character. It is the ideas and feelings that they convey which we access. By using symbols, stories, colors, feelings, and ritual we are able to work with archetypes. When we Draw Down the Moon in ritual, we have an altar set out in front of us. The Circle has been cast, energy has been raised. Our intent and focus is sacred and open. On the altar are archetypal symbols; cup, athame, candle, incense, statues, color, decorations, etc. We are making use of symbols to

help us open the doorway to our higher consciousness. These symbols, the specific combinations laid out before us, are combinations to a lock. Each lock access a specific archetypal image. Symbols may be shared by archetypes, such as Woman, Mother, Grandmother, and Crone. Some symbols are very specific, like Isis or Cernunnos.

The symbols we use in and around our ritual area and on our altars are those used for the aspect of the Goddess and God we are working with. Symbols of the Mother are those things thought of as feminine such as the circle, the cup, and cauldron. The symbols for the God are masculine such as the sword, wand or an oak or holly crown. The participants of the ritual see the decorations and tools laid out. Their subconscious takes note and the lock begins to tumble. As the High Priestess and Priest become the vehicles of the Goddess and God, the others in the circle put on the cloaks of their archetypal images. Through symbolism, story and ritual all are able to feel the power of the archetype.

As we project our symbols onto the archetypes, they feed back to us a more clear image of their true nature. This in turn allows us to project more accurate symbols onto the archetypes. Through this interplay, our unconscious becomes more accessible, and the divine more direct. Each time we access the archetypes in this way, it becomes a little easier. Since the archetypes are part of the collective unconscious, we can also share in the experiences of our ancestors, who had their hand in the making of the archetype before us.

MYTHS

I enjoy a good story or myth. Stories and myths are two of the tools used to teach. They are full of principles, ethics, morals and lessons. Every story or myth has archetypes in their foundation.

Myths are said to be a “map to the spiritual understanding of humankind’s’ position in the universe.” Myths are full of principles, surrounded by legends so they are more easily understood. They are a conduit for spreading ideas. The names may vary from culture to culture, but they still have a hero or heroine, a problem to be solved, a quest, and lead to a greater understanding for the reader. Below you will find an original tale. Can you spot the archetypes, and determine the moral of the story?



Buffalo mother and calf, Yellowstone

THE EGG

By Nia

He had traveled all day without sign of food. The drought had dried up all of the green, which fed his cattle. And they had died. The wild ones who lived in the area had devoured even the thorny bushes. And the beasts had moved on in search of more food and water.

He longed to move his family too, away from this heat and dust. Away from the sparseness of the ground. The need for water lay heavy upon him. He had left his last water bag at home for his family. He trudged on, knowing that his, and his family's survival, depended on him.

That night he returned empty-handed.

His youngest bride, she who had not had the gift of life within her womb, sorrowed for her man. She saw the labor he put into his search, how it drained him, and he became weaker each day in body and heart. She tried to comfort him, telling him that tomorrow he would find food. Tomorrow he would find water.

She went to First Wife and asked, "How may I help our man? How may I comfort him?"

The First Wife looked upon this newest wife. She was pleased with her husband's choice, for this woman before her was truly concerned for their

man. "Your love shall support him Young Wife. Your faith in him is strong. Let him know of your love and faith. It will comfort him."

The Young Wife asked, "First Wife, he is so weary with the search, can I not go and look as well?"

The First Wife was wise in the ways of men, "If he asks it of you Young Wife. For if you find where he has not, would it not be a spear into his side that he has failed and you have not?"

The Young Wife could see the truth in her words. "Then I shall pray that he is successful," the Young Wife said.

Young Wife went forth into the arid plains, where growth had once been so prominent. She sat underneath an aged thorn tree. She prayed for her husband and the family he must care for. She prayed for the beasts upon the plain that were hungry and thirsty. She prayed for the land, which had once held such life. But not once did she pray to have her own thirst sated. Not once did she pray to have her belly filled.

A bird with long, radiant plumage heard her prayers. He was so moved by the young woman's devotion to her husband and family, to the beasts and even the land itself, that he carried word of her to the clouds above.

The Great Thunder Being awoke from his nap at the beautiful bird's insistence. "Oh Great One, look below. For here is a woman worthy of your attention." And the bird told of her devotion and love.

The Great Thunder Being was touched, "How could one so small hold such feeling for those about her?" He was stirred by the Young Wife's words and manner. He gave instructions to the bird, to be carried to the Young Wife.

Young Wife was startled by the Beautiful Bird which spoke to her. "Young Wife, your words have been heard. Find an egg. And fertility will return to the land." Then the Beautiful Bird flew off.

Young Wife searched for an egg. She hunted all of the day. She hunted all of the night. Yet she found no egg. She returned home weary.

"Young Wife! Where have you been?" her husband asked.

"Oh Husband, I have prayed for thee. I have prayed for the beasts. I have prayed for the land," Young Wife answered. "And as I prayed, a Beautiful Bird came to me and said that I must find an egg and fertility will return to the land. But I could find no egg Husband. I have failed thee."

Husband took his Young Wife's face in his hands, "You have not failed me Wife." He took First Wife's hand and Young Wife's hand in his, "Together, we shall find an egg."

Though they looked long into the day, and long into the night, they could not find an egg. For what had lain on the ground had been eaten. And what had lain in the trees had hatched.

As they crossed a dry river bed, Young Wife could not help but notice how some of the stones looked like eggs. She told her Husband and First Wife this.

Husband noticed the resemblance as well. He had a thought, "We have hunted high and low for an egg. I shall take this stone and carve an egg for the Beautiful Bird. Perhaps he will accept it and fertility will return to the land." So saying, the Husband carved a stone into an egg.

First Wife had her hand upon the making as well. She polished the egg with love until it was smooth upon her skin. She added paint to it until it was full of the colors of the land.

Young Wife put her touch upon the egg. She carved upon it the feathers of the Beautiful Bird. She put the symbols of life upon the egg.

When at last the egg was finished, Young Wife, First Wife and Husband returned to the aged thorn tree. The Beautiful Bird returned.

"Oh Beautiful Bird, we could not find an egg as you asked. But with our own hands, together we have made an egg for thee." Young Wife laid the egg on the ground in front of the bird.

The bird flew up into the clouds with the treasure. He told the Great Thunder Being of the love found below. He told of the three who loved each other,

who loved the land enough to give of themselves such labor as to carve an egg from stone.

The Great Thunder Being was well pleased with the Gift. For it had been carved with love, and given with love. He smiled and the clouds began to gather. He chuckled and drops sprinkled upon them. He laughed out loud in his booming voice and the rain fell freely upon them. The Land once more held greenery upon it. The rivers once more flowed with laughter.

Since that time, the children of Husband and First Wife and Young Wife have sent their love to the clouds with the eggs they have carved with their own hands. And the Great Thunder Being laughs for them.

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WHAT IS MAGIC/TYPES OF MAGIC

What is Magic?

Magic. What do you think it is? Do you envision Samantha Stevens of the T.V. show “Bewitched” wiggling her nose and whatever she wants appearing? Or do you think magic is more subtle, like money suddenly coming to you that you didn’t expect? What is your definition of magic?

For me, magic is using my will to effect changes in my environment, and in myself. Here are a few more definitions to ponder.

1. Personal power is used in conjunction with natural objects to effect change. *Green Witchcraft*
2. The use of natural forces of nature to bring about needed changes. The projection of natural energies to produce needed effects. *Nature Magic*
3. A ritual for raising psychic power and directing it to a specific and practical purpose. *A Witches’ Bible*
4. The art and science of affecting change in accordance with the will. *Crowley*
5. The art and science of changing consciousness at will. *Fortune*

Did you notice a common thread weaving its way through each of these definitions? “Change” is the common thread. These definitions all have in common the idea of causing some kind of change, whether in the self or in the environment. In other words, “Transformation” is magic. Change, or transformation, is a natural process. When we are being born we are transforming. We are moving from one stage of development to another, changing in the process. When we die, we are also transforming from one state of existence to another. Seasons change and the world is transformed. When we change, it is usually a one-way ticket, usually for the better. Transformation is magic. Magic is natural..

A spell is focusing on intent to bring about change. A prayer is intent to contact the Divine to bring about change. So what is the difference between a spell and a prayer? The principles are the same. The difference is how they

intend to bring about change. In prayer, we are asking for a Higher Source to bring about change in our environment, in others, or in us, without taking responsibility for that change, and without using our energy to bring about the change as well. When a Wiccan or a Witch uses a spell, they are not only praying to a Higher Source for a transformation to take place, but they are also taking steps to bring about this change, and accept responsibility for the results of the transformation.

For many people, prayer is very personal, but for others it is very structured and repetitive. Catholics and Buddhists are known to light candles when they pray. Witches and Wiccans light candles when they work a spell. Does that mean that lighting a candle is working a spell? Or are you working magic when you are praying? When does one become the other? When you say so. When you pray, you are usually asking for change, in some form or other. Lighting a candle and intently praying for change is the beginning of magic. That is not to say that Catholics and Buddhists are practicing witchcraft. They are, however, praying within their religious beliefs.



Wilson Heights

Types of Magic

This brings us to the two main types of magic: *Low Magic* and *High Magic*. Low magic has as its goal the changing of the world outside the person, bringing money or success or love or some other observable change. High magic has as its goal the elevation and alignment of the self with higher levels of existence and ultimately the Divine. With either type of magic, intent is everything.

Magical technique falls into different categories as well: Folk magic, Spell Craft, and Ceremonial magic.

Folk magic is all of those things that are passed down from generation to generation. They are very simple and often not even thought of as magic. Like, finding a penny face up is good luck. Don't walk under ladders. Toss a coin in a wishing well. Knock on wood to avert bad luck. Many might be considered superstition. This is the simplest type of magical working.

Spell craft is more involved. When working a spell you have a purpose, intent and desired result in mind. You may need to prepare for the work, gathering feathers or stones, candles or herbs to aid you in acquiring your desired end. It's focus is usually more specific or planned. Action has been added to intent. Candle magic, knot magic, poppets and talismans are used in spell craft.

The more complicated form of magic is Ceremonial Magic. The desired results of this form of magic is change within the magician, therefore it is considered high magic. That is not to say that spells cannot be used to bring about personal change, nor that spell crafting is low magic. The intent of the working determines whether or not it is considered high or low magic.

Ceremonial magic usually involves researching numerous correspondences and associations on every level. Special robes and tools will be made on the appropriate day, at the correct hour with the most fitting planetary alignment. Each item will also be consecrated with the right correspondences as well. The rituals are very elaborate, with a great deal of recitation and postures all designed to work with high levels of magical energy. They may even call forth spiritual beings to help with the work.

Ritual and the use of symbolism is a common theme in each of these types of magic. In folk magic, a ritual may be as simple as tossing a penny, or a pinch of salt. The symbolic action of tossing something, represent our desired outcome being won for a price. In spell craft, the ritual may be a bit more elaborate, but symbolism and ritual is still being used. Certain oils to anoint a candle, which has associations with specific desires like money or health could be some of the symbolisms encountered. In ceremonial magic the symbolism is quiet detailed and specific. Every word, inflection, gesture, color and combination of colors has meaning.

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HOW DOES MAGIC WORK?

There is a theory developing about Magic. This theory is only one model of what Magic is, and is not the definitive answer. It does not entirely answer the questions we may have about magic, but, like numerous models, gives us an idea of what MAY happen when Magic is afoot. This theory states that Magic acts much like the numerous energy fields around us.



Have you ever looked at a boulder out in a pond or lake? Even though the rock isn't moving, it has an impact on the water around it. Waves lap up against it. Ripples radiate out from the rock on even the calmest days. The boulder influences the movement of the air in much the same way. Wind blows and the air must part to go around the rock. This causes the flow of air movement to change. The boulder is affecting its environment by its very existence. And the same is true of the rock's environment. Slowly the water and the wind are wearing away at it's surface, eroding the face of the rock. Water particles seep deep into cracks in the rock. In winter the water freezes, expands, and causes the cracks to deepen, and maybe even breaks off large pieces of stone. In summer the heat of the sun causes the rock to contract with the same effect. The environment is shaping the rock as well. Now

imagine you are that rock. You are influencing your environment by your very existence, and your environment is affecting you.

There are many energy fields in our environment that have an impact on us. The gravitational field of the Earth holds us on the planet's surface, while the gravitational field of the Sun holds the Earth within its orbit. The Moon's gravitational pull influences tides and women's menstrual cycles. The Earth's magnetic field influences compasses and people. I, for one, have developed a directional sense based on magnetic north. Electricity, radiation, radar, quantum waves and super-strings, sound, and light are just a few of the energy fields that we have discovered. These energy fields affect each other, and vice versa. Magical influence acts like many energy fields. As such, we can influence magic, and magic can have an impact on us.

Let's look at another field of influence, which is similar to magic. Sound Waves are all around us and greatly impact us on a personal level. If you ring a bell, the sound vibrates out from the source, travels to the next object, and can be distorted by impact with other items, such as heavy curtains, or the acoustical abilities of the area it is in. If the note is pure, it is music to our ears. If it is sour, then we flinch and wish the sound would quickly end.

Sound waves vibrate at resonant frequencies. This means that the frequency, or wavelength, at which the wave becomes stable with little loss of energy. This resonant frequency will cause other objects of the same frequency to vibrate in sympathy, even though there is no other reason for the vibrational phenomenon to occur. You can witness this when you hit a tuning fork and the musical instrument, say a guitar, and will vibrate the note in return. The reverse is also true. A tuning fork will vibrate when it is in the vicinity of a musical instrument that is playing a matching harmonic note. This process helps us to tune the guitar to the proper note or chord that matches the tuning fork.

Notes that are in harmony are notes which resonant with each other. When this happens, the notes strengthen each other, and the sound waves become stronger than the two of them together would normally be. The harmonic sound seems to last forever. The two notes will strive for harmony, changing and matching their wavelengths till they are on the same frequency. The effect is a stronger, louder sound that is maintained with a minimum of energy expenditure. In other words, the sound waves of the two notes are

multiplied by the harmonic qualities of their combined efforts and the result is more than the sum of its parts.

But what if the two notes are in discord? What if the two sound waves interfered with each other? The sound waves produced would be weakened. The frequency of the wavelengths produce would conflict with each other. Because of the discord being produced, more energy would need to be spent to maintain the vibrational dissonance than the two notes would normally use. Remember our tuning fork and the guitar? If the tuning fork is in discord with the strings of the guitar, then there will not be a matching vibration when the tuning fork is struck.

When we bring Magic into our lives, we are tapping into the different energy fields in our environment. For optimal result, we would need to be in harmony with these energy fields. This would mean that we would need to have our different energy bodies in tune with the energy fields we are using.

As Above, So Below.

Just as the boulder affected the water and air around us, when we work with the different energies in our environment, we are changing them in some way. Perhaps it is simply to direct their path in another direction. Perhaps we transform the energy entirely into a new form. By bringing about these changes, we are also bringing about changes in ourselves. These changes are like the musical notes that strive to match frequencies so that they may better harmonize with each other, therefore enhancing their own abilities.

When we use the axiom “As above, so below” we are speaking of the mutual transformation that occurs when magic affects us, and when we influence magic. Our natural attempt to match frequencies with the magical energies around us affects each of our energy bodies. If we go one step further and strive to harmonize with our surroundings on a conscious level, we enhance this process. If we make conscious changes towards harmony within our physical existence then we are also making conscious changes in our etheric body, which in turn transforms our astral, mental and spiritual levels respectively. Hence, if we make changes in the spiritual level, then our physical level is also transformed. As above, so below.

Remember our discussion earlier about everything being connected? Now we have shown why we also need to be well-balanced. Magic depends on this connection to work. For best results we also need to be centered, balanced in the elements, and in harmony with our environment and intent. We have discussed the correspondences of the elements. Let us take a look at polarity so that we may better understand how we can be in harmony.



Looking at the Tao symbol, we see two polarities, one dark and one light. Yet within each part is the seed of the other. Yin represents all things that are archetypically female: cold, wet, winter, receptivity, emotion, intuition, etc. Yang represents all things that are male; warm, dry, summer, aggressiveness, logic, etc. Tao (pronounced dow) represents a balance of these ideas. Balance is the desired state. You must meet Tao to do magic in its fullest. You must be centered and emotionally stable. You must be connected to the universe to be focused. That is why meditation, vision-quests, fasting, ritual bathing, the use of symbols and visualization are so vital for success.

One of the amazing outcomes of this balancing and harmonizing transformation is the synchronicity that appears in our lives. Slowly things begin to look better. Circumstances drop gifts in your lap. Relationships brighten, finances improve, and laughter is often heard. This is part of the harmonic resonance encountered when we embrace the Divine. When we embrace magic. Remember...

The Goddess is Alive and Magic Is Afoot.

Suggested reading:

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MEDITATION/HEALING/CHAKRA

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Meditation

One of the greatest tools of a witch is meditation. Meditation is when you consciously direct your attention to alter your state of consciousness. Meditation is simply about attention, where you direct it and how it alters your consciousness. Through meditation we learn to calm our minds and focus our attention. When we focus on our intent in ritual and in spell work we are able to bring about changes in ourselves, and in the world around us.

Traditionally meditation is used for spiritual growth. When we meditate, we become more conscious of our inner self, and of the world around us. When we meditate we become more conscious and we open up to our guides and our higher self. We are also able to open up to the collective consciousness of the larger world community. By altering our consciousness to a higher vibrational level we are able to access messages in the form of words, visuals, colors, symbols, sensations and/or feelings.

Meditation has also become a valuable tool for a number of maladies:

- Stress relief
- Healing
- Emotional cleansing & balancing
- Deepening concentration & insight
- Manifesting change
- Developing intuition
- Unlocking creativity
- Exploring higher realities

Here are some general guidelines to follow when you first begin meditating:

-Put your expectations aside, and don't worry about doing it right. There is no right or wrong way to meditate.

-Don't trying to force something to happen. Don't over-analyze the meditation. Don't put too much emphasis on doing it right.

-It's not necessary to meditate on a completely empty stomach. If you're hungry, eat something.

-Find a quiet, comfortable place to meditate. You can sit in a comfortable chair, on the bed, on the floor... anywhere that's comfortable.

-Eliminate as much noise and as many potential distractions as possible. Don't worry about those things that you cannot control. Think of them as harmless white noise in the background.

-When you sit to meditate, sit comfortably, with your spine reasonably straight. This allows the spiritual energy to flow freely up the spine, which is an important part of meditation. Leaning against a chair back, a wall, headboard, etc. is fine. If, for physical reasons, you can't sit up, lay flat on your back.

-Place your hands in any position that is comfortable.

-If it does not go against your beliefs, call on a "higher source" for assistance in your meditation. Any form is all right. This can be quite helpful, but is not absolutely necessary.

Some Misconceptions about Meditation

Misconception #1. Meditation is turning off your thoughts or making your mind a blank.

Not True ...Inner quietness is experienced in meditation, but not by willfully turning off thoughts. Quieting the mind results naturally from practice attempts and the force beyond our efforts.

Misconception #2. Meditation is difficult and takes tremendous discipline.

Not True ... Meditation can be easily learned, and can be quite enjoyable. Meditation is only difficult if one tries to do it perfectly, which is not really possible.

Misconception #3. Meditation is not successful unless we see interesting things in our mind.

Not True... Although some meditations are specifically for visualizing, many are not. In those meditations, seeing things may be entertaining, but is not essential. Even visualization does not necessarily require seeing. Some people sense or feel things inwardly, and that's all right.

Meditation may seem intimidating at first. However, it is not as hard as you may think. The benefits of meditation are numerous. Even if you should decide that Wicca is not for you, I would still strongly suggest that you look into meditation for your own health and well being.



Boulder Cave

Healing

Every man, woman, and child has the ability to heal. Unfortunately many of us don't realize that we have this ability. The Wiccan religion, however, embraces this wonderful ability to heal ourselves and to heal others.

There are many ways that we heal. Faith healing is the most common form of healing that we practice. No, I am not talking about Christian faith healing, and then again, I am. I am speaking of healing with faith. Believing in the healing, drawing healing energy from the Divine Source, and trusting that the Divine will heal, through us. Christians use this same trust and belief in the same way that Wiccans do, Buddhists, Native Americans, and many

other religions. A belief in a higher source, and a trust that we can heal through this source is the primary force behind our ability to heal.

We heal in many ways. We use visualization, meditation, energy raising, drumming and chanting, herbal remedies, candles, crystals and stones, homeopathy, massage, acupressure and acupuncture, aromatherapy, Reiki, light and color therapy, Chinese and Hindu medicines, chakra work, reflexology... the list goes on.

One of the simplest ways to heal is to visualize an energy ball of white light. Once you have built this energy ball in your mind, then you would send it to the area that needs healing. Another way is to pick a candle of the appropriate color, charge it with energy through visualization, and then burn the candle while envisioning the energy healing the ailment.

I would like to stress, however, that it is rude and unethical to heal someone without their express permission. Many people do not believe that they can be healed in this way, or do not feel comfortable with someone of our religious preference within their 'space' even if it is with the pure intention of healing them. Sometimes the ailment is karmic in nature and they need to work through this aspect of their life. Sometimes a person is unwilling to let go of their affliction because of the attention they gain from it. For whatever reason, they have the right to say whether or not you send healing their way.

Occasionally though, we come across circumstances in which an individual is unable to express his wishes in this matter. Perhaps they are unconscious and in need of aid now. Under those circumstances I would meditate, contacting the spirit of the individual and tell them of my intent. I would then make a ball of healing energy and tell their spirit that this energy was for them, if they care to use it. I would also add that this energy was to be used with free will, and for the greatest good of all. To end the meditation I would also specify that if the individual should chose not to use the energy, that it go to the Earth, to be used as the Goddess saw fit, for the greatest good for all.

At times I have found that the person's spirit was quite willing to accept help in this way, even though they would be horrified to have me actually speak to them on this subject. I have also come across individuals that, even in the spirit form, were unwilling to accept my help. I accept their wishes, just as I would expect them to accept mine.

I would also like to stress that each time we do energy work, that it is important to give the energy direction and purpose. If left to hang around, our raised energy can cause problems, such as electrical glitches, or annoying phone calls. It can even cause us to trip and fall, leaving us with the need to be healed. By specifying that our raised energy is to be used with “free will”, we are not trying to impose our will on the healing or spell work, and we are stating that the person it is intended for also has free will in the matter. When we affirm that the energy is to be used “for the greatest good for all” we are specifying that no harm come from this working, even unintentional. Human beings may feel we know a few things, but I have found that humans make many mistakes. It would be presumptuous to think that we know more than the Gods, in almost any circumstance. Since everyone involved also has free will, there is the chance that the energy work may be rejected, hence my statement that the energy then be used by Earth, for Her needs. This not only grounds the energy, but gives it purpose that few could refute.

That said, believe in your Self, and believe in the healing.

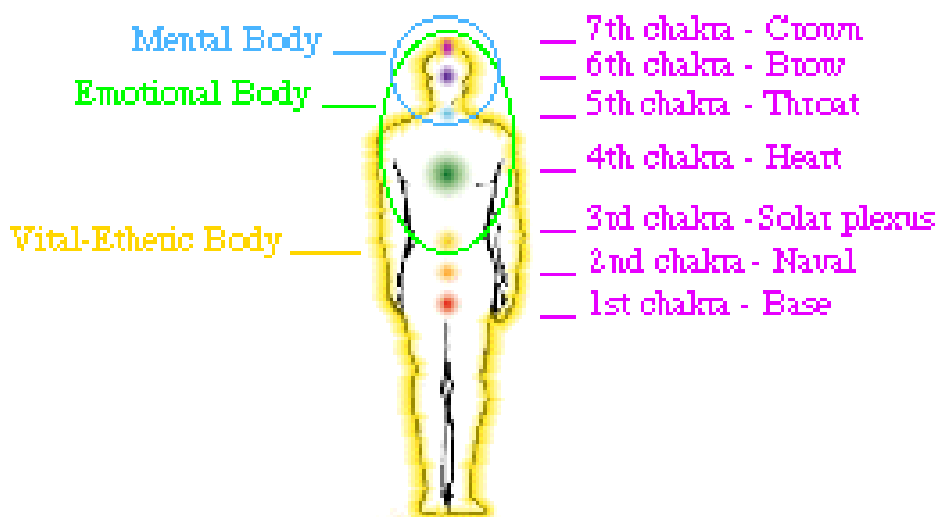
Chakras

I have often spoken of working with the “*Chakras*” when discussing healing work. Chakra is a Sanskrit Hindu word meaning ‘*Wheel of Spinning Energy*’. Chakras are subtle energy centers located within our body. These energy centers look like spinning wheels of light, each a different color and each vibrates to a musical note. There are a number of chakras located in the body. However the major chakras are located along the spine. There are seven of them, each with their own specific role to play.

Chakras help connect our subtle energy bodies to our physical body. Some of the chakras are doorways to higher dimensions. These chakras direct our life force to fulfill specific functions. I mentioned earlier in the Macrocosm/Microcosm section of this book the different energy bodies which surround our physical body. As there are seven bodies, so there are also seven chakras, and each chakra is connected in a special way with its corresponding body.

The easiest way to work with healing the chakras, first envision each one, moving from the root chakra up. If you see that a color looks pale or muddy, then there are imbalances within the chakra. Flood the chakra with its specific color until it is bright and healthy, then move on to the next color. Be sure to work with all of the chakras, not just one or two. When finished with the chakras, close the connection, leaving the root chakra open to the earth, grounding you, and the crown chakra open to the sky.

Diagram of Chakras & Energy Bodies



1st Chakra *The Physical Body and the Muladhara Chakra*

Located at the base of spine, its color is red. It is the chakra closest to the earth and represents earthly grounding and support as well as our roots. Often called the root chakra, its element is Earth.

On a physical level this chakra governs the back, legs, hips, feet, spine and the circulation of the blood. When functioning negatively, this chakra causes aches, strains and loss of mobility to these organs. On a physical level, this chakra can be the cause of backache, leg aches, overweight, underweight, anemia and so on. These problems arise as emotional baggage that we store in our back, spine and legs. When we have no energy and lack ambition and drive, it is because we have no connectedness to Mother Earth and ourselves. By learning to become connected to the physical we can eliminate

many back, leg and circulation problems. If we are tired, run down and lack ambition and drive, it is because this center needs positive energy to help us sustain the levels needed to think, feel, work and play.

The base chakra is the root of our manifestation, our existence. Fear is felt in this chakra and it controls the fight or flight response. It is the chakra of physical survival and self-preservation. It governs our sense of Smell.

Red represents life, fire, growth and the burning away of negativity and weakness. Red is the earth, the soil, the stones and trees. Red makes you wake up and feel alive. The color red heals, regenerates and inspires enthusiasm and a will to live.

2nd Chakra *The Etheric Body and the Svadisthana Chakra*

Located between the base of your spine and your navel, it is just below the navel, about where the ovaries would be in a woman. Its color is orange. Its primal foundation is energy/power in its raw form, sexuality and pleasure. Often called the sex chakra, its element is Water.

On a physical level this chakra governs the bodies' organs like your lower sexual organs, your bladder, bowel and lower intestine. For a woman it is all about their femininity. For a man it is about their masculinity. A lot of stomach disorders happen because this chakra is dysfunctional. This is because there are issues with others and how we relate and express emotions outside of ourselves. Sexual abuse also causes this chakra to become unbalanced. People who suffer sexual related diseases are caused through the chakra becoming exposed and vulnerable to negativity.

The second chakra represents your sexuality, desires, creativity, emotions of anger, resentment and frustration. It is the energy center that controls your passions, your sexual needs, the abundance that you allow into your life for fulfillment of your desires. This center is where you find your creativity on the physical level. When functioning properly you become open, expressive, creative and spontaneous. When negative and not functioning positively, you may have a low self esteem and may think that you are ugly and that you have nothing worth giving to others. You could have a low sex drive and find it hard to communicate and respond to others. Once this chakra is healed, we often find that the people around us do not provide the nurturing

environment that we need. This chakra is also an earth connecting chakra like the base. Working on this chakra will also help you to remain focused and grounded. This chakra is good for healing relationship issues, healing minor stomach and digestive orders and help your reproductive organs to function properly. It governs our sense of Taste.

The color orange is a powerful color that invokes passion, creativity and vibrancy. The more colorful and bright the orange the more forward-thinking you feel. The more earthly and brown looking the orange the more connected to the earth and Mother Nature. Orange is a mixture of powerful red and willful yellow. Power and will ignite together to create an explosion of strength self esteem and vitality.

3rd Chakra *The Astral Body and the Manipura Chakra*

Located in the solar plexus area, a few inches above the navel. It is the seat of your emotional living, personal power and metabolic energy. It's primal essence is that of the Will. Its foundation is based on one's individual essence/being. Personal emotions are carried in this chakra. Commonly called the solar, or solar plexus chakra, its element is Fire.

The solar plexus chakra controls our upper intestines and upper back and spine. Because the Solar governs the stomach, many ulcers and stomach disorders are caused by stress that is caused by excessive worry over the future. When this chakra is not functioning properly, we become very fearful. We carry many burdens and worries for the future and this can cause back problems as well.

The Solar controls our will, our personal power. It brings us our strength, courage and our will to succeed, achieve and survive. The Solar chakra, when functioning negatively can cause a person to be very fearful. They suffer from a low self-esteem. They have very little self worth. They may allow others to push them around and control them. They can become very indecisive, fearing to make any decisions or commitments to anyone or anything. It governs our sense of Sight.

Yellow is intellect, optimism, and mental concentration. Yellow also represents mental stability, and imagination.

4th Chakra *The Mental Body and the Anahata Chakra*

Located in your heart area, the 4th chakra's color is green. It is the center of love, harmony and peace. The heart's primal essence is interrelations and all that is in the arena of love. Its element is Air.

The heart chakra is situated in and around the heart area of our physical body. The heart pumps the flow of blood that is needed to keep us alive. Without the heart we cannot function on the physical plane. This area also governs the lungs. We need our lungs to breathe in the life force energy of oxygen. Without air our physical bodies would die. On a physical level we have problems with our heart, blood, circulation and the vessels that carry the blood, also our lungs and how we breathe. We have ribs that protect these areas, these also become weakened when this center is not functioning properly.

The natural qualities of this plane are imagination and dreaming. There are great psychic possibilities of the fourth body, which is connected to the heart chakra. It is through this Chakra that we fall in love. It controls our love, compassion, associations, and relationships. It governs our sense of Touch.

On a mental level, the heart chakra functions on an emotional basis, our feelings and how we express them towards ourselves and to others. How we think gets turned into how we behave with our feelings on this level. On a spiritual level this also causes an effect. When one person is negative and sends that negativity out, others who have vulnerable heart center, connect to this energy, and reflect it on to others as well. This effect may cause the world to seem like it is filled with negativity, hatred and racism, as well as a lack of love and respect for our Mother Earth. Fortunately the reverse is also true. When we send out love, others pick it up and it multiplies to feed us, and the earth. It isn't that the world is filled with negativity, but that our attention tends to be focused on the negative. By focusing our attention on love, laughter and goodwill, we will pass on these feelings to others, who in turn pass it on, and so forth and so on.

Green is connection with the earth. It is healing and wisdom, the knowledge of the earth. It is spiritual understanding, sympathy, charity and compassion.

5th Chakra *The Spiritual Body and the Visuddha Chakra*

Located in the throat, its color is blue. It is the chakra of communication, expression and judgment. Its essence is vibrational. Its essence is to focus and direct. Called the throat chakra, its element is Sound.

The throat chakra is situated in the neck area of the body. On a physical level this chakra governs the throat, thyroid, mouth, teeth, tongue, and jaw. The problems that we have on this level are, sore throats, over and under active thyroids that can lead to a lack of energy, vitality, overweight and underweight problems. We use the throat to eat and drink, as well as expressing ideas and emotions. What goes through our throat chakra can affect us and can cause us to become unbalanced. On other levels like the emotional and spiritual this can cause confusion and blockages to our creativity and our emotions. Because this chakra also governs our creativity, sometimes having a bad diet and abusing it with drugs and alcohol can cause problems in this area.

The throat chakra also governs our voice. The positive attributes of this chakra on the emotional level are when we speak the truth, know the truth and act upon that truth. The fifth chakra is called visuddhi which means purity, absolute purity. The quest of the fifth chakra is to be rid of pain, hatred, violence and desires. On an emotional level this chakra governs the aspects of communication, willpower, truthfulness, practical analytical thought and creativity. It governs our sense of Hearing.

On a spiritual level this chakra governs freedom and expression. This is a type of freedom where we are fully opened and can communicate with all beings and spirits. On a spiritual level the throat chakra governs the doorway to peace on earth. When the throat chakra is functioning in a positive manner, we are able to communicate words and verbal rhythms that send out loving and positive vibrations to the world. These vibrations and energies enter other beings and inspires them to feel positive and uplifted. The gift of sound that comes from our vocal cords and up through the throat. This sound turns into words and singing. Through using the voice in song, we can create a vibration that travels through our whole body. This sound and rhythm enters into our soul and clears away negative energy blockages that accumulate when we are sick or under emotional stress. Through song, we are able to heal the body in a creative and inspiring way.

The color that responds to this chakra is turquoise or pale blue. The color blue vibrates energy through the body that embraces the ideals of openness and the unlimited freedom that is available to all us. Blue embodies a sense of self-expression. Blue is the color of wisdom, healing and freedom.

6th Chakra *The Cosmic Body and the Ajna Chakra*

The ajna chakra is located near the middle of your forehead and slightly into the head, about where the psychic third eye would be. As such it is called the third eye or brow chakra. It is the Chakra of question. Our inner vision is contained here; inner dreams gifts of clairvoyance, wisdom and perception. Its color is Indigo, which is a combination of red and blue. Its element is Light.

On a physical level this chakra governs the pituitary glands, the skull, eyes, the brain and the nervous system. It also governs our senses, like sight, smell, taste and touch. The pituitary glands, nervous system and the brain control the energy waves that send messages to the rest of the body. The skull protects the brain from outside interference and the eyes give us the ability to see on the physical. If this chakra is unbalanced, our physical state of existence can become confused. If the energy waves from our brain and pituitary do not flow in a positive and balanced direction we can suffer headaches, sinus and nasal problems and disease within the brain and the skull. We can also suffer from different types of mental disorders that are caused through our nervous system. We can become weak and lose coordination in our body. Our senses of smell and taste can become unbalanced. We can also suffer eye problems. They call this chakra the control panel for the entire mind, body and spirit. Here everything is processed before any actions or reactions take place. When functioning positively, we are able to look at life from a balanced point of view. We are open to learning, which provides stimulus that makes our life more fulfilling.

The brow chakra finds its essence within the astral and dreaming worlds. It governs our intuitive faculties and all that is governed by our imagination. It is our mind, our inner vision, and conceptual thought. It also governs discernment, knowledge, intuition and wisdom. It is from this chakra that we perceive the higher zones and higher planes. This chakra is used to question the spiritual nature of our life. This chakra also governs our dream state, our

subconscious and our imagination. On the spiritual level this chakra governs our sixth sense of awareness. The third eye opens you up to other worlds, beings and other senses like clairvoyance, which is the ability to see into the future. It also opens you to clairaudience, which is the ability to be able to hear spirit voices, and other vibrational frequencies that cannot be heard by the normal ear. When functioning negatively, we tend to criticize any spiritual beliefs. We do not believe in the magic of life that is present in our universe. We can become critical, skeptical and harsh in the way we look at the world. When functioning positively, we trust in life and the universal process that governs our existence here on this plane. We are open to the realms and planes of consciousness that reside along side our world. It governs our sense of awareness and being.

The color that is associated with this energy center is violet to purple. These colors vibrate an energy that opens up our intuition and imagination. These colors stimulate the brain to function in a balanced way that helps with education and learning.

The subtle energy body associated with this chakra is the Cosmic body. On a physical level this would be equivalent to our place in the universe. It is our sense of Being within the cosmos.

7th Chakra *The Nirvanic Body and the Sahasrara Chakra*

Located at the top of your head, this chakra's color is white or violet. It is the chakra of Divine purpose and destiny. This Chakra is said to be your own place of connection to God. Often called the crown chakra, its element is Thought.

This chakra governs part of the spinal cord, the stem of the brain, pain center of the brain and part of the nerves. When people become sick and suffer a lot of pain that they cannot handle, it is because the energy flow is blocked to this chakra. Since it governs the organs and nerves that control our pain, people have been able to control their pain by focusing on this chakra and sending energy there. When not functioning properly on a physical level this chakra causes a loss of control over a person's ability to live and interact with the world. Some people suffer from diseases that cause them to lose movement. Some of the problems that come from this chakra are blindness, deafness, and paralysis. They may also experience diseases that attack the

nervous system, brain stem and spinal cord. There is a loss of energy flow and more so belief, which causes this chakra to become unbalanced. This chakra can also send healing energy down through to the others' chakras.

As the base chakra connects us to Mother Earth, the crown chakra connects us to the heavens, to the stars and beyond. This chakra governs all the power and wisdom that belongs to our higher mind. It is an energy channel for healing and spiritual awakening and governs the connection that we have to the Divine. It embodies belief, unconditional love, beauty, knowledge, information, understanding, and refined thoughts.

When you open this chakra you access your higher mind, you can channel through spirits from different planes, guides and many more beings that communicate on this level. You will also be able to communicate with trees, animals, plants and stones as well. The Crown chakra is like a transmitter to the whole universe. If you send out thoughts and ideals, dreams and goals through this chakra you will be heard and a lot of the times your prayers are answered. This is the chakra that can create miracles. If you believe and have hope, working with this chakra can bring about true healing on any level. It governs our sense of the Divine.

White represents all the colors combined together. So all the energies that exist with all the colors flow and vibrate a powerful healing frequency through this chakra. White is divine, pure, honest and new.

The subtle energy body associated with this chakra is the Nirvanic body. On a physical level this would be equivalent to our place within the Divine. It is leaving behind our being to become the Divine in a much larger sense. The word, *nirvana*, means 'the void from where we jump from the being into the nonbeing.' It also means 'the extinction of the flame.' In other words, that which was I (the ego) is no longer and spiritual union with the Divine is the goal.

The Thymus Chakra

Many believe that there is a powerful chakra that exists in between the heart chakra and the throat chakra. I make mention of it here because I have personally felt and worked with this chakra. When I first became a Reiki

healer, my hands would automatically begin Reiki healing when my hands were in this position. Though I have read a number of books on Reiki and on the seven major chakras I found little written on this chakra, which is located about where the thymus is.

Whether or not it is a major chakra I do not know. I do know it is a powerful chakra nonetheless. This chakra is said to be a powerful energy channel that links you to the earth and to the heavens. It is said that uniting with this chakra brings about great awareness to your emotional and spiritual planes. When this chakra is recognized within the person and is functioning properly, you will become open to the truth of your existence. It is like accessing the sacred records. This chakra seems to bring belief and spiritual wisdom down from the heavens and connects us to the earthly plane. Learning to feel this chakra and bringing it back to awareness is said to bring about healing and wisdom on all levels.

This chakra uses the colors blue and green. As mentioned earlier blue embraces the ideals of openness and unlimited freedom. Blue is the sky above us, the ocean that nurtures us. Green is sympathy, altruism, charity and healing. Green is the earth at our feet, the ground below us, Mother Earth's arms around us.

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Whirlpool Galaxy, Hubble Telescope

DIVINATION

Divination is a number of methods by which events are predicted, interpreted or explained. It combines the gifts of intuition and prophecy, as well as some skill in interpretation. Divination began with shamans and priest/esses long ago. They would observe omens and signs and interpret their meanings as they related to future or current events. They would also divine the cause and cure of illness and injury.

There are two main divisions of divination: Ecstatic and inductive. Making direct contact, usually while in a trance state, with the spirits of the dead or other beings, is ecstatic divination. Ecstatic forms of divination include channeling, mediumship and, to an extent, scrying. Inductive divination is done through the observation of natural events, or special items. Forms of inductive divination as natural observance are the I Ching, Runes, Tarot, and Astrology.

One of the questions asked is what is the source of the information. One theory, or explanation, is that the information comes from a source outside of the diviner. This includes the spirits of the deceased, beings dwelling on other planes, spirit guides, or some ultimate source. Many diviners refer to Spirit, one title for an ultimate source. By entering into a trance, the diviner is open to the communication of these sources. In case of scrying, the source projects images into the scrying device, whether a mirror or bowl of water or other. In inductive divination, the source may even direct the layout of the cards or runes, working through the shuffling and distribution of the items.

Another theory is that all of the information comes directly from within the diviner who draws on the Collective Unconscious or the Akashic records, a sort of cosmic reference library where all knowledge is recorded. In this theory, the diviner interprets the information based on their knowledge of the individual or situation. A third explanation combines these two.

RUNES

The Runes are a set of sacred symbols of the Teutonic peoples. Runes are distinguished by the fact that they are made up of straight lines rather than curved. Two classes of runes are the symbol runes and alphabet runes. The

symbol runes were direct representation of items. The alphabet runes were devised from the symbol runes and represented the sounds of the language. It is the alphabet runes that are most commonly used today for divination. The most common are: the Elder Futhark, the Younger or German Futhark, and the Anglo-Saxon Futhark. The most frequently found is the Elder Futhark. It is the set you are most likely to find for sale. Because of this, I will list the Elder Futhark and its possible meanings at the end of this section. The word Futhark comes from the first six runes, just as our word alphabet comes from the first two letters, alpha and beta. The names of the runes begin with the sound they represent. The exception is the Ing rune, which represents the sound 'ng', however, there are no words that begin with this sound, so an I was added.

Ancient sources refer to the runes, describing them as symbols written on pieces of wood cut from a length of tree branch. The pieces would be scattered face down on a cloth and the person seeking information would choose three runes to be interpreted.

Runes are one of the simplest divinatory tools to make and use. Just as the original users of runes cut small discs from a piece of wood, a set of runes can be made from a length of branch or even a dowel. The symbols can be painted on stones, carved into wood, or molded into clay. The runes can be read in many ways. The simplest is to use the method recorded from antiquity, picking three from a set scattered on a cloth or table. They can also be drawn from a bag, or even rolled with special dice. Some readers use a layout much like tarot, with the position of the rune affecting its interpretation. Runes can even be read from sources in nature. The branches of a tree will form runes as they cross. By looking into the bare branches of a tree, runes will appear which can be interpreted. Casting a handful of sticks onto a table can do the same thing. These two methods have the advantage of being readily at hand, and of relying entirely on the recognition of the runes, drawing on the subconscious even more.

Besides divination, runes are also used for magic, and to make amulets. Two or more runes can be combined into a bind rune. The runes are chosen so that their meanings combine in a way to provide protection or to bring prosperity or whatever is desired.

Elder Futhark

| <u>No.</u> | <u>Sound</u> | <u>Shape</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Exoteric Meaning</u> | <u>Esoteric Meaning</u> |
|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | f | f | fehu | Livestock/Money | Dynamic power |
| 2 | u | u | uruz | Aurochs (wild bison) | Vital formative essence |
| 3 | th | x | thurisaz | Thurs (giant) | Breaker of resistance |
| 4 | a | a | ansuz | A God (Woden) | Sovereign ancestral force |
| 5 | r | r | raidho | Wagon/Chariot | Vehicle on path to cosmic power |
| 6 | k | k | kenaz | Torch | Controlled energy |
| 7 | g | g | gebo | Gift (sacrifice) | Exchanged force |
| 8 | w | w | wunjo | Joy/Pleasure | Harmony of like forces |
| 9 | h | h | hagalaz | Hail (-stone) | Seed form and primal union |
| 10 | n | n | nauthiz | Need (distress) | Need-Fire (friction/liberation) |
| 11 | i | i | isa | Ice | Contraction (matter/anti-matter) |
| 12 | j/y | j | jera | Year (harvest) | Orbit (life cycle) |
| 13 | i | y | ihwaz | Yew Tree | Axis (tree of life/death) |
| 14 | p | p | perthro | Lot/Cup | Evolutionary force |
| 15 | -z/-r | z | elhaz | Elk | Protective & tutelary beings |
| 16 | s | s | sowilo | Sun | Sun-wheel (crystallized light) |
| 17 | t | t | tiwaz | The God Tyr | Sovereign order |
| 18 | b | b | berkano | Birch (-goddess) | Birth (container/releaser) |
| 19 | e | e | ehwaz | Horse | Twin equine gods (trust) |
| 20 | m | m | mannaz | Man (-kind) | Human order of divine origin |
| 21 | l | l | laguz | Water | Life force and organic growth |
| 22 | ng | q | ingwaz | Ing, the Earth God | Gestation (container) |
| 23 | d | d | dagaz | Day | Dawn/twilight (paradox) |
| 24 | o | o | othila | Ancestral property | Self-contained hereditary power |



Juniper Tree

TAROT

The tarot is a deck, usually of 78 cards, which is used to access inner knowledge, the past and future events. Many people use the tarot as a tool for personal development, helping to discover the problems they are facing and of determining a way to bring these problems to resolution. Tarot cards have been documented in Italy, as far back as the fifteenth century, as a popular card game of the rich. The Visconti-Sforza deck, created in 1450 or so, is one of the earliest and most complete decks still in existence today. Students of the mystical, with some believing the cards origins were early Egyptian, later adopted the tarot.

A traditional tarot reading is usually between a seeker and the reader. The seeker asks a question, and under the direction of the reader, he/she may shuffle and/or cut the cards into specific piles. Some readers prefer to handle the cards themselves, allowing no one to touch the cards, as they are considered sacred and imbued with personal energy. The reader then lays the cards out in a specific pattern, with each position having meaning and each card responding to that position. This information is then interpreted to shed light upon the answer to the seeker's question.

The archetypal images on the cards provide valuable insight into the meanings of the cards. The Fool card is often times dramatized within literature and movies, portraying a joker or someone without the common sense to come in out of the rain. Yet, if we look further into the archetypal meanings of the 'fool', we can see that oft times the fool is also the wisest among us. Each person has his or her own interpretation of the archetypal image of the fool, yet the fool also has a basic commonality which each of us understands. It is this commonality of archetypal images that gives the seeker and the reader a basis for understanding each other.

There are two sections to the Tarot, the Major and Minor Arcana. The word 'arcana' means 'profound secret'. The major arcana consists of 22 cards and are numbered from zero (0) to twenty-one (21). These cards are the basis of the archetypal images. They are:

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 0 The Fool | 11 Justice |
| 1 The Magician | 12 The Hanged Man |
| 2 The High Priestess | 13 Death |
| 3 The Empress | 14 Temperance |
| 4 The Emperor | 15 The Devil |
| 5 The Hierophant | 16 The Tower |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 6 The Lovers | 17 The Star |
| 7 The Chariot | 18 The Moon |
| 8 Strength | 19 The Sun |
| 9 The Hermit | 20 Judgment |
| 10 Wheel of Fortune | 21 The World |

The major arcana are special and gives extra meaning to a reading. The issues they represent are important in this stage of your development. They represent your major responses or feelings to the situation. The major arcana has been equated to the taking of a fool's journey through life and his encounters in the journey.

The 56 cards of the minor arcana express the practical applications in affect in our life, the drama of our day-to-day existence. The minor arcana are divided into four suits; each of these suits stands for a particular approach to life. They are Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles.

Wands are equated with fire and represent creativity, action and movement and are considered a masculine suit. Cups are water, the emotions and the spiritual in our lives, a feminine aspect of the minor arcana. Swords are air, another masculine aspect. Swords represent intellect, thought and reason. Pentacles are of the earth, they represent the material, prosperity, practicality and security. Pentacles are a feminine aspect in the tarot.

There are many different spreads that can be utilized with the tarot. Each spread has its own interpretations and areas of interest, which it looks at. Spreads can use either one card, or all 78 (Rhadue's Wheel) if that is desired. Most cards spreads are from 6 to 15 cards with the Celtic cross being one I favor.

ASTROLOGY



Planetary line-up - Nasa

It is fun to look through the newspapers, scanning the pages till you come across the horoscope section and see what it has planned for you during the day, and to see how close the predictions will get. This is the popular notion of astrology, based on the assumption that everyone born under a specific sun sign will behave in the same way and have the same experiences. The actual art and science of astrology goes much deeper than that. Basing its predictions on the time, date, and place of the individual at birth, a chart is produced. The most common chart produced is called a natal chart, which gives you the position of the sun, moon, ascendant, planets, signs, houses and aspects at the time of birth. Astrology takes into account the influence of the planets noticeable attributes and predicts the influences the individual is most likely to encounter based on his natal chart and the influence of the stars (constellations) and planets upon his chart houses, etc.

Astrology has its origins from the first time anyone noticed the turn of the sun and moon, the stars in the sky. In the beginning, it was a timetable of planting and harvest, hunting and gathering. The knowledge within astrology grew as men and women also noted the aspects, which seem to appear around the appearance of the different planets as they rotated through the seasons across the night sky. By observing the planets and stars subtle influences upon each other, we could also see the same effects happening in the world around us and within our own lives at the same time! Astrology had become a science, in which we could predict the turning of our lives. Today's astrologer thinks of the heavens and earth as united, each experiencing a common space and time with direct influences affecting both. This is to say that both events, celestial and earthly, happen at the same time and are mutually reflective. In other words, what happens in space happens on earth, what happens on earth happens in space, simultaneously. With this knowledge, we can utilize astrology to determine our best approach to the

situations we encounter, both in ourselves, and in the events around us. To keep this simple, I will touch briefly upon some of the major influences within astrology, the sun signs, houses and planets.

Sun Signs

The Sun moves through the solar system, slowly rotating across the heavens. Within this path, it moves through the constellations which we can see in the night sky, Aries the ram, Taurus the bull, Gemini the Twins, etc.. As the sun passes within the influence of these constellations certain attributes have been noticed to influence the people born during this time period. The names of the basic 12 constellations have also become the names for the sun signs. Therefore, a person born close to the 19th of January through the 20th of February is considered born under the sign of Aquarius. The exact degree location of the Sun will determine what sign a person belongs under. Other planetary and house cusps offer more leeway of their sign's influence. Here is a list of the basic attributes persons born under these signs experience.

ARIES THE RAM Pioneer and adventurer. Salesman. Courage, daring, and boldness. Independence, impulse and energy. Drive.

TAURUS THE BULL Steady, deliberate, determined, and physical manifestations. Possessing and embodying.

GEMINI THE TWINS Reasoning, connections, and coming together. Endless search for information. Exploration, inquiry, curiosity. Nervousness and fussing. Fast mind and sometimes a quick wit.

CANCER THE CRAB Home and family. Feeling and sensing. Protection. Nurturing. Sympathy, Security, Secretive. Loves recognition.

LEO THE LION Self-awareness. Pride, will, creation, ego. Expression and acting. Drama and Passion. Children. Sports. Regale; regal. Generosity.

VIRGO THE VIRGIN Purity, and devotion. Concern, helpfulness, and caring. Practical, analytical, and discriminating. Attention to detail, sometimes too much pickiness. Crafts. Busy, careful. Worry. Work activity.

LIBRA THE BALANCE Marriage, partnership, union. Socially skillful. Appraisal. Diplomacy. Attentiveness. Love of Beauty and Art.

SCORPIO THE SCORPION Furnace and phoenix. Stripping away excess. Reinvention and reincarnation. Purification. Reduction, essentials.

Elimination. Strong defense. Protective. Seemingly disinterested, but passionately self-contained. Sexual union.

SAGITTARIUS THE CENTAUR-ARCHER Seeker, experience. A teacher, traveler, adventurer. Truth, religion, and philosophy. Legal awareness.

Frankness. Projection. Practical jokers. Racing and speedy sports.

CAPRICORN THE MOUNTAIN GOAT (Sometimes the Sea Goat.)

Practical vision. family oriented. Reputation. Authoritarian. Serious and orderly, control and power. Direction. Endurance. Responsibility. Industry.

AQUARIUS THE WATER BEARER Impersonal, team player. Unifying. Aspiring. Radical. Humane. Associative. Scientific. Democratic. Everyone is a potential friend.

PISCES THE FISHES Intuition. Understanding. Accepting. Sacrifice. Fluidity. Restless. Sponge. Imagination. Inspiration. Secretly knowing that everything is One.

Planets

The planets, including the sun and moon, influence our lives by showing us the basic forces around us. We can even determine the type of influence they may have on us with a simple knowledge of Roman mythology. Just as the Roman gods and goddesses had certain attributes, so to do the planets. In fact, the interpretations of the planets have remained fairly constant in vastly different cultures. Venus, for example, is the planet of love and attraction both in European and Hindu astrology, while Mars is associated with action or aggression.

MOON Emotions, nurturing, feelings, instincts. Habit and routine. Mother.

MERCURY Mental, communication, ideas, thoughts, connections. Consciousness. Assistance.

VENUS Love, values, appreciation, relationships, pleasure, art, beauty, dictatorial possibilities.

MARS Action, assertiveness, aggression, initiative, problems with follow-ups.

JUPITER Guide, vocation, problem solving, success, growth, expansion.

SATURN Responsibility, boundaries, limitations, time, Lord of Karma.

URANUS Inventiveness, originality, independence, change, revolution, unification of diversity.

NEPTUNE Imagination, ideals, dissolving, inspiration, compassion, communion, addictions.

PLUTO Transformation, profound change, death, rebirth, the core.

Houses

A natal chart is represented as a wheel, divided into twelve sections. Each section represents a certain aspect of life; the self, home, communication, etc. These sections are called your houses. Where the planets and signs fall within these sections describes the influences of

the planets and signs on these areas of your life.

1ST HOUSE Self, identity, the physical body, persona, what we present to others and how they perceive us. A change from being toward expression.

2ND HOUSE Personal value system. Material, substance, resources, esteem, values, money, possessions, new experiences, new ideas.

3RD HOUSE Communication style, thinking, movement, information, exploration, investigating, gossip, teachers, brothers and sisters, meetings, short trips.

4TH HOUSE Home, Mother, family, roots, center, base, history, property, endings.

5TH HOUSE Self-consciousness, awareness, pride, teaching, extension of self, recognition, creativity, fun, romance, risk and gambling, celebration, children.

6TH HOUSE Service, industry, harvest, care, maintenance, work conditions, health, criticism, meticulousness, craft, purification.

7TH HOUSE Partnerships, relationships, open enemies, concern for others, marriage, harmony, cooperation, counselor, contracts and agreements, vows.

8TH HOUSE Sexual union, fusion, financial and physical union, transformation, action with others, probing, administration, intimacy, sex and death, detectives, taxes, inquiry, what you value in others.

9TH HOUSE Philosophy, religion, education, search for truth, meaning, moral judgment, journeys, far-away places, future visions, law, enthusiasm, wanderlust.

10TH HOUSE Career, talents, vocation, responsibility, authority, Father, management, skills, government of functions (administration), foundations, public or corporate work.

11TH HOUSE Resources, friends, planning, planning action, resolve, humanity, humanitarianism, cooperation, groups, teamwork, colleagues, identification with a group, friends, business speculation.

12TH HOUSE Institutions (hospitals, government, prisons, churches, etc.) Privacy, behind the scenes, the "disconnected personal," connection to higher power or the universal. Channeling, caring the disadvantaged, limits, confinement, hidden faults, dues, karma, hidden enemies, personal secrets to gain life's greatest rewards.

| Sign | Element | Mode | Ruler | Pos. Trait | Neg. Trait |
|--------|---------|----------|---------|------------|------------|
| Aries | fire | Cardinal | Mars | Initiating | Impatient |
| Taurus | earth | fixed | Venus | Steady | Stubborn |
| Gemini | air | Mutable | Mercury | Adaptable | Unstable |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|----------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Cancer | water | Cardinal | Moon | Nurturing | Moody |
| Leo | fire | Fixed | Sun | Confident | Self-centered |
| Virgo | earth | Mutable | Mercury | Skillful | Over critical |
| Libra | air | Cardinal | Venus | Gracious | Indecisive |
| Scorpio | water | Fixed | Pluto/Mars | Passionate | Possessive |
| Sagittarius | fire | Mutable | Jupiter | Optimistic | Careless w/ details |
| Capricorn | earth | Cardinal | Saturn | Organized | Over ambitious |
| Aquarius | air | Fixed | Uranus and Saturn | Inventive | Impersonal |
| Pisces | water | Mutable | Neptune and Jup. | Compassionate | Lacks boundaries |

Suggested reading:

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STONES & CRYSTALS/ HERB CRAFT

It is only natural for a religion, which honors Nature, to become attuned to the plants, animals, stones and elements around us. We believe in the natural energies found in nature and the world. We feel these energies, we communicate with them, we honor them. Each plant, animal, stone, and element has natural energies and attributes that we can call upon to aid us. It is a natural step that we also work with them. It is important to gain permission from our plant and mineral brothers and sisters before we begin any magical working that they will be involved in.



Basalt Cliffs, Columbia National Wildlife Refuge

Stones and Crystals

Stones are life forms of ancient origin. Though we do not see them move, they are filled with essence and being that travels a different path than that which we encounter in our everyday world. To be able to interact with stone beings, we must stop and still our minds, just as the stone embraces stillness in this reality. There is much that we can learn from stones and crystals if we open our minds and hearts to the messages they embrace.

Different types of stones and crystals will have different healing and magical aspects, wisdom and knowledge, and vibrational frequencies. We can communicate with the stones and acquire their help if we ask. Once you build a relationship with stones and crystals (and plants as well), you will be amazed at how they will find their way into your hands. They bring the gifts of harmony and communication with all of the Divine's creatures and beings.

There are many ways in which we can work with stones. First it is important to cleanse and empower the stones and crystals using salt, spring, river, well or ocean water. We can also use the natural powers of the Earth, Sun and Moon to cleanse and empower the rocks. We can imbibe in the essence of the stones by soaking them in pure water then drinking it. We can also place crystals and stones in our magical circles and ask their help in bringing our spells to fruition. We can carry stones with us for protection, healing, and any other need that they may have. Below are a few of the more common stones, crystals and minerals; their aspects and planetary correspondence. Keep in mind that the different colors of the stones will also determine their abilities.

| <u>Stone</u> | <u>Planet</u> | <u>Element</u> | <u>Energy</u> | <u>Color</u> |
|--|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Agate | Mercury | various | various | various |
| Aspects: protection, healing, strength, bravery, longevity, truth, protection, gardening | | | | |
| Amber | Sun | Fire/Akasha | projective | yellow to red, green |
| Aspects: luck, healing, strength, protection, beauty, love | | | | |
| Amethyst | Jup./Nept. | Water | receptive | purple |
| Aspects: dreams, alcoholism, psychism, happiness, courage, healing | | | | |
| Aventurine | Mercury | Air | projective | green |
| Aspects: mental powers, gambling, money, peace, healing, luck | | | | |
| Carnelian | Sun | Fire | projective | red |
| Aspects: protection, peace, healing, sexual energy, eloquence | | | | |
| Citrine | Sun | Fire | projective | yellow |

Aspects: anti-nightmare, protection, psychism

Copper Venus Water receptive reddish/orange
Aspects: healing, love, luck, money, protection, energy direction

Crystal, Quartz Sun/Moon Fire/Water proj./recept. clear/various
Aspects: power, healing, psychism, protection, wisdom

Garnet Mars Fire projective red
Aspects: healing, protection, strength

Gold Sun Sun projective gold/yellow
Aspects: power, healing, wisdom, money, success, protection

Hematite Saturn Fire projective silver/black
Aspects: healing, grounding, divination

Jet (fossilized coal) Saturn Earth/Akasha receptive black
Aspects: protection, luck, divination, health

Lava Mars Fire projective black/red
Aspects: Protection

Lodestone (magnetite) Venus Water receptive gray/black
Aspect: healing, attraction, money, love, fidelity, power

Moonstone Moon Water receptive white/various
Aspects: love, divination psychism, healing, protection

Obsidian Saturn Fire projective black, white, red
Aspects: protection, grounding, divination, peace

Onyx Mars/Saturn Fire projective black
Aspects: protection, defensive magic

Opal All All proj./recept. various
Aspects: astral projection, psychism, beauty, money, luck, power

Pyrite Mars Fire projective yellow/gold
Aspects: money, divination, luck

Ruby Fire projective red, blue
Aspects: wealth, protection, power, joy, anti-nightmare

Salt Earth Earth receptive white
Aspects: purification, protection, grounding, money

Sapphire Moon Water receptive various
Aspects: psychism, love, meditation, peace, healing, power, money

Silver Moon Water receptive silver
Aspects: invocation, psychism, dreams, protection, peace, travel, money

Sodalite Venus Water receptive blue
Aspects: healing, peace, meditation, wisdom

Sunstone Sun Fire projective yellow/gold
Aspects: protection, energy, health, sexual energy

Tiger's Eye Sun Fire projective gold/brown
Aspects: protection, money, courage, energy, luck, divination

Topaz Sun Fire projective yellow
Aspect: protection, healing, weight loss, money, love

Turquoise Venus/Nept. Earth receptive blue/green
Aspects: healing, protection, money, love, friendship, luck



Ponderosa Pine

Herb Craft

We use plants each and every day. Without their help we would not be able to breath, or eat, to have shelter and warmth, or even to read the words on this page. We use plant extracts to help heal us. We can also use plants not only medicinally, but magically as well. We gather herbs sometimes under the full moon, always with respect, asking for permission from the plant itself. If we cannot grow and gather the plant, we find reputable distributors from which to obtain them. We use them as elixirs, incense, potions and creams, oils and balms.

The most common use for plants magically is as incense. Dried herbs may be sprinkled on a burning incense block, or as an offering to the Gods. Just as with stones, soaking a plant in spring water or purified oil will also instill the water or oil with the qualities of the plant. An oil or water extract can be used to dress a candle for a specific purpose or to purify and consecrate ritual space, tools and altars. Oils or herb soaked water may be used to anoint ritual participants. What herbs you chose to use will depend on the purpose of your ritual or spell work.

I recommend “The Master Book of Herbalism” by Paul Beyerl, from Phoenix Publishing Company. It is a good primer for medicinal and magical herbs as well as their correspondences. The book will also explain how to gather and prepare the plants. The following is a small list of magical plants.

Acorn Traditional symbols of fertility, they may be used to bring creativity to fruition. They also represent the continuity of life and are appropriate for Samhain decorations.

Angelica An herb of protection and works against spells, enchantments, and all forms of evil.

Apple Sources of wisdom, apples have within them the five-pointed star, as well as five-petaled flowers, which is said to represent the five elements and the pentacle. Eating an apple at Samhain can bring about deep internal change.

Asafoetida Used as an incense, Asafoetida is a must have in any magical cabinet. It is used to banish all negative energy and dispel any magical working. However, it smells horrible and once used, you will have to reconsecrate any and all tools in the area.

Basil Associated with dragons, basil is used to invoke them for advice, inspiration, and protection. It has also been used as a funeral herb and a fertility herb.

Birch The Lady of the Woods is used to commune with the Goddess. It is also a tree of the god Thor.

Cedar Cedar is used to consecrate magical wands. It is used to invoke Wotan and is also used to attract money.

Cinnamon Cinnamon can be used to purify temple space and will increase concentration and focus, and greater communication. It will also bring peaceful energy and a better understanding of immortality.

Dragon's Blood An herb of protection it is also said that Dragon's Blood will increase the energy of any ritual. It is also used to consecrate tools.

Frankincense A highly religious herb, Frankincense is used mainly as an incense. It is used to invoke the masculine aspect of the Divine in the forms of Apollo, Adonis, and other Sun Gods. It will also invoke the feminine aspects, such as the various Moon Goddesses as well as Demeter. It is said that frankincense will bring its user success in both the spiritual and the mundane worlds. It is also an herb of protection and cleanses and purifies the soul and spirit.

Garlic An herb of Hecate, garlic is used for protection and strength and repels all negative energies.

Honeysuckle A herb of Cerridwen honeysuckle is an herb of immortality.

Hyssop Another herb of protection, hyssop is used to keep out negative energies like unwanted intruders. Hyssop is also used as a sprinkler for holy water and will cleanse your temple.

Jasmine Jasmine is an excellent oil for candles. It also gives psychic protection and heals one's aura. It will stimulate the creative aspect of the mind and will bring an influx of original ideas.

Lavender A religious herb of Midsummer's eve. Lavender is used in rituals of a mystical nature and can be used to invoke Hecate or Saturn. It is used to bring stability into one's life or to make the magical working a permanent one. Lavender may be used to cleanse sacred circles and temples. Lavender is also used to increase the vibrational frequency in meditation, bringing increased awareness. It grants inner calm, peace of mind and freedom from emotional and mental stress. It is used to bless homes, and attract money and possessions.

Mugwort Mugwort is a visionary herb and is used to bring about visionary dreams and divination, bringing about great mystical experiences. It is also an herb of protection, is used to consecrate silver, and will increase one's psychic abilities.

Myrrh Myrrh brings spiritual awareness and a better understanding of the currents flowing through a ritual. It heightens magical awareness and will help one to understand personal sorrow.

Oak Oak is prized for its strength and endurance. It is a tree sacred to Jupiter, Zeus, Blodeuwedd and Odin. It is used for protection and good luck.

Rosemary Rosemary is used for remembrance and enhances one's memory. It is also used as a funeral herb so that we will remember the departed with fondness and love. When used it enhances the sacredness of the occasion.

Rowan Also called mountain ash, rowan is a herb of protection, magic and vision. It is used to ask the Goddess for her help, direction and bounty. It is often used for wands.

Sage Sage is a herb of wisdom, purification, healing, cleansing, strength, and mental health. It is a good herb for business and important decisions.

Sandalwood Sandalwood is used in all forms of meditation and divination. It is used for success and confidence.

Thyme Thyme brings courage, ambition, childlike fun, protection, and communion with the dead.

Verbena/Vervain The two names are actually the same herb. It is a visionary herb, which can be used in almost any magical situation. It has been used for dream-questing, divination, understanding of immortality, relief of emotional pressures, protection, consecrating magical tools, ritual

sweeping, cleansing altars, and inspiration for songs, poems, and the written word.

Willow Willow is an herb of immortality, protection, magical wands, communication, and healing. Willow is sacred to Hecate, Hermes, and Hera.

Yarrow Yarrow is used for healing, and divination. It is sacred to the god Pan.

Suggested reading:

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Sheldrake, Rupert. *The Rebirth of Nature; The Greening of Science and God*. Rochester: Park Street Press, 1991, 1994.

Stein, Diane. *All Women are Healers; A Comprehensive Guide to Natural Healing*. Freedom, CA.: The Crossing Press, 1990.



DEDICATION AND INITIATION

Dedication

Dedication in Wicca is a very personal sacred commitment to Deity. It means that you are giving your life to the Divine. You are dedicating yourself to live your life in a sacred manner, committed to spiritual and personal growth. It may even mean that you are committing yourself to work for the Gods in ways that you cannot understand. Perhaps they will lead you to a life of commitment as a leader of a coven. Perhaps you will find yourself developing a pagan community. Perhaps it will be an internal change of personal growth. Know this... your life will be changed in some way.

People who find their spiritual path discover a need to commit to it. It is a need to affirm your alignment to this particular aspect of spiritual worship. For some people, this is a very serious undertaking. Others feel the need, make the commitment, but do not put their heart into it. They may find themselves brushing aside the dedication. They may discover that this really wasn't their spiritual home. In other words, they weren't ready to make the commitment.

It is important to think long and hard about this type of dedication. Dedicating to the gods is much more than a commitment of marriage. It is not something that you can easily throw away. The Gods do pay attention. If you are not committing heart and soul, don't do it. You know deep inside whether or not this is a commitment that you can keep. Listen to your heart.

Dedication to the Gods can be done as a solitary practitioner, or as a member of a coven. Both are serious commitments to the Divine.

Some covens will not only ask that you dedicate to the Gods, but they will also ask that you dedicate your life to them. Again, this is something to think long and hard about. In fact, maybe more so. People are not as far seeing as the Divine. People make mistakes. People are not always trustworthy. People can have ulterior motives that you are unaware of. The coven may change and no longer meet your needs. Dedication to the Gods means that



The Stars; from birth to death to birth again, Hubble Telescope

you are consecrating and dedicating yourself to the Divine for a sacred purpose. Dedicating to a group may not meet that purpose.



Brodiaea Lily

Initiation

A Dedicant is someone who has dedicated his or her life to a specific path, belief, or goal. In Wicca it means that we dedicate to Deity, we dedicate to the Divine, committing ourselves to a life of spiritual and personal growth, among other things.

An Initiate is a person who has already dedicated to the Divine in his or her own way, and has dedicated to a specific path and completed certain criteria, thereby being admitted into a group or coven. They are then able to experience the traditions and mysteries of the particular group, religion, or path that they have chosen.

There is some talk that those who are initiated in a group are better in some way than those who are not. This is not true! Dedication is a powerful and transforming act. So is Initiation. Both change the person in some way. Both are equally valid and moving experiences. If there is not a personal transformation of some kind, either with the dedication, or with the initiation, then they did not take and did not accomplish their purpose.

I have experienced personal dedication that is extremely powerful and transforming. I have also experienced powerful initiation rites. Both have

made internal and external changes of which I can point to and say that each of the events were turning points in my life.

Initiation is usually something bestowed by another person. However I have discovered that the Gods also perform initiation. As a solitary practitioner I discovered that as I grew spiritually, I needed to develop new powerful rituals of dedication that expressed my need to rededicate to the Divine. Unknowingly, these rituals became initiations into the mysteries that I had encountered as a solitaire. They worked in ways that were spiritually different than the rituals aimed at personal growth or dedication that I have done. This was a discovery that I had not found in the numerous books for the solitary practitioner. I cannot recall any book that I have read talking about rededication in this way. However, I know it can be done.

Of course there will be those who scoff at such nonsense. They, of course, have not experienced the transformative process that comes with rededication, or initiation by the Gods without the High Priestess or High Priest officiating (which is not to infer that the Gods are not present at group initiations, for They certainly participate!) Solitary practitioners of Wicca encounter mysteries that speak to them on a personal level. These mysteries are more private than the mysteries of a specific coven or circle, yet are life changing nonetheless. These mysteries are the tradition of the individual and not of a group.

That is not to say that we do not need covens or groups to be initiated. Initiation into the mysteries of a coven brings its own rewards. The Egregor, or group mind, of a coven speaks to our psyche in ways that is not possible to experience as a lone solitaire. This type of initiation is different. A ritual in a coven has the energy of each individual participant added to the experience. This produces a synergistic effect that is more than the sum of its parts. As an example, each person adds to the invocation of Drawing Down the Moon and Sun thereby allowing a clearer image of the collective archetypes of the ritual, than if only one or two people were participating. The mysteries and transformation of initiation of this type is unique and reflects the larger, global community in the transformative process, at least in my experience.

INITIATION DEGREES

There tend to be three degrees of initiation in most Wiccan covens. This is not a hard and fast rule though. Some traditions may have only one or two initiations, some have even been known to have as many as seven levels of initiation. Some traditions may require you to participate in a probationary capacity for a year before being allowed to join the group.

In most Wiccan traditions there are three degrees of initiation. The first-degree initiation usually includes a year and a day of study and observance before the initiation. The first year and a day allows you to get to know the group and to understand the scope of commitment asked of you. It will also allow the group to get to know you and to determine if you are a good 'fit'. If you are not compatible with the coven and its members, than it can be an emotionally and physically draining experience for all concerned. The coven will expect you to look at them with scrutiny, and you can expect them to do the same, before they accept you as one of their own.

Second-degree initiation is a level that few are brave enough to obtain. Seldom do any finish the work of second within a year. Because of the depth and scope of the work, most take much longer. Traditionally second-degree work encompasses the shadow aspects of self. This is the time where the task of the initiate is to go within their psyche and to work through their psychological garbage. An undertaking few can endure.

Once you have become a 2nd degree initiate you are usually considered a High Priestess or High Priest. As a 2nd degree, you may, with the permission of your High Priest/ess, begin your own coven with a partner, under the guidance of the parent coven. You may also initiate another to at least the second degree level. However, initiating lays a responsibility on the initiator. There can be Psychic and Karmic repercussions if irresponsibly given. Another aspect of the 2nd degree is that, The Law and rituals and traditions of your parent coven have been fully integrated into your life at this time.

The status of 3rd degree gives you the full status of running a coven and initiating others. You will discover, however, that there are immense responsibilities in leading a group. You are religiously and spiritually responsible for your coven members, just as a minister in the local church is.

Before you embark on this journey, you should ask yourself why you have chosen this path and how far you are willing to go on it. And be prepared to know the answer, before proceeding into dedication and initiation.

Suggested reading:

Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon; Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979, 1986.

Crowley, Vivianne. *Principles of Wicca; The Only Introduction You'll ever need*. London: Thorsons, 1997.

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COVENS AND THEIR STRUCTURE/ COVEN MEMBERSHIP

COVENS AND THEIR STRUCTURE

The word coven means to come together or a gathering of confederates (friends). One tends to think of witches in black robes and pointy black hats gathered around a cauldron, throwing in nasty tidbits for a nasty spell. The word coven is used almost exclusively to refer to a gathering of witches. Tradition says a witch's coven is made of thirteen people. This is seldom so. It is interesting to note, however, that a group of thirteen occurs throughout many aspects of history and literature. Arthur and his twelve knights, Jesus and his twelve disciples are just two examples.

A coven is a small group of people who gather together on a regular basis. Most often they also happen to be witches, but not always. Wiccans chose to gather in covens because of the intimacy it affords. Covens bring all present into close contact. Because of their small number, they allow deep closeness and sharing in a setting where no one is anonymous.

Four to thirteen members are the usual number of individuals in a coven. The essence of coven work is to build a group mind where in each person makes his or her unique contribution. This is one of the most important functions of a coven. Each coven is unique and has a specific purpose for meeting. Some may chose to gather as a format for spiritual worship and/or personal growth. Covens may determine their purpose is healing, for each other or the Earth as a whole. Some will work on environmental or political issues. Covens may also form to create festivals and workshops for the larger community. For whatever reason, each coven has a purpose.

Wiccan Covens may come together to celebrate Sabbats and/or Esbats. Occassionally covens organize to form legal churches to acquire the protection of the law, but generally, the individual covens remain autonomous. Covens that have grown too large often hive, separate and form a daughter coven. A man and woman, who have been initiated to second

degree and have the approval of their coven leadership, may form a new coven with a few members of the original coven.

The place where a coven meets regularly is called the covenstead. Here the coven holds regular meetings. There is usually a separate space for rituals, if available. Over time, the covenstead will become charged with the psychic energy of the group, creating an “Egregor” or group mind, which is an aid to ritual and magical working. If an Egregor energy form is developed it is important to cleanse the covenstead if it should ever be moved to a new location, as well as transferring the Egregor to the new covenstead. Similarly, if the group should dissolve then the Egregor should be dismissed in ritual.

As with any organization, there are roles to be filled in a coven. There are usually leadership roles, perhaps that of High Priestess and High Priest. There should be someone to assist the leaders, as well as someone to look after money, secretarial duties, etc. There are positions to be determined in ritual as well. The most common and familiar structure includes a High Priestess and High Priest, and a Maiden and Warder. During initiations, it is often the High Priest who initiates female members and the High Priestess initiates male members.

The coven becomes your family and a large majority of your time is spent in training, teaching, leading and counseling. Joining a coven means expending a large majority of your free time to coven work. An individual must determine their willingness, ability, availability, and determination, as well as take in to consideration their family and work responsibilities before joining a coven. A coven member must determine how to balance their life and spend some regenerative time for their own body and spirit.



COVEN MEMBERSHIP

Being a member of a coven is a huge commitment. It means giving up most of your free time to spend on coven work. It means determining what activities you will enjoy with your family, and which you will give up for your coven. It may mean some discord at home because of coven commitments. And sometimes it will mean discord between you and the coven because of work or family commitments as well.

Committing yourself to a coven will bring joy, but it will also bring heartache. You will have to open yourself to these people, and even reveal your deepest darkest secrets to them. You will be subject to scrutiny and expected to change. You will be held responsible for your behavior and will be expected to work toward personal growth. At times you may even be disappointed. Still interested?

By now you have seriously considered joining a coven. Have you looked seriously at your own motivation for joining a coven? Is it for your own gain? How about pride? People look in awe at coven members. They are such an elite group. Do you seriously want to join a coven so that you can help others? How about to learn? Personal growth? Is it rebellion against society or your parent? Is it to please someone else? Do you want to belong because it looks like fun? What is your motivation?

Once you have determined your true motivation for joining a coven and found it is indeed a serious and satisfactory reason, then the real work begins. Now you must find a suitable group for your specific goals. It is not always easy to find a coven, or a reputable teacher. Covens are not listed in the phone book, nor do they advertise on radio or television, though you may be lucky enough to find a group in your area by going online. You are going to have to do a bit of detective work if you plan on finding an appropriate coven.

Even though covens tend to be secret, there are ways of finding them. Pagan festivals, gatherings and retreats often will have coven members in attendance. Stores that deal in metaphysical and new age items are popular hangouts. Classes on aromatherapy, alternative healing, divination, meditation, etc., may be taught by a coven member or have a coven member

present. Stay alert for any activities that fit your interests, they will also draw others of like mind. Attendance at these events will also enable you to get to know people, and for people to get to know you.

Each tradition has its own process of study, work, dedication and initiation. Teachers and students need to be compatible. The personality and temperament of both people need to mesh well. A person who is a good teacher often doesn't have time to continually prod students who do not take the initiative to advance themselves. A teacher's time is precious; they do not need to spend it on a student who is not serious about their commitment and responsibility. It is usual to have a contract between student and teacher, with guidelines, goals and expectations outlined, clearly understood by both parties, to save misunderstanding and hurt feelings.

Ask yourself these questions when looking for a teacher or coven:

- 1) Does the person make sense to you? Do you feel what they say is meaningful to you?
- 2) Does the person care about others, or always talk about themselves?
- 3) Does he or she have a good sense of humor and can they laugh at themselves?
- 4) How does this person react when you disagree with what they say?
- 5) What kind of people does this person admire? Who do they hang out with?

Now that you have found a group, it is time for you to take a close look at the coven you are interested in. You should evaluate the group as a whole. Are they compatible with your needs? Joining a spiritual community of any kind can be a daunting move. A step like this makes you very vulnerable. You may be asked to reveal aspects of yourself you have kept hidden away; pains, fears, and dreams. It's vital that the group you join is trustworthy. There are people out there who are more than willing to take advantage of others. Ask yourself: Can you trust these people? Do the leaders have credentials that you can personally verify? If so, then verify it.

There is danger when joining an unscrupulous group or a group with a few unscrupulous people in it. We can divide the danger into two categories: physical harm and psychological harm. Physical harm is usually quite obvious. If people are being punished or disciplined in a physical way, the marks eventually show. If people are being harmed psychologically, it may

take much longer to show. It may even be argued that the less obvious of the two may be the more difficult to overcome. Robbing people of their self-esteem, sense of identity, and sense of security can have effects long after the end of the relationship with the abusive group.

How do we identify groups that may pose a risk to us? The first step is to observe the leaders and as many members as possible. Learn all you can about them. Ask other people in the community if they know about the group. After making as many observations as possible, there is one more step; a gentleman by the name of Isaac Bonewits has created a Cult Danger Evaluation Frame. By answering a series of questions about the group you are considering, you can gain some valuable insight into the group in question. In this context, the word cult is used in its current popular sense: a group characterized by an extravagant devotion and loyalty to a leader or teaching. This tool can be used to help evaluate a group in terms of the potential danger it may present to its members. It is based on the fact that such groups have certain things in common. The questions on the evaluation are based on the author's years of experience as well as modern psychological ideas about mental health. A high score on the evaluation indicates a high level of risk to current and new members. Individuals considering membership as well as parents, friends, and family members can use it. A copy of this evaluation has been printed at the end of this piece. Feel free to use it often.

The dynamics of a coven is like a marriage. The people involved need to be close in order to help each other's spiritual growth. This close relationship allows for criticism, and intrusion. Kahlil Gibran says of marriage, "Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together yet not too near together: For the pillars of the temple stand apart, and the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow." Remember that each of us are individuals who become a piece of the web of a psychically connected group. Each one of us affects the whole, all the while remaining an individual person.

Covens are not for everyone, but as Wicca continues to grow and as people face their fears and are willing to step out, more and more options will become available.

CULT DANGER EVALUATION FRAME

By P. E. I. Bonewits ©

Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

1. INTERNAL CONTROL, amount of internal political power exercised by leader(s) over members.
2. WISDOM CLAIMED by leader(s); amount of infallibility declared about decisions.
3. WISDOM CREDITED to leader(s) by members; amount of trust in decisions made by leader(s).
4. DOGMA, rigidity of reality concepts taught; amount of doctrinal inflexibility.
5. RECRUITING, emphasis put on attracting new members, amount of proselytizing.
6. FRONT GROUPS, number of subsidiary groups using different names from that of the main group.
7. WEALTH, amount of money and/or property desired or obtained; emphasis on member's donations.
8. POLITICAL POWER, amount of external political influence desired or obtained.
9. SEXUAL MANIPULATION of members by leader(s); amount of control over sex lives of members.
10. CENSORSHIP, amount of control over members' access to outside opinions on group, its doctrines or leaders.
11. DROPOUT CONTROL, intensity of efforts directed at preventing or returning dropouts.
12. ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE when used by or for group or its leader(s).
13. PARANOIA, amount of fear concerning real or imagined enemies; perceived power of opponents.
14. GRIMNESS, amount of disapproval concerning jokes about the group, its doctrines or leader(s).
15. SURRENDER OF WILL, emphasis on members not having to be responsible for personal decisions.

Suggested reading:

Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon; Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979, 1986.

Crowley, Vivianne. *Principles of Wicca; The Only Introduction You'll ever need*. London: Thorsons, 1997.

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Harrow, Judy. *Wicca Covens: How to Start and Organize Your Own*. USA, Citadel Press, 1999.

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Starhawk, M. Macha Nightmare & The Reclaiming Collective. *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying; Practical Rituals, Prayers, Blessings, and Meditations on Crossing Over*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1979.

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COUNSELING

As we follow the path of spiritual growth our lives change. We accept personal responsibility for our actions. We pay our bills and honor commitments. We begin to mature. Our existence changes from hectic soap operas to become organized and fulfilling lives. Our transformation resonates with our environment.

People notice these changes. Friends and family may come to you with problems. Complete strangers could be drawn to you, asking for advice from a person who appears to “have it all together”, especially if you are personable.

For centuries witches have been the ones people go to for help. They ask for love spells, healing, hexes, advice and protection. Being a witch, it comes with the territory, we see everything, right? Being a priest or priestess we are expected to be wise and all-knowing. We know the secrets of the universe, or so they think.



Little Palouse Falls

Some of the problems people may come to you for advice may include:

- Relationships (dating, marriage, divorce, sexual, conflicts, family, friends)
- Health (illness, addictions, stress)
- Financial (not enough money, unpaid bills, planning or unexpected emergencies)
- Jobs (no job, unhappy in job, lay-offs, poor working conditions)

-Religion (lack of support, lack of community, questions of faith)

Most people need you to listen. Others want advice. Some people want a quick fix to their problems. Some people want to make you responsible for their mistakes. It is important to realize that your best skill is listening. Your second best skill is keeping them responsible for making the changes necessary to bring solution to their problem. Without their intent and determination to work on an answer, anything you tell them goes in one ear and out the other.

Occasionally you may encounter mental or physical problems which are beyond your means to counsel. After all, priests, priestesses, and witches are not all-knowing nor are they all-seeing. It is important to realize that your counseling skills will go only so far. *Especially* if you do not have any formal training. It is essential that you do know where to go to find help for almost any circumstances. Below is a list, which you can fill out yourself, of suggested phone numbers that will aid you in assisting others. This is only a partial list. If you live in a large metropolitan area there will be more resources available than what I have listed here. If you know of a Pagan friendly counselor, lawyer or attorney, list them as well. Good luck.

Emergency:

Ambulance:

Fire:

City Police:

Sheriff:

State Patrol:

Hospital:

Department of Social Services:

County Health Department:

County Resource Center:

Crisis Line:

Community Counseling Services:

County Counseling Services:

Domestic Violence Services:

Mental Health Services:

Chemical Dependency:

Alcoholics Anonymous:

Narcotics Anonymous:

Counselors:

Attorneys/Lawyers:

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CONCLUSION

As stated previously, this work is only a brief discussion on each topic and is not to be thought of as a definitive book on the Wiccan religion. Wicca is an intuitive mystery religion, without prophets or specific dogma and dictates to pursue. We do not have a written word of “God” to follow, like Jews, Moslems or Christians have, and as such our faith is open to personal interpretation.

I do hope that this book gives you a chance to learn about this religion. As a fairly new, and somewhat old, religion, Wicca faces uninformed prejudices, which is a shame. Even if you chose not to follow this path, I hope that you have discovered a new way of thinking.

For those of you who embrace the Wiccan faith, I hope that this book has addressed at least on or two of your questions, and given you a foundation from which to start the amazing journey that lay before you.

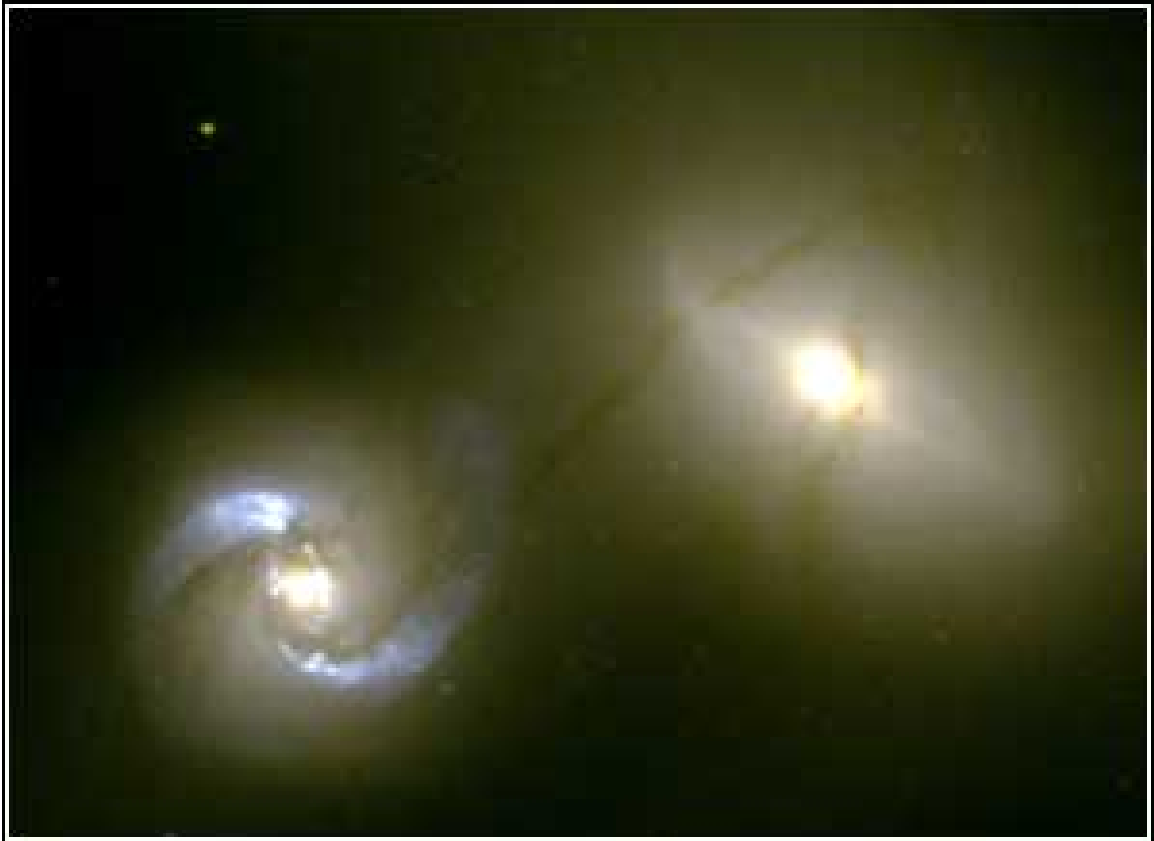
Blessed Be,

Robin



Palouse Canyon

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Pipeline between two colliding galaxies, Hubble Telescope

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