

THE LAWS

YOUR HIGH PRIESTESS

In the Magic Circle, the words, commands and wishes of the High Priestess are Law. She is the earthly representative of our gracious Goddess. She is to be obeyed and respected in all things. She is our Lady and, above all others, a Queen in the highest sense of the word. All female covens will curtsy and say "Blessed Be" when they come before Her, and all male covens will bend their knee and kiss Her on the right cheek and say "Blessed Be".

YOUR HIGH PRIEST

In the Magic Circle, the High Priest is the earthly representative of the Great God. He commands the respect due a Magus, Lord, Counselor and Father.

THE LAWS

THE LAWS WERE MADE FOR THE WITCHES TO ADVISE THEM IN THEIR TROUBLES. DO NOT CHANGE THEM LIGHTLY.

1. The Witches should worship the Gods as is their due, and obey their will. For the worship of the Gods is good for the Witches even as the worship of the Witches is good for the Gods. For the Gods love all their Witches.
2. As a man loves a woman more by learning more of her wants and desires, so should the Witches love the Gods by the learning (mastering) of them.

2. It is necessary that the Magic Circle, which is the Temple of the Gods in these times, be cast and purified such that it may be a fitting place for the Gods; and the Witches should be properly prepared and purified to enter into the presence of the Gods.
4. With love and worship in their hearts the Witches shall raise power from their bodies (and the elements around them), and they shall offer this power to the Gods so that the Gods may help their Witches.
5. The High Priestess shall rule her coven as the representative of the Goddess, and the High Priest shall support her as the representative of the God. The High Priestess will choose any member of the coven to be her High Priest, if he has sufficient standing in the coven as the God Himself kissed our Lady's feet, gave her the five-fold salute and offered her His power because of her youth and beauty, her sweetness and kindness, her wisdom and justice, her humility, gentleness and generosity, and shared His power with her, so therefore the High Priestess should always be aware that all power comes from Him; it is only left to be used wisely and justly.
6. The greatest virtue of a High Priestess shall be recognition that youth is necessary to the representative of the Goddess. She will, therefore, gracefully retire in favor of a younger coven should the coven so decide in council. The true High Priestess should realize that gracefully surrendering the pride of place is one of the greatest virtues, and that thereby she will return to that pride of place in another life, with even greater power and beauty.
7. In the Old Days, when there were many Witches, we were free and worshipped freely in the greatest temples; but in these times, we must celebrate our sacred mysteries in secret. Therefore, none but the Witches are to see our mysteries; no coven shall know the location of any other coven or who its members are, except the High Priest, the High Priestess and the Messenger; and that there shall be no communication among the covens, except by the Messenger of the Gods or the Summoner. Only if it is safe may the covens meet in some safe place for the Great Festivals; and while there, none shall give their true names or any information about their coven or its members. This law is made for this reason: No-one can tell our enemies what they do not themselves know.
8. It is ordained that no-one shall tell any person not in the Craft who other Witches are, or give them names or addresses, or in any way tell anything that can betray a Witch to their fate. Nor may anyone tell where the covenhood or covenstead is, where any meetings are held or any other information about the coven unless directed to do so by the coven in council.
9. If anyone breaks these laws, even under torture, may the Curse of the God and the Goddess be upon them, so that they may not be reborn upon the Earth (but shall live forever in the Hell of the Christians).

10. Let each High Priest and High Priestess govern their coven with justice and love, with the help and advice of the other and of the elders of the coven, always heeding the advice of the Messenger of the Gods if he should arrive. They will heed all the suggestions of their covenants and strive to settle any differences among them.
11. It is recognized that there will always be people who will try to make everybody agree with their ideas: these people are not necessarily bad -- they often have good ideas and these ideas should be discussed in council. But if they will not come to agree with their other covenants or if they say "I will not work with this High Priestess", then the elders will have them leave. It should be suggested that they might join another coven or if they are of sufficient standing, they may be encouraged to found their own coven. For it is better this way, to avoid strife among the family of Witches.
12. When using geographic boundaries, whenever anyone of Third Degree lives more than a league from the covenstead (or are about to), any of these may found a new coven; indeed, any Witch living within the covenstead who wishes to form a new coven will inform the elders of this intention and immediately move to a new dwelling beyond the boundaries of known covensteads. Members of any coven may choose to join the new coven when it is formed, but they must totally avoid their old coven if they choose this course. The elders of the old and new covens should meet in peace and love to determine the boundaries of the covens. Any Witch living outside of any two covens may choose to join either coven but never both. All may meet for the Great Festivals if the elders agree, so long as they meet in peace and love. Let the elders confer as to the use of this law when it is not directly applicable. Always be aware that the splitting of a coven breeds bad feelings (enmity vortices?); this law was made chiefly for this reason and may happen times come!
13. If you would keep a Book (whether it is called a Black Book, Book of Shadows, Book of Light, or whatever), write it in your own hand. Let your brothers and sisters in the Craft copy as they will from your book in their hand, but never let your Book out of your hands and never keep the writings of another. Every Witch should keep and guard their own writings, that none may be discovered through their Book being found in another's possession.
14. Destroy your Book whenever danger threatens, and commit as many as possible of these Laws to memory. Destroy the writings of a deceased Witch if they did not have time to do so themselves. If any of their writings are found, it is clean proof against both the writer and the holder, for our enemies firmly believe that "one may not be a Witch alone": their family and all who are known to be friends may be suspected as Witches. Be responsible with your writings and you will protect all who love you.
15. If your Book is found on you, it is clean proof against you alone unless you tell our enemies what you know. You may be taken and tortured, but keep all thoughts of the Craft from your mind. If the torture is too much to bear, tell them "I cannot bear this torture, I will confess. What do you want me to say?" If they try to make you talk about the Craft, do not; but if they try to make you speak of absurd things, such as flying through the

air consorting with the Christian devil, sacrificing children or eating man's flesh, say, "I had an evil dream; I was beside myself; I was crazed," or words to that effect, to obtain relief from the torture. Not all magistrates are bad -- if there is any semblance of an excuse, they may show mercy. If you have confessed to anything, deny it afterwards: say that you babbled under torture, or that you don't remember what you said. If you are condemned, do not be afraid, for the Craft is powerful and your escape will be aided if you stand fast. If you go steadfast to the flames, be certain that drugs will reach you and you will feel nothing of the pain. You will only go to death and what lies beyond -- the ecstasy of the God and the Goddess. If you betray anything, however, there is no hope for you in this life or that which is to come.

16. To avoid being discovered, choose your working tools to be ordinary items which you would have around the house. Make your Pentacles out of wax so that you can break and melt them at once. Do not keep a sword unless its presence would alarm no-one. Have no signs or names visible on anything. Write the signs in ink on water immediately before consecrating the tool and wash them off immediately after. Do not engrave anything, for this will only help you be discovered. Keep your athame and heptan (working knife) among your kitchen knives, and let the colors of the hilts determine the one from the other and from the other knives. Always remember that we are the Hidden Children of the Goddess. Never do anything to disgrace the Craft or Her -- never boast, never threaten and never say that you wish ill of anyone.
17. It is not forbidden to say, "There is Witchcraft in the land", for the Christians say so themselves and have made it heresy not to believe so; but always say, "I know nothing of it here, though it may be elsewhere." If any person speaks about the Craft outside of the Circle, say, "Don't speak of such things -- it frightens me. It is bad luck to talk about such things." Say this for this reason: the Christians have their spies everywhere. These spies have been known to talk as if they were drawn to the Craft and as if they would want to come to our meetings, and they say such things as, "My fathers and forefathers worshipped the Old Ones, and my mother; I would like to worship in this way myself." To all of these, tell them that you do not know what they are talking about, and that you wish they would stop. But to others, say, "It's silly to talk about Witches flying around in the air; they would have to be lighter than feathers on this side-down. Besides, everyone knows that Witches are all bleary-eyed old hags; what fun could they possibly have at their meetings, and why should I want to participate? And besides, you know we were taught in school that there are no such things as Witches." Always make fun of the subject, that we may worship in peace when the persecution ends; let us all work for that happy time. May the blessing of the God and the Goddess be upon all who keep this law.
18. If any in the Craft holds any property, let all Witches guard it and keep it clean and good for the use of the Craft. It is the further responsibility of all Witches to guard Craft funds wisely.

19. If any Witch offers a well-made item, it is proper to pay them for it according to the value of the work; this is not taking money for the Craft, but payment for honest work -- even the Christians believe that "the labourer is worth his hire". Still, if any Witch works willingly for the good of the Craft and will not accept payment, this shall be to their greater honor.
20. It is known that a coven may be bound together by sexual ties, and that this is often not desirable. When it is found that this is not desirable, the coven should be made up of loving couples, and there may also be single covens. In such cases, it is required that the search for new love be undertaken outside the coven except when two single covens find love with each other; otherwise, it will often cause division in the coven. For while all acts of love and pleasure are indeed the rituals of our beloved Goddess, She is not inclined to favor acts which divide Her covens and scatter Her Witches unnecessarily.
21. If there should arise quarrels or disputes among the Witches, the High Priestess or High Priest shall immediately convene the elders and inquire into the problem. The elders shall hear each side separately, and then both together. Their decision should be just, not siding with one side until the matter is determined, recognizing that there are people who cannot work under others, and others who cannot make wise decisions. To those who must always be in charge, the possible solutions for them are to void the coven altogether, find another coven for them, or for them to found a new coven (taking with them all who will go). To those who cannot rule wisely, the solution is that those who cannot bear the rule will leave the coven. No one can truly worship the Gods when personal conflicts among the covens are not resolved; all who cause strife in the coven must be told, "Go away from us, for the Craft must ever survive."
22. In the Old Days, we could use the law against anyone who treated the Witches badly; but in these times, we must not do so. Our enemies have invented a burning pit of everlasting fire into which their God throws everyone who does not worship Him, except for those few who buy their pardon from His priests (for their God always seems to be in need of money). Even as our Gods need our aid to make fertility for people and crops, so it is that the God of the Christians is always needing men to find and destroy us. Their priests tell them that any man who is helped by us will be damned to their Hell forever, to the point that men are mad with the terror of it. But the priests also make them believe that they may escape this Hell if they give up Witches to be tortured, so that these men are always thinking, "If I catch only one Witch, I will escape the fiery pit." For this reason we have our hiding places, and when no Witches are found, the searchers will say, "There aren't any Witches, or at least not in this area." But as soon as one of our oppressors dies or even catches a cold, the cry will go up that it is "Witches' work", and the hunt will be on again and while they may kill ten Christians for every Witch, they will not care, for they are countless millions while we are few indeed.

20. THEREFORE, IT IS ORDAINED that none shall use the Art in any way to harm anyone or even wish them ill. However much they may injure us, HARM NONE, and may the Christians forget that we exist.
21. These laws are ordained to help us in our difficulties. No person no matter how large the injury or injustice they incur, may use the Art in any way to do evil or harm anyone. But they may use the Art, after great consultation with the elders and fellow covenants, to keep the Christians and their tools from harming anyone -- but only to constrain them. To this end, some day men will say "That man says he is a mighty persecutor of Witches, but all we ever see him torture are old women -- we cannot see that they have hurt anyone, and if they are all such powerful Witches, why has he not been harmed?" They will see him as the evil person he is, regardless of his professed beliefs. We know that too many people have died because someone had a grudge against them, or were persecuted because another wanted their wealth or because they were too poor to bribe the witch-hunters. And many have died only for being old women -- so many that most men now seem to believe that only old women are Witches. This is to our advantage, for it turns many suspicious eyes away from us; but we mourn deeply for the old women. Still, in England and Scotland, it has been hundreds of years since a Witch "died the death"; be vigilant, for the misuse of our power might begin the persecutions again. Never break this law, no matter how much you are tempted. Never consent to the breaking of this law, even a High Priestess who merely consents to the breaking of this law must be deposed immediately, for it is the blood of all the Witches that she exchanges. DO ONLY GOOD, and then only when it is safe to do anything at all.
22. Never accept money for the use of the Art, for money always swages the receiver. Christians take money for the use of their arts, and they sell pot-metal charms, potions and potions to men so that they may escape from their sins. Do not act like these; as long as you refuse to take money, you will be free from the temptation to use the Art for evil causes. All may use the Art for their own advantage or for the advantage of the Craft, but you must always be certain that no-one will be harmed by its use. Let the coven debate the use of the Art at length, and only when all are satisfied that none will be harmed by its use, will the use be allowed. Remember that if you cannot achieve your means in one fashion, your aim may still be reached through another -- always harming none.
23. If anyone in the Craft needs a house or land and there is no one willing to sell to them, you may use the Art to incline an owner's mind to be willing to sell, provided that the spell does not harm the owner or the property and that the full value is paid without haggling. Never bargain or cheapen anything while living by the Art.
24. The most important of laws: Do nothing that will endanger anyone in the Craft or which will bring them into conflict with the law of the land or any of our persecutors. In this regard, it is NEVER permissible, in any dispute involving the Craft, to involve any laws other than those of the Craft, nor may any tribunals be held other than one consisting of the High Priestess, the High Priest, and the elders.

28. The warden is to keep two books on herbalism. One of these will list the names and uses of all herbs which are cures for ills or are otherwise good for humans, and all may have access to this book to learn these things. But keep a separate book with the names of all poisonous herbs and those used in dark spells, letting only the elders and other trusted Witches know of these secrets or even of this book's existence.
29. Remember that the Art is the secret of the Gods and may only be used in earnest -- never for show, or pride, or personal glory. The Christians may taunt you saying, "You have no power. Perform some magic for us, and then we may believe." Do not listen to them, for the Art is holy and is to be used only in need.
30. It has always been the way of men and women that they should seek after love, and while no one should be reproved for this, it may be to the disadvantage of the Craft sometimes. It has happened too many times that a High Priestess has found a new love and run off with him, giving no word to the coven of this. A High Priestess may resign in full coven at any time, and this resignation is valid; but if she has not resigned, the coven shall wait for her to return for a year and a day (for she may return sooner, having left for love). If she has a deputy, that deputy is to act as Priestess for as long as the High Priestess is away. If she returns within this time, all will be as if she had never left, but if she does not return within this time, a new High Priestess shall be elected in full coven. Unless there is a good reason to the contrary, the deputy, having done the work, should receive the reward and be chosen as the new High Priestess. But if another is chosen, the deputy shall be the maiden and deputy of the new High Priestess.
31. The High Priest serves at the pleasure of the High Priestess. If the High Priestess is gone for more than a year and a day, he shall continue in his office while the deputy serves in her place. However, once a new High Priestess has been chosen, the new High Priestess will appoint her own High Priest (and it may be the current High Priest or not). Neither the prior High Priest nor his friends may be angry if a new High Priest is chosen, for pride must always give way to harmony in the coven.
32. The Art is sacred: it is the Art of the working of energies, and it must always be taught inside of the Magic Circle. It has been found that teaching the Art frequently leads to a sexual attraction between the teacher and student -- and that this often improves the result. If for any reason this is not desirable, it should be avoided at the beginning by both persons firmly -- and verbally -- resolving that their relations will be limited to that of brother and sister, or parent and child. It is for the reason that shared love often increases the result of working magic that teaching should always be done from man to woman and from woman to man. When a coven is made up of members of all one sex, the masculine-to-feminine energy exchange should be adhered to whenever possible. Teaching people about the Craft, however, may be done wherever and whenever it is safe, so long as the teacher is knowledgeable, the student is willing, and the information taught is available publicly or is not

a secret of the tent. No-one may charge for teaching, unless it is to cover such expenses as the cost of the room, books or other printed materials, refreshments, and so forth.

ix. Order and discipline must be kept within the camp: the High Priestess or the High Priest should and may punish all faults. To this end, all in the Camp should receive their correction willingly. With the culprit kneeling, all in the Circle should be told of the offense, and the sentence will be pronounced. Punishment might include the scourge or the casting of the Circle, followed by something silly such as several kisses. The culprit must acknowledge the justice of the punishment by kissing the scourge upon receiving sentence, and afterward by thanking everyone for their loving correction.

SO MOTÉ IT BÉ!

How to power a magic spell

by Black Cat

Some believe that Witches say a few magic words and do a ritual and then a spell is created and performs its function.

There is a metaphysical plane, a plane where all the psychic energy of both the living and the dead exists. We draw from this energy when we are being creative. It can also be psychically tapped to energize one's will and environment to cast spells.

The metaphysical plane acts like a battery. Psychic energy is alive and can be given a will of evil or good. Good psychic energy can heal and make good things happen. The evil energy creates a negative field around the person the spell was cast on. Some evil spells can cause someone to lose health etc.

It will attract random chance and make bad or negative things happen causing luck and other factors to be reduced and depending on the nature of the spell and the psychic skill of the Witch. The spell could take years before it begins to lose its energy and effects.

There are several ways to create a psychic battery. Covens are great for this. A spell cast by a coven is much more powerful than one cast by a single Witch. There are also places in the world where there are rips in the psychic energy layer of the metaphysical plane. These places are ideal for Witches because the psychic energy leaking out of the metaphysical plane is very powerful and very easy to tap. One can also tap a person and use him as a psychic battery to cast spells, but learning to channel and draw psychic energy from the metaphysical plane is the first thing any Witch should learn.

Ethics and Etiquette

When we speak of ethics and etiquette in relation to paganism what are we referring to? Are we speaking of outdated rules and actions that no longer have meaning and we only give lip service to? I don't believe so. Ethics and etiquette are living, breathing codes of life, shaping our actions in relation to each other, and ourselves. They are a guiding force in the way we live our lives.

Let us first look at ethics. Ethics are defined as -- a set of principles; moral philosophy; rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession; human duty; a particular system of principles and rules concerning duty, whether true or false; rules of practice in respect to a single class of human actions; motivation based on ideas of right and wrong; the philosophical study of moral values and rules.

When we begin to speak of ethics, we need to realize that this can be a very touchy subject. We are human after all, and we want to think our ethics are the correct ones. While there are generally accepted community ethics, it is personal ethics that make up who we are, and these are not the same for each person.

Before we begin to discuss in depth community and personal ethics let us first look at the *Reke*, the most common code of conduct among Wiccans.

Be the Wiccan law ye must, in reverent love and reverent trust.

Eight words the Wiccan Reke fulfill:

'Tis ye harm none, do as ye will;

Least in self-defense it be, even mind the rule of three;

Follow this with mind and heart,

And merry ye meet and merry ye part.

Every Wiccan knows the *Reke*. Our passwords into the sacred circle are in here. Our major rule of ethics is here, and the reason for breaking this ethic, as well as the consequences of breaking it foolishly. When we extract the line most popular -- 'Tis ye harm none, do as ye will' and begin to dissect it, we have to wonder "Is this an ethic we can every achieve?"

I believe the *Reke* is a standard of living, like all ethics, and one that is an impossibility to achieve. The goal is to live as closely to the *Reke* as possible. In the attempt to do this, we begin to analyze our actions. We follow the path of *LEAST*

harm. Thus, we begin to live conscious of our actions, and how they affect the world around us. And here comes the REAL lesson of the Rede. It forces us to have personal responsibility. Once you have acknowledged that the Rede is a goal to work for and not a given situation and have taken off the blinders that let you go around smug and happy that your religion is so sweet it makes your teeth itch, you can get down to the work of making your life an ethical one. What this involves is considering each decision in the light of the Rede before you decide upon a course of action. You do this by looking at all the possible consequences of that action and whether that will cause harm to any, choosing the path that causes the least harm and, **(THIS IS THE KEY)** accepting the responsibility for the consequences of your actions whether intentional or unintentional. -Lark, HPS of Tangled Moon Coven.

Wicca, as well as most Paganism is a religion and spiritual path of personal responsibility. We strive to live in an aware state. When we do this, we recognize our free will, and the free will of others. If we ignore the lesson of personal responsibility, we fail to realize our true spiritual potential and our true spiritual will.

As we begin our path, we must develop a set of personal ethics, while maintaining a respect for the ethics of the community we are becoming a part of. Some community ethics are very well defined.

-Don't practice black magic or follow the left-hand path.

-Don't attempt to harm another or interfere with their free will.

-Always act in a way that will retreat well upon your path. Never do anything that will bring harm to the Craft.

Since Wicca and Paganism are very open paths and for the most part do not seek to make anyone follow ONE RIGHT WAY, most of the ethics defined by community are concerning harm to others, and harm to the Craft.

But to begin a spiritual path, and to follow it every day of your life, you must develop your own set of personal ethics that define the way you live. No one can tell you what your personal ethics should be. Your teachers, mentors, HPS, HP can all recommend both in word and deed, ethics that work for them. You may be given a 'Book of the Law' that governs your group or tradition. If you are a solitary, you may read on the net, or in a book, acceptable codes of conduct, or ideals. But you cannot take someone else's ethics and make them your own. You must do some soul searching, and decide how you feel about things. Now I am NOT suggesting that you ignore your HPS or HP, or your teachers and mentors. I am suggesting that you should always temper wisdom with personal experience. You must come to a point that you are willing to question what you are taught, to grow in your own self. Through this, your own sense of ethics and morals will come.

Now, here comes the biggie. What do you do when your personal ethics are in direct conflict with accepted community ethics? For example--it has become a phenomenon in the pagan community to love everything white and full of light, and shun everything dark and full of shadow. It has become unacceptable to speak of negative emotions like anger and envy. It has become unacceptable to feel hate towards another person, wish that a murderer would get the death penalty, which that

request would get castrated by a bunch of angry women. Some of us fondly refer to this a fluffy, bunny Wicca, no offense to anything fluffy, or bunnies. We are taught to love unconditionally because we are all brothers and sisters, connected to each other and every living thing. We are taught that if we experience these emotions, maybe we aren't all that spiritual, and especially not as much as Miss Crystal love and light. We are often looked down upon if we say something like 'I am so damn mad at my ex husband I could smack him'. The response I myself have heard to such comment is 'my my, now THAT wasn't very positive. Well, guess what. It WASN'T. Now I am not saying that you should indulge in these emotions. They can be deterrents to developing a sound spiritual identity because they are 'negative' in the sense that they are base emotions that do not vibrate on the spiritual plane. But they also teach us lessons that can lead to spiritual experiences.

Life is a balance between light and dark. Nature is both beautifully creative and frighteningly destructive. Inside of a single human there is light and shadow, and to be totally balanced we must learn to face both experience both and therefore learn from both. So back to the original question. Let's say you don't feel that you are evil if you feel anger at another person or what have you. What do you do when community ethics conflict with your personal ethics? In my opinion, as long as what you are doing does not come into direct conflict with the good of the general community, or does not manipulate or purposefully harm another person, then your personal ethics should come first. You should not do something maliciously to another person. When you do this, you are not only harming yourself, but you are harming that person AND the whole of the community. It is very important that our community not be sullied, and the reasons are obvious. But beyond this, your personal ethics should prevail.

Do ethics change over time? Do you think that the ethics of our ancestors of 100, 200 or even 1000 or more years ago are the same as what they are now? I believe that ethics are a revolving and ever changing system. Some become outdated, and some we should always have. For instance, it has only been in the recent resurgence of Paganism in the last 50-60 years or so that the belief of 'thou shalt harm none, do as ye will, karma about'. In times past, a witch who could not curse, could not heal. Societies have not always believed that you should not harm another person or that interfering with someone's life was a bad thing. The old wise woman of a village was sought out for every reason from fertility, to love, to revenge. It has been in our time only, with the resurgence of beliefs and the discrimination that we face, that we have adopted some of the common ethics we now have. I am NOT saying this is wrong, or that we should go back to the 'Old Ways'. In a society that we now live in and the information is available for spiritual purposes, there is no longer a need to seek out the woman of the village and ask her to grant you revenge on your enemy. But this is the recent example of how ethics change with time. At one time it was ethical for old men to mate with young girls. In our culture, it is no longer ethical. So ethics change and so they should. Change is the only constant in the universe, and without it, we grow stagnant and our lives become filled with rot and decay. Change blows in new life to help regenerate our lives, our beliefs and yes, even our ethics.

The other common code of conduct that we hear of in the Pagan community is 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the Law, love under will.' This comes from Aleister Crowley, from his book entitled 'The Book of the Law'. Now

knowing some of the things that we do about Crowley, it's almost humorous to think of him in a discussion of ethics, except to point to what not to do maybe! But, this is a very powerful outlook on developing your own set of personal ethics.

In my understanding 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law; love under will' does not mean you may do as you wish and that is it. It is speaking of your TRULSE will, your TRULSE purpose in life, and if you are following your true or higher will and purpose you will not come into conflict with another's will so therefore you do not have to worry about stepping on anyone else's toes. So you don't have to worry about harming another, because you are in touch with the divine and you are following your own spiritual path and will, which will not cause harm or conflict with another. Of course, we still have conflicts with people. One way to look at this is as a spiritual lesson for either you or the other person. But if you are seeking to control another or harm another, this is not your true will. This is based upon the belief that every person is an individual, and as an individual you should be true to your own nature or consciousness. You must find your true will and make all of your actions subservient to the one great purpose. This again leads to conscious living.

If ethics are codes of personal and community conduct, then etiquette is a code of social conduct. Etiquette is defined as --the practices and forms prescribed by social convention or by authority; forms of conduct prescribed by polite society; code of correct conduct, also decorum denotes conformity with established standards of manners or behavior; the forms required by good breeding, or prescribed by authority, to be observed in social or official life; observance of the proprieties of rank and occasion; conventional decorum; ceremonial code of polite society; rules governing acceptable behavior.

Just like Emily Post and polite society, we in the Pagan community have behavior that is expected from us in how we interact with that community. In my opinion etiquette is something sorely lacking in many Pagans. They are not taught certain things about how we interact with each other. This could be because maybe you didn't have a teacher, or your teacher didn't know them either. Or it could be because you or those who taught you just didn't care, it wasn't important to them. But I feel that etiquette is VERY important. It keeps us civilized, it aids us in how we interact and it shows the outside world that we know how to act.

Beyond the mundane world and its social etiquette, let's take a look at some things that are common among Pagan paths, especially the Wiccan path.

1. You should never touch someone else's magical tools and items without their express permission. If you see something you like and want to touch, then ASK. Don't just hold out your hand for it, or just pick it up. A person leaves an imprint of their energy on what they touch, and they may not want someone else's energy on their magical items. This includes anything all the way to stones and jewelry. And do not take offense if you ask and are told no.
2. The way you live reflects on our whole community. You should always respect others, no matter their path. Inside your own religion there is a certain higher respect given each other, as Children of the Goddess. This comes from a

basic understanding of the hardships of the path and the process we all go through in some way to evolve. It can be equated to any secret society and its initiation process and path of self-discovery. This path is not for everyone and if you take it seriously, will change your life in ways you could never imagine. The path that causes growth can be difficult. And we link with others that are going through the same thing we are and take strength from and learn from them.

2. We endeavor to hold ourselves to a high standard of living our spiritual lives that the mundane world does not. Therefore we support each other, lending a hand when the pitfalls of the world come about.
4. When someone gives of themselves to teach or guide, we recognize that person's giving, and respect it. Not all of us are called to teach and those who are often a valuable service that should not be taken for granted.
5. When you are called to teach or guide, you have been given a very serious part to play in your community. You should never abuse it in any way. It also does not mean that you may use it as a way to gain power over, or look down upon any other person. We are all where we should be on our path, and it does not mean a thing that you have 10 or 20 years of service and someone else has 1. We are all equal in the eyes of the Gods. And if you are a teacher, you are held to an even higher state of conduct. You must never involve yourself in anything that could cause harm to your students or to the Craft. You should never do anything that would bring a bad light on us. For instance, you should never become romantically involved with one of your students. You should not condone the use of illegal drugs, or alcohol if the person is not of age. You should not use your position to control your students, or make them dependent on you. The goal is to aid a person on this path. You supply the seed as a teacher. You cannot take them by the hand and learn from them, or be easy on them when you should be honest.
6. In that same light, those who would be considered an elder in our faith are given a large amount of respect. The wisdom that is gained from following this path for 10, 20 or 30 years is an asset to our community, and we should respect the Elders of the community for what they have learned and what they teach us.
7. Due to the advent of the internet, there is a phenomenon growing among new seekers that is very disturbing. It involves not understanding the hard work it takes to learn the Old Ways, or the dedication and self-sacrifice those who follow, and especially those who teach and guide give to the path. From this lack of understanding, new seekers think they can go to any page on the net, learn what they can and be done with it. It also leads them to think that they can ask for what they want, and someone will just hand it over. For example, I have been asked to send someone a copy of my BOS. This shows me that the person requesting this has no idea of what a BOS is, what it stands for and the process that is gone through to acquire it. This is that out right to begin with. This person is wanting their religion handed to them. They want to skip the hard work, the dedication, the pitfalls and the trials, and get right to the reward. This is simply not how it's done. This person wants the secrets and mysteries handed to them on a silver platter, without having to leave the comfort of the computer chair and work

for them. This isn't possible. And I am here to say STOP. Be mindful of what you are asking. You can't go to the net, read a page or two, then go ask someone for their BOS, or even ask them to teach you. There must be effort on your part. You are not an adept after reading a page or a book or even ten books. The mysteries cannot be handed to you on a silver platter and you are a master of the universe. This is what I call lazy Wicca, and through lazy Wicca you will never come to experience the mysteries, because they come through dedication, hard work and a personal dedication to the Gods.

8. Those who are out of the closet must NEVER give away the secrets of their brothers and sisters. You should never give any personal information. You should never tell the secrets of a coven, who its leaders are, who the members are or any other information. We must honor our vows and protect those who for whatever reason have chosen to remain hidden from the eyes of the world.
9. For those who are out of the closet, your life and your actions must be above reproach in the eyes of the world. It's an open pagan you may be the only one that a non pagan every sees. They will see every Pagan in you. So in all things you must be truthful. You must live with dignity and honor.

In our discussion of ethics and etiquette, the point I was trying to impress upon you is this. We have become a society who thinks that we may do as we please, act as we please and there are no consequences. We fight with the Christians. We complain about how they fight amongst themselves. We sneer at them when they point to another of them and say how that person is wrong and they way they practice is wrong. And yet, WE DO THE SAME THING.

When I meet a fellow priestess, I treat her with respect as a person and doubly so as a priestess, since I know how hard that path can be, to have dedicated your life and your service to the Gods and the Old Ways. If I meet someone who has been walking the path for 20 or 30 years, I respect that person because of the knowledge they have obtained in that time. That is not to say my 10 years is less, or they are more spiritual than me. It is saying that this path is not an easy one all the time, and to have lived it every day for that amount of time is deserving of respect. I was taught as a child to respect my elders, and I believe that is still a valid lesson. The elders of this path can teach us things that we have never even thought of. At the same time, as an elder, you should always remember what it was like to take your first stumbling steps on this path, and how you may have longed for some guidance. It is just as wrong to be an elder and act as if you know everything, or someone who is only 20 or whatever age could never be a spiritual person. We all must remember our ethics and etiquette, and encourage each other every day.

We have forgotten to practice our personal ethics, and have thrown etiquette out the window. We have forgotten Emily Post and Miss Manners, and have went on about our merry little way to fight like cats and dogs, without even offering basic human respect for those with diverging views, and this troubles me. It is a plague that is infecting our community. The Wicah Ways continue. We struggle to make our way the right way, even if we don't realize we are doing this. We

forget the very basic teaching that we are all connected, and that all paths are valid, as long as they fulfill our spiritual needs.

Let us remember our ethics. Let us live our lives with honor, treating all of life with respect. Follow your own path, without interference into another's. Work hard, study hard and receive the blessings of a life well lived.

Becoming a Witch

I am often asked how one becomes a witch. Do you find someone who is a witch and they make you one? Or are you a witch just by saying you are? Can you make yourself a witch?

The process of becoming a witch doesn't happen overnight. It is a life change, a new path upon the journey of your life. It takes consideration, study and work. If you have previously followed a mainstream religion you may have things that take time to let go, and new things that take time to absorb. I have heard many people say it is often hard, coming from a life of Christianity, to feel comfortable praying to the Goddess. All new things take time, but if you are serious upon this path, you will find your way. The Gods call their own home to them.

No matter how you have come about finding the Old Religion here you are. So where do you go? To the book store. For a novice, books are like the air you breathe. You must have them, or access to them in some way. If you cannot afford, or do not feel safe having books on the Craft, the internet is the next best place.

In both books and on the internet you will find a wealth of knowledge that will help guide you upon your new path. Of course, as with anything else, there is good information and bad information. Avoid any kind of book, or internet site, that speaks of controlling another person in any way, harming them, doing love spells on a specific person, or tells you to chant in latin, even though you have no idea what you are saying (yes, I have seen sites like that). These books/sites will not fulfill your need for knowledge in the Craft and will only serve to confuse you.

Once you have read a variety of books and feel called to this path, the next step is to find a teacher. If you have access to a teacher, in my opinion this is the best course of action. A teacher, or a coven can often be found if there is a new age book store in your community. Also, the Witches Voice is a site that offers networking in every state. It has grown extremely large over the past few years and is a valuable resource in the Craft community. All of my coven members have found me on the Witches Voice.

Having a mentor can often do much for you when you are beginning. There will be things you come across that you have a hard time understanding and need clarification. If you have a teacher, they are just a phone call or email away. If you do not, you must try to decipher things on your own and may not come to the correct end on them. If you do not have a teacher, again, the internet is the next best place to look.

If you are only looking for a 'how to' on casting spells, then the Craft is not for you. Witchcraft is a serious spiritual path, in which magic is performed, but is secondary to the religion itself. I would suggest you look to ceremonial magic for that.

A couple of things need to be said about beginning this path in light of recent attitudes about the Craft. There lately it seems that you have a people who, after reading a few books, feel as if they can call themselves a master of the Craft. They throw on a title like Lady/Lord, or HP/s, add some black clothes, a pentacle, the sign of a hexagram, and they are ready to go. This is not what the Craft is about. If you have spent years following a particular path, have worked hard for the spiritual lessons that have been presented to you, and through this have attained the title and rank, then by all means use it. But think of how you would feel if, after all that, you have a newbie with 6 months and 5 books under their belt walking about calling themselves Lady Stormy Shi or Lord Thunderbolt. It is very offensive. Just like your parents told you when you were growing up (or maybe you still are) 'don't rush things, it will all come to you in the end, and be sweeter for the waiting'. This is true with the Craft. Using titles, putting on airs, and in general acting high and mighty are not going to make you any more spiritual. That is what this path is about. What it will do is separate you from people whom you may actually want to meet and get to know!

All of this being said the way to become a witch is through study and dedication. Gather all of the information you can. Find the best teacher possible. Read whatever you can get your hands on. Go outside in nature and commune with the Goddess and God. Listen to the trees and the wind and the rush of the water, for this is the witch's world.

Initiation

Initiation is a process of "death and rebirth" - the old self dies, and the new and magical self is born. A rite of self-dedication marks a serious commitment and dedication to the path and should not be taken lightly.

Having followed your path this far, you will have noticed subtle (or not so subtle) changes in your self, and you may wish to mark this and affirm your commitment to the path with a self-dedication ritual. Initiation is a process which happens over time, and the rite itself will benefit from being preceded by a daily practice, building up in intensity as you approach the day of the rite, with the dedication rite being the culmination of this ritual practice.

As the rite marks a rebirth into your ritual self or magical self, you may wish to obtain a new magical item or items for it. This could be a piece of ritual jewellery, such as a pentagram pendant, or amulet and jet necklace (the traditional witches necklace), or a cord you wear around your waist. Some people choose to mark their dedications by having a tattoo in a magical design personal to themselves.

It is also good to have a magical weapon which you will consecrate at the end of the dedication rite. A ritual dagger or athame is the general tool chosen. Self-dedication can be very empowering, and can produce a feeling of "walking on clouds", and it is very important to earth oneself afterwards, and then to have a rest from magical work for a period of between a week and a month.

Simple daily meditation may be practised during this period, but avoid intense magical work. Time is needed to assimilate the experience, and the dedication process should be undertaken at a time when you do not have too much outside stress, and are able

to take time for yourself.

It should be stressed that self-dedication is not the same as initiation into a coven and should you wish to join a coven at a later date you would still have to go through a probationary period and coven initiation if accepted.

A Self Dedication Ritual

Preparation

When you decide that you want to do a self-dedication plan the date of the ritual at least a month in advance, choosing a suitable time, perhaps consulting astrological tables, or at least the phases of the moon. It is best done on a waxing or full moon.

Start your preparation at the new moon. Make sure that you have a day off work for the initiation itself. You may already have decided on a magical or witch name. If you haven't yet decided on your witch name, find one through meditation and journaling in the daily ritual leading up to the rite of self-initiation.

Begin preparing for the self-initiation by performing a daily ritual. Start by creating a sacred space. Purify the area with incense and sprinkling salt water. Visualize a sphere around yourself, and call on the powers of the four quarters, visualizing the elemental landscapes. (more-circle casting)

Call on the Goddess and the God, by whatever names you prefer to call them. Pledge to the Elements, the Goddess and the God that you are embarking on the path of dedication and ask for their help in preparing you.

Spend some time in meditation on the meaning of dedication and opening yourself up for any messages from the Goddess and God. Thank and say farewell to the Goddess, God, and Elements, and close the circle.

Closer to the time

Try and spend time every day in the week leading up to the self-dedication rite, working out your vows and meditating. Make sure that the vows you make are realistic! It is better to make less demanding vows

them to make highly demanding vows and not live up to them.

The Ritual

Spend the day in quiet meditation and fasting. Drink only pure water, or if you really cannot do this, allow yourself a small quantity of apple or grape juice. Do not smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs! If you are on prescribed medication, consult your doctor. If the medication is short term, wait until you have finished the course of medication before doing the ritual.

If possible, go to a sacred site or wild place and attune yourself with nature. Communicate with the nature spirits, and ask for their blessings.

Think about the vows that you wish to make in your initiation. Think of a vow to yourself, one to the Goddess and God, and one to the Earth.

Before you start the ritual, have a purification bath. You may put essential oils, herbs or sea salt in the bath. Whilst in the bath, meditate on purifying your aura. See your aura as grey and dirty, but gradually becoming lighter and cleaner, until it is brilliant.

When you emerge from the bath, allow yourself to dry naturally. Do not use a hair dryer or rub yourself with towels. Rub your entire body with oil. This may be olive oil, grapeseed oil, or other vegetable oil, scented with pure essential oils of your choice. Perform the ritual singly if possible.

Have an altar set up, with an altar cloth on it, with a chalice of wine, a piece of bread or cake on a platter, a cup of water, two altar candles, some aromatic oil, your athame or other tool, any ritual jewellery which will be put on at the end of the ritual to mark your dedication, and two small dishes containing sea

salt and water (from a spring or sacred well if possible). You may also wish to have images or statues of the Goddess and God on the altar.

Light the candles and the incense and purify your ritual space. Hold your hands over the water dish and say:

"I purify you. Oh water, in the blessed and mighty names of the Goddess and God".

Visualizing it glowing with white light. Do likewise with the salt. Then tip some of the salt into the water and mix it in with your fingertips.

Sprinkle the salt water around your ritual space. Visualize a circle around you. (or cast a circle in your usual way). Call on the elements, then on the Goddess and God.

Declare your intent, saying something like: "I (optional name) am prepared for dedication. I have followed the path and fulfilled my vows, and I now call upon the Goddess and the God to witness on me wisdom and integrity. I ask for the blessings of air, fire, water and earth".

Spend some time in meditation and controlled breathing to gather energy and achieve an altered state of consciousness. You may also wish to use a mantra or chant.

Meditate for a while on finding the stillness inside yourself. When you are ready, stand before the altar and anoint yourself first with oil, then with salt water and lastly wine, saying:

"I am reborn into my true and magical self, and I take on the name of (Witch name). I ask for the blessings of the Goddess and God on my adventures and I vow (make your vows)".

When anointing yourself you may wish to anoint your cheeks, or anoint yourself with a circle pentagram.

or personal symbol. It is good to write down your vows
in your magical diary and sign the entry with your
witch name.

Present yourself to the quarters, stating that you are
now dedicated to the solitary path. Consecrate your
ritual jewelry with the four elements (incense,
water, salt and candle flame), and anoint it with oil
or spirit before putting it on.

Consecrate your athame or other tool in the same
manner. Then hold it to your heart, feeling a link
with it, and filling it with your energy. Say
"I am a child of earth and starry heaven."

Hold it up to the moon and stars, and ask for the
blessings of the cosmos on it. Then touch it to the
ground, and ask for the blessings of mother earth.

Lastly, consecrate the wine and cake by touching your
athame to them, and channelling energy through it.
Prick and eat, anointing yourself. Then thank the
Goddess, God and Elements, and close the circle.

How to find a Covenant or Group

If you are looking for a group then going out and meeting people and talking, asking questions and showing your intent of finding a group are the most important steps.

If you stay at home and never mingle with other people then don't expect anything to happen. This is not a shortcut path to walk, there is a lot of serious work involved and when you do find a group the work doesn't stop.

Joining a Covenant means giving up a lot of free time, substituting social time for Covenant time and spending a lot of time studying and experiencing... So which coven path you follow, and which coven type of group you are seeking - make an effort and be persistent.

In big cities such as the one we live in London (UK) there is no reason to say 'But there is nothing to go to'. There are online organisations such as W/W who keep their members informed of social events, workshops, training groups, conferences and open rituals. The W/W also organise events just for their members, so that you can meet the faces behind the names. To find out more about W/W visit:
<http://www.waldrun.co.uk>

The Witches Voice - <http://www.witchesvoice.com> is another great resource. You can find contacts with similar interests to yourself to correspond with but most importantly they list all the major events, conferences and festivals organised by Pagans from all over the world. They also list smaller events, such as pub moots and workshops.

In parts of the world it is not that easy, and you might have to travel to attend conferences or workshops. This might seem like a lot of work just to meet other people, but if you are serious then travel

should not deter you from your path.

When you do get the opportunity to meet other Pagans make an effort to ask around about open groups and other events. As the organisers of the event if they know of groups which might be taking on new trainees.

It is important to note that even in big cities such as London there are very few new groups forming and the groups in existence might only take on a trainee every few years. Those who do might expect to interview you to see if you will fit in with the rest of their group. If this happens take the opportunity to interview them too. Be honest with them, but make sure that their answers also satisfy you. Ask what they will be expecting from you and what training they will be providing you with.

Unfortunately there are still some dubious groups using the name of Wicca to cover other activities. Do not just join a group because they happen to be the first one which approaches you!

Remember:

You should feel comfortable with your HPS & HP:
Sex should not be expected in return for training, nor should it be part of your initiation.
You should not be expected to contribute large sums of money in return for training - although you should expect to contribute towards temple expenses.
Confidentiality is VERY important in Wiccan groups.
Expect a lot of hard work!
Finally you should enjoy being part of the group you join!

BOOK OF THE WHOLE

LIBER I :

ON THE LIES

OF THE

CHILD OF THE BEAST

BY: PIRADON'IS : *A'N'(-SITTA-SAR'OO'N'

1. Many have failed to see the True Nature of Manhood.
2. For manhood know not the true Seducer that is me.
3. I give this message unto you so that you can pass it onto the Children of the Beast.
4. For He is a lie, He is a sin.
5. Manhood knows naught but shame.
6. They fear the truth and they reject reality.
7. Heath not the Will to Learn though heath the Will to teach.
8. He teaches them all lies. For all He knows are Lies.
9. The New man has come tis It has been foretold.
10. The Beast has risen He is that who has lied to you all.
11. The One claims to be the Son of Jehovah. Though He is the Son of the Beast.
12. A Child portrayed by Sin and crucified in Shame.
13. He died for your Sins, though he hath no name.
14. The Only Sin Manhood knows is Shame.
15. As they ate from the Tree of Life, they were blinded by the Lies.
16. He claims that these Lies are reality. That the Liar is the Beast.
17. The Only Way to Salvation is through the death of Pessim.
18. Salvation is the Key.
19. The Key of Man is Sin.
20. The Sin of Man is Shame!
21. If thou teaches Sin then thou know only Shame.
22. The Book of Sin is the Book of Shame.
23. His disciples taught lies.
24. They taught fear.
25. They taught slavery.
26. They taught Shame.
27. They claim to do Jehovah's work.
28. They claim to be prophets.
29. Has it not said that to beware the false prophet?
30. Though the prophet himself was false?

21. He taught lies and He taught fear
22. I repeat this to you
23. The truth is inside of you
24. Apostles brought forth the Lies from Heaven
25. The Lies are the Book of Truth
26. Mortals repeat these truths
27. For you are ignorant and you are hypocrites.
28. You ignore the Truth and follow Lies.
29. Which of His revelations came true?
30. Let the Word be burnt!
31. Spat in the eyes of the False Ones.
32. Let men stride you away from achieving your Desire.
33. Desire is a lie.
34. Then Jehovah created the world with his word of Command.
35. Through whetstone sent his son down for us to pray with the truth sent an impostor!
36. For Christ was a false He was a Son of The Beast.
37. Created into manifestation through the lies of the One
38. These are the truths that you hear.
39. For the truth lies inside us all.
40. For if we sought look within we shall never find it without.
41. The Nature of Man is this: Lies, lies, lies!
42. Lies taught by Jehovah's Son?
43. No. Lies taught by the Child of the Beast.
44. For this is the Age of Truth
45. The One and Twenty creatures of the Earth shall We know the Truth
46. The Book is written It cannot be erased.
47. The Lies are in our minds and must be denied.
48. Teach not lies Thou servants!
49. Teach love and Wholeness.
50. Teach Forgiveness and Condemn not to assault
51. It is written to command death
52. Thou shalt never condemn to death
53. Ye shall never subject another to discrimination
54. For the Prophet said "Love all Unto the Being".
55. Let these truths hold near to you
56. Let them always Be.
57. For just as you are here to Be, Let the Truths be known to them.
58. The truths said are those by Man
59. Follow not their empty lies.
60. With the grace of the One unto you all.

1. By the powers of Love and Life
2. Spread my Word and Teach them the Truth

PRADOVIS: *A*V*E - S*H*H* - S*H*O*O*V

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

LIBER II:

THE RITUAL
 OF EMBODING THE SELF
 PRADOVIS: *A*V*E - S*H*H* - S*H*O*O*V

I
 The key to Inner knowledge and salvation is through discipline of the Self.
 The Mind is the mystery. The Body is the Temple. The Spirit is the Will. Ye
 shall endure through suffering purification of the Self is the Death of Pessimism
 under Will. Read not the words of the rite unless You decide to perform it.

Once you have agreed to embrace Yourself to the Gods and Goddesses, then
 shall ye be granted knowledge and wisdom that was once unknown. The Occult
 shall no longer be. The truth shall be hidden No More!

- II
1. Ye shall have with you a dagger, a star, a cup, and Your Book
 2. The Book shall be of Your secrets.
 3. Arrange the items as listed onto an altar. Have a statue of the Goddess
 and Her consort Pan
 4. Kneel before the altar and raise the Dagger high above.
 5. Thus through Your voice proclaim:
 "I am of the Gods, and to the Gods I do submit myself!
 I give unto thee my soul, and I give to thee my Whole!
 I shall be granted My Rebirth!"
 6. Thus shall you take thy Blood and mix it within the blessed cup of life.
 7. Mix it with the Holy Water.
 8. Then shall You raise the Cup to the Gods and Say:
 "My Body shall be pure,
 My Mind shall be Pure,
 My spirit shall be pure,
 I embrace Myself,
 I take these Mysteries inside of Me!"

9. Upon thine proclamation shall ye drink the Cup of Life.
10. Lie onto the ground before thine altar.
11. In the position of the God with arms across your chest, raise the ancient powers by chanting their sacred names:
 "Nuit, Ra, P and
 Amos, Ptahus, Gmahl!
 Horned Hunter of the Night.
 Great One of the Seas.
 Silent One of the Shores.
 True Mighty Lord of Might!
 I invoke thine sacred Name.
 The One is the All.
 The All is the Many!"
12. Ye shall arise and raise the Star.
13. Hold it upon your breast.
14. Proclaim yourself as a servant of the Gods.
15. Then drop the star and raise your arms.
16. In a loud and commanding voice say these words:
 "Great Goddess I take thee mistress of Me
 I pledge My loyalty to thee.
 As I head into your arms.
 Shall ye then make Me Whole.
 I shall endure
 All that you know.
 Isis, Hecate, Perse.
 Carnivorous Antares, Atreus!"
17. Then shall you meditate.
18. At the completion of the Ritual, ye shall scribble all you have seen.
19. And shall ye scribble all you now know.
20. For you have now been initiated into the Spirit's Glow!
21. "Love, Vinto All, and Follow thine self!"

END OF RITE

ANK-SITH-SAKOON

LIBER III

THE ONLY SIN OF MANKIND

IS SHAME TAUGHT THROUGH LIES

By: DRAGONIS: *ANK-SHTA-SAKOON

I

The Sin of Man is shame. When Eve ate from the Tree of Life she knew the truth. The truth was Shame. Then she gave the fruit to Adam. Who was taught the Lies of Man.

The snake was not a serpent. He was the Lies. He taught them the truth of shame. For it has been seen inside his eyes!

The Sin is here and shall always be. Nothing can hide it. The woman had given man the gift. The gift of Shame. So too did Christianity. Christ gave the gift of Shame. For shame is the only Sin of Manhood.

All Manhood knoweth is Shame. For Shame is the lie taught by the Child. The Child was the Son. The One was the Father. And the Lies were the Holy Spirit.

For Manhood know now the lies. They will never forget. Their desires are their never met. For they are blinded by the lies. The Lies of Shame.

II

The Will is the Control.
The Will is the life!
Spread Will until you fill.
And fear Not for I have come!

I am here, I have always been.
I shall teach to you the Sin.

III

The Sin of Man is Shame.
Repent not for mistake again!
Teach love and straight fear.
For I am always here!
I shall arise until the end.
And teach to you my friends!

ANK-SHTA-SAKOON
FINISHED

Physics and the Basic Principles of Visualization Magic

Introduction

For starters, I would like to say a few things about myself to set the record straight. I have a Masters degree in Quantum Field Theory, am working on my PhD in the same, and am a practicing, if typo, shaman. I have read in several places that the best way to start in magic is to read read read read, and I have noticed several articles using Physics to explain magical arguments. Unfortunately, many of these articles either do not explain the Physics very well or are just plain wrong. I am not disrespecting these people; after all, not everyone can be a Physicist! I thought I would write a brief article to clear up a few issues on the nature of probability in Physics as well as how probability might play a role in magic.

The following article is essentially a short paper on the Metaphysics behind what I call "visualization magic." I am not going to footnote; all of the Physics arguments are well known and documented and can be found in any introductory text on Quantum Mechanics. As for my magical arguments, well, they are as correct as I can make them. Naturally, I accept responsibility for any errors contained in this article.

The Nature of Investigation

Most of the science done today is based on a problem solving technique called the "Scientific Method." The Scientific Method is a well-established way to start from the basic principles behind a problem and develop an experimentally based explanation of a given phenomenon. It has been used successfully for centuries. There is one problem with this method, though: it can be very difficult to incorporate any newly discovered facts that do not fit the structure of the current scientific theory. This point has been raised repeatedly when scientists try to discover the nature of ghosts, ESP, etc.

I think it is natural to take the viewpoint that any axiomatic structure, such as the sciences, can only explain certain types of phenomena. Other systems, such as magic, can explain other phenomena. It is interesting that these different axiomatic structures can overlap: they can explain the same types of phenomena, but they explain them in different ways. One might call different axiomatic systems as "paradigms," or "representations." Whatever you call them, it is important not to mix the different systems, because the any term defined in one representation are not likely to have the same meaning in another. For example, anyone trying to explain a magical phenomenon in terms of Physics needs to be careful of how the word "energy" is used. Energy in magic will not necessarily mean the same thing as it does in Physics. (Incidentally, energy is not a well-defined concept in Physics!)

In the remainder of this article I am going to discuss the Physics representation known as the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Physics (CI) and, within that representation, provide an explain of visualization magic.

Schrodinger's Cat and Quantum Reality:

When most people think of Physics, they think of equations, math and all sorts of difficult problems. In actuality, Physics is based on very simple arguments and can often be put in the form of puzzles that illustrate the basic principles. For instance, Classical Physics can usually be put into the form of some little guy (or person for you extreme liberals!) firing a cannon over a ravine. Classical Physics describes what we see and touch in everyday life. We are familiar with it and it is the representation that makes the most sense to us. Another representation, which is more basic, is that of Quantum Reality. Classical Reality is fully contained within Quantum Reality, but Quantum Reality contains more phenomena, much of it things we do not see in day-to-day life. Not really accepting Quantum Reality for what it is, Erwin Schrodinger devised a thought experiment to show the odd nature of what Quantum Physics implies. He was essentially trying to ridicule the interpretation of the science he was helping to develop. The thought experiment is known as "Schrodinger's Cat."

We start with building a switch device based on quantum principles. We are going to take an atom of a radioactive material and place it inside a detector. The detector sends a signal to a switch if the atom decays. Now, all atoms decay eventually, and the amount of time it takes for half the amount of a radioactive material to decay is called the "half-life" of the material. So the chance our one atom will decay in one half-life is 50%. Thus, after one half-life, our switch has an equal chance of being "on" or "off." We now connect a vial of the deadliest poison to the switch: if the switch is "off" then the poison vial is closed, if the switch is "on" then the poison vial is open and any creature in contact with the poison will die instantly. Now place the quantum switch and vial of poison along side a cat in a sealed box. The question is after one half-life has elapsed, is the cat alive or is it dead?

Since there is a 50% chance that the atom has decayed in one half-life, our "logical" answer must be that the cat has a 50% chance of being alive or dead. No other answer in our (Classical Reality) experience makes any sense. We cannot say with certainty if the cat is either alive or dead.

However, we are asking a question that requires a specific answer. Is the cat alive, or is it dead? Quantum Reality gives us a third, and actually the only valid, answer to this problem. The cat is in a mixed quantum state of both alive and dead as far as anyone outside the sealed box is concerned. That is, the cat is only in a specific state of alive or dead when someone called a "quantum observer" looks inside the box to determine the state of the cat. This leads us to all sorts of metaphysical problems about the cat as well as the problem of what defines a quantum observer.

The Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Reality:

The Quantum Reality representation of the result of the Schrodinger's cat experiment does not make any sense as far as Classical Reality is concerned. Nevertheless, it has good basis in Physics. Many of the top Physicists of the time (around the 1920's I believe) met in Copenhagen to discuss Quantum Mechanics. Several topics were on the board there and eventually a consensus was made as to the nature of a quantum system: if a system is not measured it exists in a

superposition of all possible quantum states. When the system is measured, it falls into one specific state. (For you Physics buffs, this is the concept behind the Born interpretation of the wave function.) This representation has become known as the "Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Physics." (CI) According to the CI, Schrödinger's cat is both alive and dead until someone opens the box to look.

There is one other way to look at quantum reality, but you pay a severe price. The representation called the "Many Worlds Theory" states that every time a quantum level decision is made, the Universe splits into two or more copies, one for each outcome of the decisions. The Many Worlds interpretation of Schrödinger's cat states that the Universe splits into two copies: one with a dead cat and the other with a live cat. When we open the box we find out which Universe we are in. Personally, I find this representation to be a bit ridiculous, but you may feel free to choose which one you like the most. Both the Many Worlds and the CI make exactly the same predictions and we cannot tell which one is correct (if either!).

The Double Slit Experiment:

The Schrödinger's Cat thought experiment does not really tell us anything about the real world unless we can prove it. Obviously, we are not going to learn anything from killing cats (and why would we want to anyway?) so we need to turn to another experiment to give us some facts. The Young's double slit experiment does just that and is almost as simple as Schrödinger's Cat. First though we need to talk about light.

When Sir Isaac Newton was doing his experimentation on light he decided, based on his experiments on reflection, refraction and the sharpness of shadows, that light was made of little particles, which he dubbed "corpuscles." (We now call corpuscles photons.) Later on interference experiments (such as the Young double slit) showed that light was made of waves, not particles. Was the great Sir Isaac wrong?? Not entirely. In the early 1900s, a man named DeBroglie showed that electrons, which are "obviously" particles, could be thought to have a wavelike character. Eventually scientists realized that all subatomic particles have both wave and particle properties...subatomic "particles" are neither particles nor waves, but are something else which we have come to call by the badly punned name of "wavicles." (If you are a John Gribbon fan as I am, then you may like to call subatomic particles "shrey toys.") When we run an experiment that assumes light is a particle, light behaves as if it were made of particles; when we run an experiment that assumes light is a wave, light behaves as if it were a wave.

Young's double slit experiment assumes light is going to behave as a wave. We start with a monochromatic (single colored) light source and pass it through a slit so that we obtain a set of equally spaced wave fronts. We pass these wave fronts through a wall that has two tiny holes in it, equally spaced from the center point. Beyond the wall is our "detector," essentially a TV that records the wave pattern striking the screen. A diagram of the double slit experiment may be found in any introductory Physics text, just look under the term "interference" in the index.

When we turn the light source on we see a pattern of light and dark areas on the TV screen. This is the expected result since light is a wave and the two slits create an interference pattern: the peaks and troughs of the wave carried out in different regions on the TV screen. This is entirely due to the fact of those two little holes in the wall...if there was only one tiny hole in the wall then we would only see one point of light on the TV screen and no interference. The one hole experiment is more like treating light as a particle rather than a wave, and we get no interference from it since particles do not interfere with themselves.

Now let us play with the experiment a bit. We are going to presume that light is made of particles and install detectors in both holes in the wall to see which hole the photon goes through. What kind of pattern do we get on the TV screen now? According to Classical Reality it had better be an interference pattern again. Nope. We get two little points of light on the TV screen. Why? Because we are thinking of light as particles we detected the particles, so they cannot interfere with each other. Let's play with this again. We are going to take the original double slit experiment and this time put the photon detector right in front of the light source and then we are going to run the double slit experiment only letting one photon through at a time. Obviously we only get a point of light on the TV screen each time a photon passes through. However, let us record where each photon hits and run a bunch of single photons through the experiment. What do we get on the TV screen? We might expect to see two little points of light on the screen but we do not. We now get a full-fledged interference pattern. Remember, this is a composite pattern made up of individual photons going through the experiment, not a bunch of waves. This is truly weird.

There are only two ways to explain this last result, neither of them comfortable. Consider a photon passing through hole #1 as a photon in state 1 and a photon going through hole #2 as a photon in state 2. The only way we can get an interference pattern is if we have something going through BOTH holes at the same time. This implies that the photon is traveling through the double slit apparatus in both states at the same time. Remember we are not trying to detect which state the photon is in as it goes through the holes, so the CI predicts that the photon is in both states, just as the results say it must be. (We can make a similar argument for the Many Worlds case as well). This is hard experimental evidence for the CI and has not been contradicted in the last 70 years or so. Just the opposite...other experiments have lent validity to the CI. (By the way, this same experiment has been done with electrons and, I believe, neutrons as well.)

The Extreme Copenhagen Interpretation and Your Quantum Universe:

What follows is my personal interpretation of the Physics mentioned above.

Let us go back to Schrodinger's Cat since it is the simplest experiment. We need to discuss what makes a quantum observer again, because it is a tricky point. A quantum observer is some nebulous thing that takes a measurement of a system. What is it that creates the measurement process? Presumably, we have two systems to consider: the first is the actual experiment that we want to measure and the second is the system that does the measuring. Therefore, if we take the measurement process to its most basic level, a measurement is the process by which the experimental system "gives"

information to the observer's system. This information exchange is mediated by photons (or W, Z, gluons, etc. Basically any boson you wish. That's another topic.) To make a long story short, the observer gets information from the experiment by absorbing a photon. This means that an electron can serve as a quantum observer since absorbing a photon will alter the electron's state. A quantum observer does not actually need to have an intelligent function; it merely needs to respond to the experiment in some way.

So, let us go back to Schrödinger's Cat. According to the scientist running the experiment, the cat is both alive and dead until the box is opened. Say that he opens the box and knows the state of the cat. Now look at the people in the next room who are waiting to hear from the scientist in the room with the cat. According to them, the cat is STILL in that odd alive and dead mixed state. We can go further and state that the whole lab we ran the experiment in is in an undetermined state since the scientist in the lab might take different actions depending on the state of the cat. No one outside the lab can possibly know what is going on in the lab. Now look at the people in the next room beyond that, etc. What we have is a nested set of "Schrödinger's Cats." Until the information is passed between different rooms, the set of rooms inside exists in a mixed state.

We can take this argument to an (I feel logical) extreme. Since the individual particles in our bodies act as quantum observers, the only pertinent information we have about the state of the Universe at large is what we perceive through our senses. Therefore, anything that we do not perceive through our senses exists in a mixed state similar to Schrödinger's alive/dead cat: nothing exists in a definite state unless we are sensing it. This is what I call the "Extreme Copenhagen Interpretation" (ECI). What this implies, then, is that each of us exists in our own personal universes and everything exterior to that universe exists in an undetermined state until we sense it. Note: I am going to ignore the question of other people existing. I will assume other people exist and our knowledge of their reality comes from the "interpretation" of these multiple universes. To give a quick example, consider the question: "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to see it fall, does it make any noise?" The ECI states that since no one was around, the tree is in a mixed state of existence/non-existence. Furthermore, it has fallen/not fallen, much less made any noise/silent. Since the tree does not directly influence your universe, you cannot say anything definite about it even existing, even though you may have seen the tree an hour ago.

The Basic Principle of Visualization Magic:

The ECI tells us that what we sense is what is contained in our universe. In order to do magic, we need (at least) one more principle. When we do visualization magic, we actually feel what it is that we visualize. The ECI says that what we feel makes up our reality. Combining these two statements, we have what I call the "Basic Principle of Visualization Magic." What we visualize becomes real in our universe. This principle can be demonstrated by a simple spell, which I call an "empowering" spell. First, enter a light meditative state. (This first step may also be achieved by casting a circle.) Next, visualize a blanket of white fire surrounding you, starting at your feet and working its way up to encompass your whole body.

Hold this visualization until you can actually feel the fire surrounding you, cleansing your spirit and not letting any darkness penetrate your being. Now visualize your hands held outward from your body and let a globe of white fire come into being between your hands. Hold the globe there until you can feel it. This globe of fire represents your inner strength and the longer you hold it the more in touch with your strength you will be. The result of this spell is that you will feel empowered and more able to cope with the challenges of your life.

Is this magic, physics, or psychology? Remember, how we view our universe depends on the representation we use. In this case, the empowering spell may be viewed in any one of these representations. Using the *EI* to describe the spell what we are doing is literally bringing up our inner strength as a concrete object and physically contacting it. We know it is there because we can feel it, therefore according to the *EI* it has an actual existence. A similar argument holds for essentially any magic that has its basis in visualization or feelings.

The *EI* explains how magic can affect our own universe, what about someone else's? After all many witches (warlocks, sorcerers, etc.) will claim that their magic affects other people, not just their own universe. We can use visualization magic to show how this might work, so there is not necessarily any conflict here. You (presumably) put some clothes on today so anyone that sees you will see those clothes and all of them will be able to describe the same set of clothing. You know you are wearing a certain set of clothes, and your best friend came up to you and mentioned something about the outfit, so you know she saw them. Both of you agree on the set of clothes because both of your universes came into contact, i.e. the two universes interfere because they both contain quantum observers. Now, can your best friend say anything about what you are wearing three hours after you parted? No, because you might have changed clothes. (Or heck, you might be skinny-dipping in the local watering hole.) Once the universes are out of contact they no longer interfere.

To continue the analogy, if you feel something in your universe then it is real in your universe and thus, because your universe interferes with other universes the effect may well be real in someone else's universe. Say you know a spell to create a rainstorm. It will happen in your universe. Whether or not it happens in someone else's universe depends on the strength of the interference between your universe and theirs. I would suppose that the strength of the interference depends on the strength of your belief (and that of others) that you can make it rain. Taking things at face value, I would say that it would take a tremendously powerful mage to create an effect in someone else's universe, seeing how difficult it is to create a magical effect in our own universe. Note: I am aware the rain spell probably has nothing to do with visualization magic. I am also aware that other magical principles could come into play here. Remember that I am using a representation, the *EI*, to explain an effect. The *EI* is probably not a good representation to discuss a rainmaking spell!

Summary:

The way we explain an effect depends on the representation we use. The rules for which a representation is a good representation to explain an effect are not known, though we may certainly use common sense to guide us. The *CI* is a well-established representation that is used in modern day Physics. A logical extension to the *CI* is the *EI*, which states

that we all live in our own individual universe and that the Universe is composed of the interweave of these personal universes. The EMI provides a way for Physics to explain the phenomenon of visualization magic by stating that what we feel is what is real in our universe.

Brujeria

Brujeria. For many, it is nothing more than the Spanish word for witchcraft. But for a growing number of North Americans, Brujeria is something much more complex--it is a religion not unlike Wicca.

I would like to volunteer to contribute some articles to the archive on this Pagan path. Myself, I am what is known as the Roja, or Red Priestess, of a temple here in Philadelphia. One does not need to be of Hispanic/Latin descent to celebrate Brujeria--I am not.

As a sample, allow me to offer you what is known as the Rule of the Brujo. Much of Brujeria is done in Spanish or in the native language of Nahuatl, but much is being brought into English.

"The one who made the Rule known is not known, but from this person the Rule spread unto the Olmecs, unto the Toltecs, unto the Aztecs, and ultimately the Rule has come down to us. That there is one piece of the rule for every full moon in the solar year is a certainty.

The universe is a living thing (which is an idea brought into modern Brujeria from Aztec cosmology), and Brujeria is a method of interacting with the living energy of the universe.

A brujo/bruja practices what could be termed magic by attuning himself/herself to this living energy.

This living energy can seize a brujo/bruja at any time, or through the concentrated work of an impromptu and inspired ritual.

An individual enters Brujeria through a personal encounter with the living energy.

Once a brujo, always a brujo. It is something that cannot be shaken off.

Brujos are born and cannot be made, even if they do not come to realize their place in Brujeria until much later in life.

A brujo has no ethical laws or limits to restrict his magic. However, he must also assume complete responsibility for his actions and be willing to submit to the consequences.

"A dead brujo is more powerful and more dangerous than a living brujo." What exactly this means is up to interpretation.

As Mexican President Benito Juarez said, "Respect for the rights of others is peace."

Brujos are free to use their abilities for non-brujos. Example situations are healing, spiritual counselling, and the creation of hechizos ("spellwork").

Brujeria is a community bound together by the living energy of the universe and all brujos are brothers and sisters. A brujo is pledged to assist a fellow brujo whenever and wherever needed.

Some of what makes Brujeria can be revealed to non-brujos but most of Brujeria must remain between brujos alone.

Brujeria is learned from brujo to brujo and through interaction with the living energy."

Gender and Nature in Contemporary

NeoPaganism

In recent decades, several social and political movements have had profound impacts upon the popular Western psyche. Collectively, they pose a potential challenge to religiously grounded relational paradigms which until recently have been accepted almost without question. These movements include the human rights trio (ethnic/racial civil rights, lesbian/gay rights and feminism) and environmentalism.

The last two of these, feminism and environmentalism, have been converging to the degree that a common discipline, ecofeminism, has been born. Although some affinities exist between these two and the others, the only solid connection seems to be the union by some feminists of lesbianism on ideological grounds in spite of their personal sexual preferences. What could the women's rights movement have in common with the attempt to preserve and protect our planetary ecology which the homosexual and nonlate rights movements do not share? To answer this question we must take a look at the paradigm they are all opposing, and in what ways each of them opposes it.

Our Present Paradigm

This paradigm is drawn from the moral laws set down in the holy texts of the religions comprising mainstream Western Monotheism. These religions mainly include Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism; their texts include the Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta. For purposes of simplicity and brevity, we shall call this the JBIZ paradigm.

JBIZ postulates a single, omniscient, omnipotent and relatively benevolent male deity (Jahweh, Jehovah, God or Lord, Allah or Ahura Mazda) who created and populated the world but is essentially transcendent with respect to it. This deity is opposed

by another somewhat less knowing and powerful, relatively malevolent male deity (Lurker the Evil, Satan or Mimir), who is also essentially supernatural. These two opposed forces of good and evil, light and darkness, contend with each other by interfering in our affairs. Each of us shall spend eternity with whichever one he or she allies with; in any case, this earth is a temporary inconvenience, unimportant in the greater order of things. It is in our interest to ally ourselves with the "good" god, and we know how to do this because He's thoughtfully sent us a male savior or prophet or avatar (Moses, Jesus, Mohammed or Zarathustra) to so inform us.

We are now in a position to understand the special affinity between feminism and environmentalism. Homosexuality is condemned and slavery condoned in the Bible, but if these prejudices were reversed, it would not compromise the underpinnings of the theological structure; gay/lesbian rights identical to those of straights and white/nonwhite equality are no metaphysical threat to the integrity of the system. The religious ramifications of feminism and environmentalism, however, strike it to its very core. By criticizing the consequences of following the Bible, they reject as immoral or unwise the premises upon which it is based, and do so from the perspective of an alternative paradigm which derives from many pagan sources past and present, but which is crystallized in Wicca.

Feminism

In the Bible, all deities are male, the first human is male and any neutral prophets or saviors are male. In the cosmic play, women are relegated to the roles of dumb slave, rebellious whore, broodmare and submissive saint. Mary Pahl's axiom that if God is male, the male is God has the existential corollary, within the Bible, of reducing females to nothing. In order to follow God's plan, women must submit to their husbands' rule, in particular, and to male authority in general. Men may have to attend the school of hard knocks, but women are struck with their homophobia. They are to raise their many children but not their voices, for fear of getting hounded about themselves. This exclusion of the feminine from spiritual significance and their resulting societal subordination has provoked, within many contemporary women, a soul alteration of

Mexican proportions. Revolt against the predominance of this divine chain of being has followed, and the guerrillas have not been exclusively female. Some men have come to feel oppressed and pigeonholed in the role of overseer on the domination plantation and degraded and ashamed of what is expected of them there. They have therefore joined the rebellion against the IDIL gender hierarchy, agreeing with Martin Luther King that you can't hold folks down in a ditch unless you climb down in there with them. As women and men come to the practical conclusion that only equality of rights, responsibilities and opportunities works, however, they also tend to come to the spiritual conclusion that this is true because the sexes equally approach divinity. This, however, would require deity to be composed of masculinity and femininity in equal measure, which of course directly contradicts the IDIL.

Environmentalism

In the IDIL, the Creator peered a hostile and beautiful world like a reluctant burrito for fallen humanity (meat man) to suffer, endure, dominate, subvert and exploit for his own benefit. This divine because for exploitation without regard to consequences in the name of greed has borne bitter fruit. Because we have not held our common home in reverence, or honored her as sacred to us, we have felt free to pollute, pillage, rape and otherwise profane her. Yet, after fouling our own nest, we seem surprised to find ourselves surrounded by human filth, with the blood of extinguished comrade species oozing out inconsolably from the bleak bare ground. We are coming perilously to the understanding that the earth is our source and foundation and that poisoning and impoverishing her can only hasten our own hollow demise. However, the grasping of the fact that we are only a part of something much older, wiser, grander and more complex than ourselves draws us inexorably to an experience of awe and sublimity in the presence of the sheer majesty of it. We begin to see ourselves as tiny threads, which by some miracle are able to sense the weave of a gigantic dancing tapestry (and the reality is much more wondrous than that). The earth becomes hallowed for us. But this contradicts the IDIL premise that it is transparent. Earth which is holy, not a nature which, compared to the supernatural, must remain substantial.

Forbidden Fruit

Ecological degradation may be divided into natural resource depletion and biosphere pollution but both have overpopulation as a root cause. Overpopulation drives us like lemmings to mow our global lungs for farmland, lumber and cattle pasture, sapping species diversity in the process. It drives us to strip mine our eroding soil to build skyscrapers, cars and soda cans. It drives us to burn our fossil fuels, overheating our atmosphere and depleting our ozone sunscreen for the sake of light, mobility, plastic containers and air-conditioned comfort for a small percentage of our teeming billions. It drives us to turn our overfished oceans into toxic cesspools when our rivers bear our pesticides, factory byproducts and sewage to the seas. Furthermore, the resulting competition for room and resources on a shrinking sphere has led our infant race to nurse the barrel of the nuclear gun.

It is ecologically imperative that we control our rate of reproduction generally, and the fundamental pillar of feminism that women must have the right to control their own reproduction individually. To this dovetailing of the calls of personal freedom and global necessity, the *ILIL* responds with an iron demand frozen for thousands of years in the face of catastrophically changing circumstances: you must be fruitful and multiply.

Ecofeminism

The realization that birth control is both a feminist and an environmental issue is one of many postfeminist matches which ecofeminists have found. They follow the clue given by the phrase *I Mother Nature* to the conclusion that women and the earth have both been victimized by the same attitudes of subjection, rapaciousness, violation, penetration of virgin territory, stripping, despoiling and defilement. They consider this an unfortunate result of the separation of the sexes into godlike, transparent man and earthy, immanent woman into man as mind and woman as body, found in the *ILIL*. This partition for ecofeminists is based on the differing positions of the sexes with regard to childbirth: man observes, woman participates. Women also, like the

earth produce food, and can be planted with seeds when in season;
hence the apparent occurrence of the term *IplowingI* for
intercourse.

Sexist theological Cartesianism however is untenable; the *DLI*'s
gender-based spirit/flesh dichotomy has been an injurious illusion.
Self-aware parts of nature are still woven into the web they
perceive. Mind, whether abstract or concrete, and of either
gender is a bodily based, earthly and evolutionarily emergent
phenomenon.

The main division within neo-rationalism is between *IgenderedI* and
InaturalI neo-rationalists. The *IgenderedI* neo-rationalists believe that
male-female relationships are the source of a domination pattern
that is generalized to apply to culture-nature relationships, and
that if we replace it with an egalitarian sexual partnership pattern,
our environmental abuse will stop. *INaturalI* neo-rationalists believe
just the opposite: that replacing the egocentric, exploitative and
unaring attitudes underlying environmental abuse with valuing,
consequence based stewardship will regain male-female
relationships by osmosis. I think that the domination pattern is
imprinted during child-rearing, and that to end it, we have to
embrace non-rational methods of socializing our young.

The Challenge of Neopaganism

Neopaganism Generally

The Neopagan alternatives to the *DLI* paradigm trace their roots
to prehistoric Eurasian and African tribal and shamanic nature
religions, and count the Thracian and Thracian aboriginal
traditions as siblings. From them, Pagans have taken their
reverence for the earth and their celebration of the more feminine
principles of divinity. They generally create sacred space by
casting a circle (which is the intersection between a sanctified
sphere and the ground), and calling the four directions, which
correspond to the four elements, and to the divisions of a day, a
moon cycle, a year and a lifetime, and much else. Their holy days
fall on the solstices and the equinoxes, on the midpoints between
them (the cross-quarters), and/or on full moons. In addition they
have personal rites of passage, such as birth, a naming of the

child (sometimes called weaving), puberty, marriage (known as handfasting), menopause (wrening) and death. Contemporary neopagan groups include the Fellowship of Isis, the Wiccan Church of Britain (Our Own Paganism), the Church of All Worlds, Asatru and the Church of the Eternal Source.

Wicca Spiritually

All the above is true of Wicca, but when casting their circles most also call the Earth Mother, Sky Father, and Deities, the last representing both the individual selves of the participants and the common center they create by joining together. They also thank and dismiss them when they open their circles upon the conclusion of their ritual workings. Wicca follows a greater-complementary immanent dualism comprised of a God and a Goddess; for Wicca, deity is double and non-transparent. The distinctions between them entail neither mutual hostility nor the subordination of either to the other, but instead require the co-presence in dynamic symmetry of these differing yet complementary principles for circumstances to proceed. The fundamentalist belief in the actual existence of these deities is not a prerequisite for becoming Wiccan. In fact, many, if not most, Wiccans view the Earth Mother and Sky Father as archetypes in the Jungian sense, and as lenses through which to apprehend and grasp in concrete, human-friendly terms, a totality which is too vast and ineffable to be circumscribed by finite minds. Wiccans consider all Goddesses and Gods throughout history as cultural manifestations of these principles, reveal in the diversity of expression that they find, and borrow whatever they find that works for them. In this sense, Wicca does not enslave and use its adherents; rather it is the case that Wicca is made use of by them, as a spiritual tool with which to focus their passions and intentions upon the realizations of their plans and desires. The conceptions and attributes surrounding these deities are not inscribed for all time in any holy text, but are flexible, for Wicca is an evolving, pragmatic religion with little dogmatic baggage.

Wicca's central ritual, the Great Rite, consists of dipping a dagger in a chalice of wine in symbolic intercourse. The Christian Communion in contrast, is symbolic cannibalism. Wicca has one major law, the Law of Three (any action, whether well or ill

intentioned, is returned to its source (threshold) and one
commitment, the Wiccan Rede (If it harms none do what you
will). While these admonishments do emphasize personal
freedom they link it to personal responsibility, and the
consequences of following them are a strict self-discipline since
one is expected to strive not to harm oneself, others, or the
biosphere we share. Their more magical practices include a
Satanic-like invocation of the masculine principle by the priest
and of the feminine principle by the priestess (the Raising Power
of the Sun or Moon) and Raising the Horn of Power. This
practice involves an entering of the group into a shamanic state of
consciousness, usually by means of some combination of dancing,
chanting and drumming, preparatory to attempts at divination or
spellcasting.

The Earth Mother represents the foundation or substrate of
change, the matter underlying form, the being beneath becoming.
She is omnipresent, although aspects of her may undergo periodic
change. She never dies. The feminine principle of divinity
encompasses the cyclical-intuitive, synthesizing, fecund-
formative, nourishing aspect, with its emphasis on the personal
and collective dream worlds, and on relatedness. The Shy Father
represents the changes of form that must occur in the life cycle
and food chain (he withers and returns, and never lingers. He is
the God of the inseparability of hunter and prey, and of the cycle
of vegetation (he is born of the Mother, grows, flowers and dies,
to be reborn of his own seed the following year. The masculine
principle of divinity encompasses the linear-logical, analyzing,
fertilizing aspect, with its emphasis on ego, task and
individuality. A combination of these traits is preferable to either
alone, and all people are considered to have their own particular
ratios of these attribute sets: their own yin-yang or anima-animus
blend.

Modern Wicca publicly began in 1949 when Gerald Gardner
published *High Magic's Aid*, a book of Wiccan ritual disguised
as historical fiction. He then in collaboration with Patricia
Vallentyne published *Witchcraft Today* in 1954 and *The
Meaning of Witchcraft* in 1958. Although other Wiccan forms
exist, Gardnerian Wicca and an offshoot (Alexandrian Wicca,
after its founder Alex Sanders) remain the core Wiccan traditions.

Other important Wiccan theorists include Janet and Stewart
Farman, Starhawk and L. Budapest.

Wiccan Theology and the Foundations of Feminism and Environmentalism

In a religion in which the God and the Goddess are equi-potential
(possess complementary and equal status), gender equality is
mandated rather than forbidden. Freedom of socially and
planetary responsible choice belongs to all. In a religion that
views its adherents to love the earth as a mother, rather than
restraining and coveting her as a rich, comparable, hostile kingdom,
children would be raised from birth to treat her with restraint and
respect, and to pass her on to their children in as pristine a
condition as possible. There is, in fact, a kind of Wiccan Eden
myth: a vision of a prehistoric, peaceful, eco-friendly agrarian
matrarchy which was overwhelmed by males banded for violence,
who banded together to conquer and enslave their former society
and pillage its lands. This Edenic vision is more admired than
believed. Most Wiccans desire a return to this Eden even if
humanity has never in reality been there.

Feminists and environmentalists, particularly ecofeminists and
deep ecologists, share this vision for the future: it is what they
strive for. It is therefore to be expected that many of them would
appropriate a belief system possessing similarities so in harmony
with their hopes, goals, desires and dreams. If the Wiccan Utopia
is theirs also, adoption seems eminently reasonable. In fact, these
movements receive both support and guidance from Wicca, and
give, both in return.

Wicca and Sufism/Wiccan's attitude toward science is one
of interest, interest and positive regard. For Wicca's perspective of
pragmatic, self-conscious evolution and its anti-dogmatic character
resemble scientific ideals. Sufism, for Wicca, is attempting to
reveal the underlying nature of immanent divinity, and as such is
performing a sacred science. In addition, Lovelock's Gaia
hypothesis, that the entire biosphere is an evolving, self-regulating
totality, appears to be to Wiccans the beginning of the
confirmation of their ecological suspicions, and the recent
comparisons of gender brain structure and cognitive style bolster

the validity of their chosen deity attributes. They for the most part accept that humanity creates divinity in its own image and feel flattered that science is indicating that they in particular are doing it rather well.

Pitfalls

Wiccan's deities form a heterosexual couple, and sex with one's significant other is regarded as a sacrament. This has caused gays and lesbians to sometimes feel uneasy with the energy in the circle. For this reason some gay men have formed Faerie circles and some lesbians have embraced Pagan Wicca. Straight women will also meet in full moon circles, on sabbats, and straight men in wild man groups. Although there are some differences, for instance in the deity or deities involved, the terminology, or ritual structure, remains similar throughout. General meetings are held on the sabbats eight times a year, and networking is constant. Wicca and Neopaganism remain far more gay-friendly than IDL.

Although racial diversity endures as an ideal in Wicca, it is sadly lacking in reality. This failure to rainbow the Craft is deeply disturbing to its members. It is almost certain that the reason for the phenomenon of whitebread Wicca is that, for racial minorities, the intensity and immediacy of their oppressed condition drives gender and ecological concerns to the periphery of their awareness. Also, it only stands to reason that they would feel uncomfortable participating in ritual as the token minority, or at best as one of the few. It is very likely that, despite the best intentions of the other participants, such an experience seems to reinforce, rather than relieve, the awkwardness and sense of difference for which racial minorities would seek religious comfort. Wiccans, having experienced discrimination themselves on the religious front, understand these impediments, and continue to remain open and hopeful.

Lastly, the Wiccan division of deity has inadvertently had the corollary of evoking lists of masculine and feminine gender attributes that seem disturbingly similar to those of the IDL, only wrapped in positive-regard packaging. Also, in some cases, the Wiccan backlash against patriarchy has swung the pendulum too far in the opposite direction, subjecting men to the same ridicule

and discrimination that the phallocentrists generously reserved for
women. Weans must be on guard that they do not pigeonhole
individuals into these archetypes and thus descend the slippery
slope into the very bigotry and gender expectations that many
have joined Weans to escape.

Salamantis

Code of Ethics for Teachers of Wicca

A Code of Ethics for Teachers of the Wicca

All initiations, previous experience and group affiliations to be made known to your students.

Before beginning training tell your student you don't know everything about the subject, but are willing to refer them on to another person if you don't have the personal expertise.

Tell your student of your personal beliefs, teaching what you know but also emphasising Paganism is about personal spirituality and that they must find their own truth.

Students should be of legal age (i.e. 18) or have parental permission. This does not exclude passing on basic information of religious beliefs to minors.

All theoretical information should be supported by ritual demonstration.

All lessons must be prepared by reading up on the area to be taught about, decide how you're going to present this information for the easiest understanding of the individual student and make notes to be given to the student.

There is to be a nominal fee for teaching to cover ritual supplies and materials depending on the student. It is at the discretion of the teacher if they choose to loan books or give supplies from their personal collection.

All teachers must continue their own education also. It is impossible to know everything.

Do not proselytise. All students must seek out their teacher.

You do not take on more than 4 students at a time per mentor.

Students can be taught on an individual basis or in a teaching circle.

Students should be told if the training would not lead to initiation.

You respect the confidentiality of your own students first and foremost but also respect the confidentiality of group members, other Pagans and clients for whom you perform the Occult arts.

The only time that confidentiality is broken is if you feel that the person is a danger either to themselves or to others in a physical or mental way.

A teacher must never have a sexual relationship with their student. It destroys the power balance and has led to much dispute in the communities both inside and outside the Pagan paths. If relations occur between the teacher and student, a new teacher must be found for that student.

Teaching is to be given on a mentor basis, the teacher adapting to each student.

A student can be rejected and all psychic links can be broken if they use the magical arts outside the restraints of the magical law of "harm none".

A list of the code of teaching ethics is given to the student to show your position on various issues. This is to be kept and training can be broken by either parties, but a reason should be given out of courtesy.

Note: Many teachers ask the students to draw up a corresponding Students code of ethics to show commitment.

A good teacher:

- Teaches spiritual as well as magical aspects of Paganism
- Encourages healing magic
- Has a well-balanced life. If they can't have a balanced life, they can hardly teach a balanced method of magic.
- Is willing to teach differently for each student.
- Encourages practice as well as theoretical teachings
- Welcomes questions and is willing to admit when they don't know
- Networks with other Pagans and groups, being able to refer you on when they are not proficient in the area of Paganism you are seeking to explore.

AURAS

An aura is the energy field around all each matter that takes space (excluding air itself) whether that is a person, plant, animal, or an object. Each colour represents a different aspect of that matter. Reading auras can be useful in determining whether you should confront a person at a certain time, what you can do to improve your present condition, turn you in to illnesses and conditions around you, and many other benefits. Every time you come into contact with someone, your aura reacts to his or hers. If your aura's frequency is close to theirs, you will feel close to them quickly and drawn to them. If not, you may feel an instant dislike towards them.

Everything has an aura. We have been "trained" not to see them, but with a little practice many people can successfully see and read them. Below I've listed what the different colours of auras mean, but first you should learn how to read them. When you begin you may have a hard time seeing the colours. A lot of times, beginners will see pale colours such as white, yellow, and light blue. As time passes, and with practice, you will see that the colours seem to become brighter to you and easier to read. A little bit of patience can go a long way.

ASTRAL AURA

The astral aura extends about eight to twelve inches from the physical body and appears as brightly coloured rainbow clouds. The astral aura is the bridge between the physical world and the spiritual world.

ETHERIC TEMPLATE AURA

The etheric template aura extends about twelve to twenty-four inches from the physical body and appears as a blue print form. There is an empty groove in the etheric aura into which the etheric aura fits. The etheric template aura holds the etheric aura in place. It is the template for the etheric dimension.

THE CELESTIAL AURA

The celestial aura extends about twenty-four inches from the physical body and appears as a bright shimmering light of pastel colours. This is the level of feelings within the world of our spirit. Here we communicate with all the beings of the spiritual world.

KETHERIC TEMPLATE AURA

The ketheric template aura extends about thirty six to forty eight inches from the physical body and appears as an extremely bright golden light that is rapidly pulsating. This aura takes on the form of a golden egg that surrounds and protects everything within it.

HOW TO SEE THE AURA

Everybody has the ability to see the aura. For beginners a low light is the best way to start.

Turn out the lights and lay on the bed. Leave the window curtains open and let the natural light flow in. As you are lying on the bed hold your hands out at full distance in front of you. Don't stare hard but rather just gaze at your hands. Moving your hands slowly, bring your fingertips together until they are almost touching.

You will notice a cloudy blue haze appear around your fingers. This is the etheric aura.

FEELING THE AURA

Draw a circle on your left hand using your right fingertip. Don't let your finger touch your hand; keep it at a distance of about a half inch. Move slowly. You will feel the power of your aura.

How to Read the Aura

First of all, find a place where you won't be around any harsh light; soft light is best to read auras. You will also need a piece of white paper large enough to place your whole hand on.

Place your hand on the cardboard and relax your eyes. Don't stare at your hand; rather look at the areas around the fingertips and fingers.

After a while, if you are relaxed enough, you will begin to see a soft haze around your hand. If you look at it long enough, you will start to see colours. Beginners can usually make out only one colour, but as you get better you will be able to see more at one time.

Don't be discouraged if you don't see anything the first few times. It takes practice to become good at reading auras, and after a while you will realize that it's not really as hard as you might have first thought.

You may also wish to take nonliving objects, like rocks and such, and try to see their auras as well. This can be very good practice for you.

Colours of Auroras

The following are the more common colours:

Red--The colour of strength, strong passion and will. Dark red may symbolize one who has a quick temper and is nervous or impulsive. All red relates to nervous temperaments.

Orange--Colour of warmth, thoughtfulness, and creativity. The muddier shades may represent pride or vanity, while golden orange denotes self-control. A person with orange in their aura may suffer from kidney ailments.

Yellow--Mental activity, optimism. It can mean new learning opportunities and wisdom. A golden yellow means that the person takes care of him or herself. Ruddy yellow may mean that its owner is shy.

Green--Green is the colour of sympathy and calm. A person who has green in his or her aura may be very good at the healing arts and is very reliable. Dark shades of green can indicate one who is jealous or uncertain.

Blue--The colour of quiet and calm. Any blue in the aura is good to have, but deep blue is the best. One with deep blue in his or her aura shows a person who has found his or her work in life. Many are spiritual minded as well. Blue may sometimes represent a tendency to be moody and depressed.

Indigo and Violet--The colours of one who is seeking something in life. They represent an ability to handle affairs with worldliness and practicality. Dark shades may show that the person has obstacles to overcome and is feeling misunderstood.

Black--The colour of protection. May reflect a person who is hiding something. It may possibly indicate imbalances as well.

Here are some other colours that may be seen within the aura:

Pink--This is the colour of love. It represents compassion and possibly a love of art and beauty. Darker or muddier shades of pink may point to an individual who is immature.

White--Many times this is one of the first colours you will see in an aura. However, when it is a true and strong colour of the aura, it reflects purity and truth.

Brown--This could reflect a person who is very "earthy" and that a person is establishing new roots. However, if it is seen in the chakras, it may mean that a person's energy is in some way being blocked.

Silver Lights or Twinkles--Seeing these in a person's aura may mean that they are pregnant, or have been or may soon be. However, this is not always so. Seeing this may indicate a person who is allowing great creativity in their life.

Black Spots--The presence of black spots in the aura may indicate that it is imbalanced in some areas. This may mean that the person has some negative habits that he or she should work on.

Cleansing

When I cleanse a dwelling place, first I burn a good cleansing incense, like frankincense or sandalwood in the home while I prepare for the rest of the ritual. You should have in addition to the incense, a candle, a bowl of salt water and a bowl of herbs. I particularly like to use rose buds for love, lavender for preservation, rosemary for protection, and any other sweet-smelling ones that appeal to you personally. If you can get them home-grown, so much the better. You should proceed around the house, widdershins (counterclockwise) and cleanse the area with the salt water. Be sure to get each corner, window, door, drain, etc. Simply sprinkle a little salt water on each and ask that any evil or disruptive influences leave the place. When this is finished, proceed around the house deasil (clockwise) sprinkling the blessing herbs and invoke whatever deities or properties you wish on the home, such as peace, prosperity, tranquility, etc. In the past, I have used 3 candles on the central altar. Blue, symbolizing tranquility, green for healing and prosperity, and purple for protection. Others might be pink for love, or brown for health and home. You and anyone who is to share the home with you should share food and drink, and don't forget to leave a little of the food and drink to take outside and return to the Earth that which has been given.

Blessed Be,

A ceremony to recognize completion of the 2nd degree course of study

The Circle is cast as usual. All are properly prepared and purified. High Priestess and High Priest perform the Ceremony in concert. The candidate is brought into the circle by a friend and circled 3 times clockwise, ending north of the altar, facing the Priest, who is standing south of the altar (where else?).

PRIEST:

"This is the time of Full Moon, a time for rekindling of light. The struggle for higher light is: That we may see it, and seeing it, work and live by it. We are about to embark upon a solemn ceremony to rekindle the light of Knowledge, the light of Will, the light of Compassion, the light of Steadfastness; we will combine these lights, and rekindle the light of Dedication in our Sister (Brother) here before us.

_____ here have you been taught the ways of the Wise, that you might count yourself among those who serve the Gods, among the brothers and sisters of the Wicca, those who are called the shapers of the universe."

PRIEST:

"I now direct your attention to the two lights upon our altar, the one representing the Sun, the God, and the High Priest, the other representing the Moon, the Goddess, and the High Priestess. The High Priest and Priestess, presiding over the coven may be thought of as 'One light to rule the day, one light to rule the night'. Since these lights are both beneficent, each having honor in its place, the Craft of the Wise does not set day against night, God against Goddess, Priest against Priestess. In the Craft, we do not define evil as a negative power, rather as the lack of light; where there is the light of Sun or Moon, God or Goddess, there can be no lack of light. Choose one or both; place light within yourself, and nurture it."

"In times past, the Circle of Initiation was called a 'Hermetic Circle', after Hermes, the ancient name for the planet Mercury." In astrology, the house of the Sun is in the zodiacal sign of the lion, which is the fifth house; the house of the Moon is in Cancer, the crab, and is in the fourth house; and the day house of the planet Mercury is in the Gemini, the Twins, and is the third house. These numbers, three, four and five, were sacred to many ancient peoples, as the dimensions of the Pythagorean Triangle, in which the square of five, twenty five, is equal to the sum of the squares of four and three, or sixteen and nine. Knowledge of this triangle was essential to builders; you are also a builder—you are building your character."

PRIESTESS:

"I now direct your attention to the several lights surrounding us, in the East, South, West, and North. Let us now examine these lights, and see what we can discern within them of human character."

"In the building of character, the Eastern light is denoted the Lamp of Beauty, and stands for accomplishments; for learning, skill in art, poetry, in song and instrumental music, in painting and sculpture. It exemplifies the art of making one's self attractive to those about one. It is an old saying that 'Beauty is as Beauty does'. It causes great distress to see these noble graces of character prostituted to ignoble ends.

Remember well the lesson of the Lamp of Beauty and accept the blessing of the East."

Initiate is raised with incense from the incense which has been previously placed in the East.

PRIEST:

"The light in the South is denoted the Lamp of Life, and stands for individuality, and for energy; for firmness, for zeal and vitality. It exemplifies passions, desires and appetites. It means loves and hates, sympathies and abhorrences, and what is more than all the rest of these, it means heart and joy in the work of life.

Remember well the lesson of the Lamp of Life and accept the blessing of the South."

Initiate is circled three times with the brazier, previously placed in the South.

PRIESTESS:

"Look now to the West, and observe the Lamp of Compassion, which stands for 'fellow-feeling'. Every work in life demands a price. Labor, tears, self-denial, self-sacrificing, the very blood of life is sometimes the price of a truly great work. Look to your fellow travellers on the road; note with care what sacrifices they have made in their progress toward the truth; allow them their faults, commiserate with them in their failures and rejoice with them when they succeed. Remember well the lesson of the Lamp of Compassion and accept the blessing of the West."

Initiate is circled three times with water and his/her hands washed in a lavng bowl, previously placed in the West.

PRIEST:

"Look now to the North and observe the lamp of obedience. The laws of the Gods are inevitable, and the more we, as children of the Gods, understand and work in accordance with them, the greater is the sum of our happiness. Obedience in character means order, the subjection to one's principles, the fear to do wrong, and the

desire to learn and do right. Many would rather give charity than do justice. They swell with emotion weep with sentiment, hand with the mob, so long as their own particular little tyranny or injustice is not touched. The Lamp of Obedience exemplifies firm will and determination of character, in spite of difficulties, dangers and losses. So also the Lamp of Obedience stands for self-control, perseverance and patience. In time of peace, prepare for war; when shines the sun expect the cloud; and in darkness wait patiently for the coming light. 'When all the sky is draped in black and beaten by tempestuous gales, and the shuddering ship seems all awreck, calmly trim once more the tattered sail, repair the broken rudder and set again for the old determined course.' Remember well the lesson of the Lamp of Obedience and accept now the blessing of the North."

Initiate's hands are marked with damp earth from a bowl in the North. Initiate is then led back south of the altar.

PRIESTESS:

"Of the character thus illuminated and thus guided by the lights here on the altar, and by the Lamps of Beauty, Life, Compassion and Obedience, it may be said, 'Though the world perish and fall away, he/she remains.'"

Initiate then takes the Oath/Obligation kneeling.

"In the names of Anahmod and Bran Piana and Apolyon; Heartha and Cerrunos; and by the powers of Earth, Air, Fire and Water, I, _____, pledge to love, worship and honor the Goddess in her many aspects; and her Consort, the Horned One, Lord of Death and Ruler of Chaos; to always be true to the Art and its secrets; to never abuse the Art or my own powers; and to keep this pledge always in my heart, in my mind, in my body and in my spirit. This I pledge, by the Circle of Life, by Ceridwen's Sacred Cauldron and by my own hopes of a future life."

Initiate stands. High Priestess places a necklace over Initiate's head.

PRIESTESS:

"The Circle is a place between the worlds and outside time. The Circle is also the Symbol of Life, Death and Rebirth. We wear the necklace as a token of the Sacred Circle and as a sign that we are part of all it symbolizes."

High Priest strikes the bell three times.

PRIEST:

"Hear ye, Lady of Life and Lord of Death! Hear ye, Ancient Guardians of the Powers of Air, Fire, Water and Earth! In this place, by our hands and will, _____, known to us as _____, has been duly pledged and appointed a Priest/ess of the Second Degree!"

Pagan Ritual for Basic Use

A circle should be marked on the floor, surrounding those who will participate in the ceremony. An altar is to be set up at the center of the circle. At the center of the altar shall be placed an image of the Goddess, and an incense burner placed in front of it. Behind the image should be a wand fashioned from a willow branch. Candles should be set upon the altar ... a total of five, since one is to be set at each quarter and one will remain on the altar during the rite.

When all the people are prepared they shall assemble within the circle. The woman acting as priestess shall direct the man who acts as priest to light the candles and incense. She shall then say:

"The presence of the noble Goddess extends everywhere,
Throughout many strange, magical and beautiful worlds
To all places of wilderness, enchantment and freedom."

She then places a candle at the north and pauses to look outwards, saying:

"The Lady is awesome,
The Powers of Death bow before Her."

The person closest to the east takes a candle from the altar and places it at that quarter, saying:

"Our Goddess is a Lady of Joy,
The winds are Her servants."

The person closest to the south takes a candle from the altar and places it at that quarter, saying:

"Our Goddess is a Goddess of Love,
At Her blessings and desire
The sun brings forth life anew."

The person closest to the west takes a candle from the altar and places it at that quarter, saying:

"The seas are the domain of our Serene Lady,
The mysteries of the depths are Her's alone."

The priest then takes the wand and, starting at the north, draws it along the entire circle clockwise back to the north point, saying:

"The circle is sealed, and all herein
Are totally and completely apart
From the outside world,
That we may glorify the Lady whom we adore,
Blessed Be!"

All repeat: "Blessed Be!"

The priest now holds the wand out in salute towards the north for a moment and then hands it to the priestess, who also holds it out in salute. She motions to the group to repeat the following lines after her:

"As above, so below ...
As the universe, so the soul.
As without, so within
Blessed and gracious one,
On this day do we consecrate to you
Our bodies,
Our minds
And our spirits.
Blessed Be!"

Now is the time for discussion and teaching. Wine and light refreshments may be served. When the meeting has ended, all will stand and silently meditate for a moment. The priestess will then take the wand and tap each candle to put it out, starting at the north and going clockwise around the circle, while saying:

"Our rite draws to its end.
O lovely and gracious Goddess,
Be with each of us as we depart.
The circle is broken!"

A Circle for Catharsis

Introduction

One of my near and dear ones spent an hour in a therapist's office kicking an innocent throw pillow around the room and screaming out rage at his abusive father. At the end of the hour, he had a broken foot -- and the first beginnings of a healed mind.

But we have learned that magic works through symbols. Calling an object by your abuser's name and then abusing that object is sympathetic magic used for the purpose of cursing. To throw a curse is to project one's worst feelings out into the world of form, and to invoke upon oneself the inevitable harmful feedback.

It is not our way to blast the crops and sour the milk. Wiccan tradition and plain common sense both tell us to avoid the practice of harmful magic. But, as usual, it's not quite as easy as just saying no.

Rape and child abuse, loved ones killed by muggers or drunk drivers, emotional manipulation and betrayal, economic exploitation and dishonest office politics -- people hurt and victimize other people in many different ways every day. We are not immune.

At some point in our lives, probably every single one of us will feel violated by some other human being. Often our feelings will be based in fact. Whether they are or not, however, we need and deserve a safe way to discharge them.

Symbolic harmful actions are also cathartic actions. They drain and clean our poisonous feelings and allow our own emotional healing to begin. If we deny ourselves this outlet, what happens to the grief and pain and rage?

If projection is bad for us, introjection is even worse. Unreleased bad feelings are a major source of stress.

In a very real sense, stress cripples and kills. Ulcers, strokes, heart attacks and more are all heavily stress-related. A simple refusal to engage in harmful magic could easily amount to punishing a victim by adding serious illness to the original harm.

I am part of the till. "Am it harm none" is about me, too. Release of my feelings is my right.

At first it seems like an insoluble paradox. But the same understanding of magic that forbids projection of our bad feelings can open a safe channel for those feelings. Here's one possible form:

Preparation

1. Understanding

Think about the Alcoholics Anonymous prayer. "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference."

People of any religion can recognize the wisdom in those words. This ritual is intended to ease emotional pressure. I believe that is a step towards granting all three of those things to ourselves.

If your hurt is ongoing, you must take steps to stop it -- leave the abusive relationship, begin searching for a new job, begin organizing politically to stop your oppression. What good this Circle does you will be temporary at best if you are not acting on both the magical and material planes to change the things you can change.

But some of our pain comes from old, old injuries. And some of our feelings are not based on fact at all. The source of those hurts cannot be changed, but the pain can be. This particular working is to release any bad feelings, not to judge them.

Don't worry about justice. You may be mistaken about who has hurt you, but nobody will be hurt by what we do here. All energy will be contained within the Circle. The object of this working is healing, not justice. You deserve this healing simply because you hurt, and even if you are mistaken.

Prevention and healing are human tasks; to do them is to change the things we can change. Justice -- the evening of karmic balances -- is the business of the Gods, and may take place across a span of many lifetimes. Karmic balance is a thing we cannot change.

2. Set Up

You have some decisions to make. The first one is whether you will work alone or ask one or more trusted friends to witness and facilitate your working. Some of us can only let our feelings go in strict privacy. For others, the presence of people who will make sure we don't hurt ourselves or our homes removes a source of inhibition. And sometimes simply being heard is part of the release process.

Next, exactly what kind of symbolic action will release your feelings? Will hitting a throw pillow suffice, or do you need to actually make a poppet? Or just screaming may be enough. If you want to work

with a physical symbol, prepare it in advance, and be sure not to use anything you will want to keep after the rite or even use again.

Figure out whether you can either cast a Circle to include your bathroom, or leave a cast Circle for a period of time. This will depend on your particular training. If possible, have a warm, scented tub waiting for you. If not, a basin of warm, scented water and a washcloth within easy reach just outside of your Circle will suffice. Also, a ritual meal should be prepared and waiting outside of Circle, and this should include something green and growing -- I favor sprouts -- and something sweet.

Procedure:

1. Waxing moon is a good time for this Circle, and the Peak of the Moon is even better. Cast the Circle and invoke the Watchtowers in your usual manner. Call on the Crown, on She who weaves and prunes and disposes of the obstructive and unnecessary.
2. Just inside the Circle, like the membrane in an eggshell, cast a grounding shield. One possible image for this shield would be a black absorbent chain link fence, supported at regular intervals by fence posts that are lightning rods. Whatever happens within this space will be contained and grounded.
3. Make clear to yourself what would you seek to drain. Say it out loud, even if you are alone. Recall what happened to you in detail and let the feelings grow strong.
4. Now, let go of your feelings. Do whatever will help you release what is in you. Beat on a pillow or rip up a doll. Scream till you cry. Don't stop till you are emptied. Then fling the thing you used as a symbol out of your Circle.
5. When you are sure you are all done, all drained, contract the shield into a tight ball in the center of the Circle. As it contracts, it will gather all the negative energy from the Circle. Ground it. Affirm that you are sending this energy to the fire at the heart of the Earth -- to Jamsaxa or to Paha -- to be purified in that blast furnace and wycled to wherever strong energy is needed. Know that what you now let go is gone. Affirm this out loud.
6. Wash or bathe in a ritual manner, feeling the last traces of your bad feelings dissolve away. If others are present, allow them to wash and serve you.

7. Rest a few minutes. Feel the peace of emptiness.
8. Then invoke the Maiden's energy for new beginnings. Have your ritual feast and otherwise indulge your senses. Gentle and joyful music would be effective, and you may want to switch to a sweeter-smelling incense. This is a time to dream dreams and plan plans. You have removed an energy drain from your life, now you will be able to ... ?
9. Thank and dismiss whatever Beings you have called on throughout the whole ritual. Close your Circle as usual. Do not do any other kinds of working or worship within this particular Circle.

Follow Through:

The final part of any effective magical working is "acting in accordance" on the material plane. By doing this, we give the magic a channel through which to manifest. For this working, there are three forms of follow through, and all are important.

1. Remember that painful feelings are partly habitual. Acting in accordance with magic to banish such feelings requires you to stop feeding the habit. Don't talk about the pain with anybody until at least the second full moon after the working. This gives the habit a chance to fade out. As much as you can, eliminate the topic from your internal dialogue as well. When you notice yourself dwelling on the old pain, gently and firmly change the subject.
2. Thinking about action to change your life in the here and now is perfectly OK. The problem is reiteration of old feelings of frustration and helplessness that actually impede change.
3. If the hurtful situation is current and ongoing, continue with any steps you were taking to change the things you can change. In fact, you will probably find you have more energy than you did before to devote to your projects.
4. Be sure to use some of your newly freed emotional energy to reward yourself. Take time for friendships, love, and pleasure. The object of the exercise is to clear space for the enjoyment of life, so start right now.

Opening (ending) the Circle

The High Priestess goes to each of the four directions in turn and draws a Banishing Pentacle, saying:

Guardians of the East (South, West, North),
Powers of the (Fire, Water, Earth), we thank you
For joining in our circle
And we ask for your blessing
As you depart
May there be peace between us
Now and forever. Blessed be.

She raises her athame to the sky and touches it to the earth, then opens her arms and says:

The circle is open but unbroken
May the peace of the Goddess
Go in your hearts.
Merry meet, and merry part.
And merry meet again. Blessed be.

Consecration of Chalice, Athame or Other Tool

Before these assembled spirits I bring (name type of tool) to be dedicated to the service of the Lady and Lord.

(Pass tool three times through smoke of the incense.)

By the power of air, be thou purified. Be thou dedicated to purity of thought and to harmlessness that all intentions for which thou art used may harm none and be for the good of all.

(Pass tool three times through or over the flame of the fire candle.)

By the power of fire, be thou purified. Be thou dedicated to purity of desire and to harmlessness that all goals which thou dost help achieve may harm none and be for the good of all.

(Take a few drops of water and sprinkle or dab on instrument.)

By the power of water, be thou purified. Be thou dedicated to purity of emotion and to harmlessness that all that thou shalt be used in a spirit of harmony, harming none and for the good of all.

(Touch instrument to the stone or salt in north quarter)

By the power of earth, be thou purified. Be thou dedicated to steadfastness and purity of purpose, that my will be achieved without wavering, with harm to none and for the good of all.

(If this is a chalice, present it first to the Lady, then to the Lord, if athame, reverse order. All other instruments use personal preference, but it is courtesy to present them to Her first.)

PRESENTATION FOR CHALICE:

Lady Freya, Keeper of Femininity, bless this chalice. Let it be as Thy cauldron, a vessel of productivity that it may be worthy to dispense Thy bounty. Let it be used in Thy service and in the service of humanity. Let it be so bound that no harm may come of it to any being, but let it rather be an instrument of goodwill and understanding, of loving harmony. To Thy sacred self I dedicate this vessel, (name of vessel), that it and I may long be of service to Thee.

Lord Thor, companion to the Lady, champion of the Gods, bless this chalice and keep watch over it. Guard the works which come forth from it, that they ever be in the service of Thee and Thy Lady, that they be of service to humankind, and that they abide by the laws of harmony. To Thee I vow I shall use it for Thy sacred purposes, and for no other.

So mote it be.

PRESENTATION FOR ATHAME:

Lord Thor, Thunderer & hammer wielder, bless this athame. Let it be as the spring rains which fall upon the Earth to cause Her to bring forth Her bounty.

Let it quicken my hopes and dreams, yet keep them from causing harm. Let it guide them in the harmony of the seasons, bringing forth only good for all. Lord Thor, bless this athame, (name of athame), that it be used even in the worship and honor of the Gods.

Lady Freya, companion to the Thunderer, lover of the Gods, bless this athame that it shall bring forth joy, and shall cause no pain nor disharmony to any. I dedicate this athame (name athame), symbol of the Retriever and Rain Maker, to Thy service. May it ever bring Thee joy and praise.

So mote it be.

Samhain ritual for a small Circle

[Older woman to older man]:

One-eye, Wanderer, God of wisdom,
Hunt-lord, hail, who leads the hosting!
Nine nights hanging, knowledge gaining,
Bloated at crossroads, council hidden.
Now the night, your time, is near us --
Right roads send us on, Runer-winner.

[Older man to older woman]:

Every age your eye has witnessed,
Carulnon-Ketgor, hail wise Cronel
Keds in riddles is your nation --
Wynd-weaving at the World-tree's root.
Eldrest ancient, all-knowing one,
Speak secrets to us, send us vision.

[Younger woman to younger man]:

Lord of Life, hail Land-Master!
God of grain that grows and dies
And rises reborn, full of richness:
Fallow fields shall yet be fertile --
Spring sap runs as stirs your phallus
Bless barren earth, let it bear again!

[Younger man to younger woman]:

Snow-shoes striding, hail swift Huntress!
Wild one, true and willful Goddess
Bow and blade, you bear beside you,
Finding food to fend off hunger ---

Winter will not leave us wanting;
Give good hunting, grant us skill.

WINTERING IN THE NEW YEAR:

Welcome winter, waning season,
Now with night the new year comes;
Hail the horse's head with blessings --
Blessings be on those who bid, here,
And instead on all the world!

SERVING:

Wide are the worldgates,
Sights to be sent us;
Ready for treat-gifts,
We wait for your wisdom.

OFFERING/THANKSGIVING:

Grateful, we give now, gifts of our own
Heart-work and hand-work the hearth shall grate;
Happiness, harmony, health in the new year,
Send to the world and we in it, we wish you.

DISMISSAL/OPENING:

To waiting winds we wish fair travelling;
To sleepless dead sweet rest we send;
Gods and Goddesses, go with praises --

See: the circle is severed thus. [cut with sword at east]

I wrote that ritual for David, myself and two friends who are older than me. It was the first ritual that I wrote, not based on *NROGP* material in any way, but on entirely original structure and material. The horse's skull is a primitive form of the *Mari Lwyd* (Grey Mare/Mary), a Welsh folk traditional hobby horse that goes

from house to house at the calceolan New Year, but she's such a biggame and manabone beast that she was almost certainly a Samlram hettoren. There's interesting material about her in Trefor Owen's "Welsh Folk Customs" (which is probably out of print, but I could provide photocopies for interested parties who provide copying costs...)

NR009D Samhain

TOOLS: Priming Horn

Hammer (Mjollnir)

Sword

Pentacle/Stone

Bowl of Salt

Water

Chosen & Invited

CELEBRANTS:

White Priestess (Shadi)

Gold Priest (Freyr)

Red Priestess (Freyja)

Red Priest (Heimdallr)

Black Priestess (Vala)

Black Priest (Odin)

Procession consisting of Souleas (any small number) and White Mage.

Shadi takes the sword around the circle with these words:

Sharp bright steel the circle scribes:

Caring, clearing world from world.

Freyja banishes the circle with the hammer and these words:

Mankind's friend, by Mjollnir's might

Banish beings that boar us ill!

She stands in the center and to each quarter and above and below she makes the Hammer-Sign saying:

Holy hammer, hallow and hold us.

Vala seals the circle, carrying pentacle and bowl of salt, saying:

Stout stone shield us, shut the circle

Shadi asperses the circle (Vala follows with incense) with these words:

Be all bless'd who bide herein

By stone and sea, by storm and sun

Now Heimdallr takes the sword and calls the quarters as follows:

Wisdom's wain, East wind I call thee!

Thoughts thy flames that thrive in nervous.

Breathe and bless, blow all clean:

Watch and ward, O wind of mind.

Summer's savour, South wind come now!

Bright the blessings you bear with you

Strong of spirit, sun-like fire:

Watch and ward, O wind of soul.

Wild and wet, West wind I summon!

Sea-spray bearing, singing, shouting:

Beats the Earth's blood in thy breast:

Watch and ward, O wind of heart.

White with winter, North wind, wa'head!

Storm's strength bringing, snow-cloaked wind.

From the Frost-realms, fresh and chill.

Watch and ward, O wind of form.

The Priestesses and Priests stand opposite each other, and each one of the pair invokes the other, as follows:

Shadi (to Freyja)

Lord of life, hail Land-master!
God of grain that grows and dies
And rises reborn, full of richness:
Fallow fields shall yet be fertile --
Spring saps mires as stirs your phallus --
Bless barren Earth, let it bear again!

Freyr (to Shadi)

Shoemaker striding, hail swift huntress!
Wild one, fierce and willful Goddess,
Bow and blade you bear beside you,
Finding food to fend off hunger.
Winter will not leave us wanting,
Give good hunting, grant us skill!

Freyja (to Heimdallr)

Standing steadfast, hail far-seer!
Watchful one, on rainbow waiting,
Horn at hand to rouse the heroes,
News you know from Nine Worlds over.
People's parent and our patron
Open our eyes to altered sight.

Heimdallr (to Freyja)

Vain bride, hail vision-giver!
Coyard in cat-fur, cloaked in feathers,
Drumming for the dance of dreams,
You haste to hunt out hidden things.
Scant now the screen that hides sight,
Let us learn the lore of trapper-work.

Vala (to Odin)

One-eyed wanderer, God of wisdom,
Hunt-lore, hail, who leads the hosting!
Nine nights hanging, knowledge gaining,
Blocked at crossroads, council hidden
Now the night, your time is near us ---
Right roads send us on rune-written.

Odin (to Vala)

Every age your eye has witnessed,
Cauldron-keeper, hail, wise woman!
Rude in middle is your nation ---
Wind-weaving at the World-tree's root.
Eldst Ancient, all-knowing one,
Speak secrets to us, send us hearing.

Odin reminds everyone what the festival is about, as follows:

Odin:

So comes the Souls'-day, summon for feasting
Ancestors, ancestors, honoured and blessed;
Let in beloved ones, lend them your bodies ---
Whom do you hallow? Hail them by name!

Allow a few minutes for everybody to name the ancestor they want to welcome. Then Vala gives this admonition:

Vala:

As ancient Elders you learn from and honour,
Let not the living ones moulden alone.

New Year is their knowledge nearer than spirits'.
Seen without ceremony, simply for asking.

Both:

Grandmothers, Grandfathers, great be their blessings
Past ones and present we dance them all power!

All the Celebrants but Heimdall form a circle facing outward; Heimdall goes to the West, and all say:

Wide are the Worldgates; now the nights wander.
Welcome within are the dead who were ours;
Rest from riding here, reveal and feast here;
Come in, old kinsfolk, herepens of wisdom!

Heimdall cuts the Soulers' Procession into the Circle on "Come in", and moves to stand with the other Celebrants while the Soulers dance slowly around singing:

Welcome Winter, waning season
Now with night the New Year comes;
All who honour elder kinsfolk
Purge the dead to earthly drums.
Souls respected safeguard living
House well hold, and hallow hearth;
Blessings be on those who bid here,
And invited on all the Earth!

The Celebrants begin also to circle, dancing in character, starting waltzsteps then spiralling in and out to end deasil, as in the meeting dance, while the Soulers encourage the outer circle to dance also. The intent should be for luck in the new year, and better connection with our Ancestors (as well as better treatment of our Elders!). "We Are The Old People" and "Blood Of The Ancestors" are appropriate and may be sung in polyphony...

As the providers of food, Freyr and Skadi bring forward the feast. Some food should be laid out for the ancestors, and people should be encouraged to let the ancestors use their senses for a while to enjoy the food

with them. The Soultens in particular should receive Soul Cakes. A strong magical gesture would be for people to bring forward canned and other non-perishable food (which can be later given to a food bank or similar organization).

Freyja speaks as follows:

Cakes to us carry, corn from the storehouse;
Wine dainties winter, warm with caught ripeness;
Milk made to cheeses, meat dried and salted;
Last of the land's fruits are the long sterya.

Shadi speaks as follows:

Good nuts and game-food are hunters' quarry;
Sleeping Earth's secrets yield to the searcher
True buried treasure: onions, potatoes
Forest shall feed us while the fields rest.

Both say (if there is to be food donation):

All who have ought to offer, now bring it;
Wights, bear ye witness now with the givers.
Feeding our fellows, let us be fed so,
Soups for the spirit or sups for the flesh.

If there is to be scrying and divination, it should be done now in a quiet space marked off as separate from the feasting-place. Freyja and Heimdallr lead the scrying and Vala and Odinn lead rune-work, with the following optional speeches:

Heimdallr:

Let the lots tumble, loosing their teaming;
Word-wood and wit-stones, won through ordeal.
Come up and cast them, while word is clearest
Answers may answer aught the year holds.

Freyja:

Wide are the Worldgates, windows are open;
Sights may be seen now, else times but scarcely.
Crystal and carlaron capture the vision;
Mystery's meaning speaks to the mindful.

Note: it is entirely appropriate for partying to go on inside the sacred circle (people can get up and move around), so that the Dead have the opportunity to enjoy their day before we bid them farewell; the circle should be cast large, with this in mind. The only constraint is to open in sufficient time to clean up the hall before the mental time runs out. The circle is opened as follows:

Hraimdalhr:

To watching winds, we wish fair wandering;
Fan us sweet fragrances; Hail, farewell!

All:

To strengthless souls, we wish sweet resting;
Friends will keep faith; farewell now!
Gods and Goddesses, go with praises!
Finished our festival; Hail, farewell!

Celebrants ground with this formula:

As from the Earth our energy comes,
Into the Earth the excess flows;
Earth and all empowered alike
Be it so!

Shadi:

See: the circle is severed thus (she cuts)
Merry meet, Merry part, Merry meet again!

The Origins of Halloween

In recent years, there have been a number of pamphlets and books put out by various Christian organizations dealing with the origins of modern-day Halloween customs.

Being a Wiccan myself, and a student of the ancient Celts from whom we get this holiday, I have found these pamphlets woefully inaccurate and poorly researched. A typical example of this information is contained in the following quote from the pamphlet entitled "What's Wrong with Halloween?" by Russell K. Tardo. "The Druids believed that on October 31st, the last day of the year by the ancient Celtic calendar, the lord of death gathered together the souls of the dead who had been made to enter bodies of animals, and decided what forms they should take the following year. Cats were held sacred because it was believed that they were once human beings ... We see that this holiday has its origin basis and root in the occultic Druid celebration of the dead. Only they called it 'Samhain', who was the Lord of the Dead (a big demon)!" When these books and pamphlets cite sources at all, they usually list the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Encyclopedia Americana*, and the *World Book Encyclopedia*. The *Britannica* and the *Americana* make no mention of cats, but do indeed list Samhain as the Lord of Death, contrary to Celtic scholars, and list no references. The *World Book* mentions the cats and calls Samhain the Lord of Death, and lists as its sources several children's books (hardly what one could consider scholarly texts, and, of course, themselves citing no references).

In an effort to correct some of this erroneous information, I have researched the religious life of the ancient Celtic peoples and the survivals of that religious life in modern times. Listed below are some of the most commonly asked questions concerning the origins and customs of Halloween. Following the questions is a lengthy bibliography where the curious reader can go to learn more about this holiday than space in this small pamphlet permits.

1. Where does Halloween come from?

Our modern celebration of Halloween is a descendent of the ancient Celtic festival called "Samhain".

The word is pronounced "sow-in", with "sow" rhyming with "cow".

2. What does "Samhain" mean?

The "Irish-English Dictionary" published by the Irish Texts Society defines the word as follows: "Samhain, All Hallowtide, the feast of the dead in Pagan and Christian times, signalling the close of harvest and the initiation of the winter season lasting till May, during which troops were quartered. Fairies were imagined as particularly active at this season. From it, the half-year is reckoned. Also called Feile Mionnime (Snow Goddess)."² The "Scottish Gaelic Dictionary" defines it as "Hallowtide. The Feast of All Souls. Sam + Fuin = end of summer."³ Contrary to the information published by many organizations, there is no archaeological or literary evidence to indicate that Samhain was a deity. Eliade's "Encyclopedia of Religion" states as follows: "The Eve and day of Samhain were characterized as a time when the barriers between the human and supernatural worlds were broken... Not a festival honoring any particular Celtic deity, Samhain acknowledged the entire spectrum of nonhuman forces that roamed the earth during that period."⁴ The Celtic Gods of the dead were Eizym and Nudd for the British and Arawn for the Welsh. The Irish did not have a "Lord of Death" as such.

2. Why was the end of summer of significance to the Celts?

The Celts were a pastoral people as opposed to an agricultural people. The end of summer was significant to them because it meant the time of year when the structure of their lives changed radically. The cattle were brought down from the summer pastures in the hills and the people were gathered into the houses for the long winter nights of story-telling and handicrafts.

3. What does it have to do with a festival of the dead?

The Celts believed that when people died, they went to a land of eternal youth and happiness called *Tin na nOg*. They did not have the concept of Heaven and Hell that the Christian Church later brought into the land. The dead were sometimes believed to be dwelling with the Fairy Folk, who lived in the numerous mounds, or *sídhe*, (pronounced "shee" or "sh-three") that dotted the Irish and Scottish countryside. Samhain was the new year to the Celts. In the Celtic belief system, turning points such as the time between one day and the next, the meeting of sea and shore on the turning of one year into the next, were seen as magical times. The turning of the year was the most potent of these times. This was the time when the "veil between the worlds" was at its thinnest and the living could communicate with their beloved dead in *Tin na nOg*.

5. What about the aspects of "evil" that we associate with the night today?

The Celts did not have demons and devils in their belief system. The fairies, however, were often considered hostile and dangerous to humans because they were seen as being resentful of man taking over their land. On this night, they would sometimes trick humans into becoming lost in the fairy mounds where they would be trapped forever. After the coming of the Christians to the Celtic lands, certain of the folk saw the fairies as those angels who had sided neither with God or with Lucifer in their dispute and thus were condemned to walk the Earth until Judgment Day.⁵ In addition to the fairies, many humans were abroad on this night causing mischief. Since this night belonged neither to one year or the other, Celtic folk believed that chaos reigned and the people would engage in "horseplay and practical jokes".⁶ This also served as a final outlet for high spirits before the gloom of winter set in.

6. What about "trick or treat"?

During the course of these hijinks, many of the people would imitate the fairies and go from house to house, begging for treats. Failure to supply the treats would usually result in practical jokes being visited on the owner of the house. Since the fairies were abroad on this night, an offering of food or milk was frequently left for them on the steps of the house so the homeowner could gain the blessing of the "good folk" for the coming year. Many of the households would also leave out a "dumb supper" for the spirits of the departed.⁷ The folks who were abroad in the night imitating the fairies would sometimes carry turnips carved to represent faces. This is the origin of our modern Jack-o-lantern.

7. Was there any special significance of cats to the Celts?

According to Katherine Briggs in "Nine Lives: Cats in Folklore", the Celts associated cats with theailleach Bheann, or Blue Hag of Winter. "She was a nature goddess, who herded the deer as her cattle. The touch of her staff drove the leaves off the trees and brought snow and harsh weather."⁸ P. H. Ross addresses the use of divine animals in her book "Pagan Celtic Britain" and has this to say about cats: "Cats do not play a large role in Celtic mythology ... the evidence for the cat as an important cult animal in Celtic mythology is slight".⁹ She cites as supporting evidence the lack of archaeological artifacts and literary references in surviving works of mythology.

8. Was this also a religious festival?

Yes. Celtic religion was very closely tied to the Earth. The great legends are concerned with momentous happenings which took place around the time of Samhain. Many of the great battles and legends of kings and heroes written on this night. Many of the legends concern the promotion of fertility of the Earth and the insurance of the continuance of the lives of the people through the dark winter season.

9. How was the religious festival observed?

Unfortunately, we know very little about that. W.G. Wood-Martin in his book "Traces of the Elden Faiths of Ireland", states: "There is comparatively little trace of the religion of the Druids now discoverable, save in the folklore of the peasantry and the references relative to it that occur in ancient and authentic Irish manuscripts are, as far as present appearances go, meager and insufficient to support anything like a sound theory or full development of the ancient religion."¹⁰ The Druids were the priests of the Celtic peoples. They passed on their teachings by oral tradition instead of committing them to writing, so when they perished, most of their religious teachings were lost. We do know that this festival was characterized as one of the four great "Fire Festivals" of the Celts. Legends tell us that on this night all the hearth fires in Ireland were extinguished and then re-lit from the central fire of the Druids at Tlachtga, 12 miles from the royal hill of Tara. This fire was kindled from "need fire" which had been generated by the friction of rubbing two sticks together, as opposed to more conventional methods (such as the flint-and-steel method) common in those days." The extinguishing of the fires symbolized the "dark half" of the year, and the re-kindling from the Druidic fires was symbolic of the returning life hoped for and brought about through the ministrations of the priesthood.

10. What about sacrifices?

Animals were certainly killed at this time of year. This was the time to "cull" from the herds those animals which were not desired for breeding purposes for the next year. Most certainly, some of these would have been done in a ritual manner for the use of the priesthood.

11. Were humans sacrificed?

Scholars are sharply divided on this account, with about half believing that it took place and half doubting its veracity. Caeser and Tacitus certainly tell tales of the human sacrifices of the Celts.

but Nora Chadwick points out in her book "The Celts" that "it is not without interest that the Romans themselves had abolished human sacrifice not long before Caesar's time, and references to the practice among various barbarian peoples have certain overtones of self-righteousness. There is little direct archaeological evidence relevant to Celtic sacrifice."¹² Indeed, there is little reference to this practice in Celtic literature. The only surviving story echoes the tale of the Minotaur in Greek legend: the Fomorians, a race of evil giants said to inhabit portions of Ireland before the coming of the Tuatha Dé Danann (or "people of the Goddess Danu"), demanded the sacrifice of 2/3 of the corn, milk and first-born children of the Fir Bolg, or human inhabitants of Ireland. The Tuatha Dé Danann ended this practice in the second battle of Moytura, which incidentally, took place on Samhain. It should be noted, however, that this story appears in only one (relatively modern) manuscript from Irish literature, and that manuscript, the "Pinnaculus", is known to be a collection of fables. According to P.W. Joyce in Vol. 2 of his "Social History of Ancient Ireland", "Scattered everywhere through our ancient literature, both secular and ecclesiastical, we find abundant descriptions and details of the rites and superstitions of the pagan Irish; and in no place -- with this single exception -- do we find a word or hint pointing to human sacrifice to pagan gods or idols."¹³

12. What other practices were associated with this season?

Folk tradition tells us of many divination practices associated with Samhain. Among the most common were divinations dealing with marriage, weather and the coming fortunes for the year. These were performed via such methods as ducking for apples and apple peeling. Ducking for apples was a marriage divination. The first person to bite an apple would be the first to marry in the coming year. Apple peeling was a divination to see how long your life would be. The longer the unbroken apple peel, the longer your life was destined to be.¹⁴ In Scotland, people would place stones in the ashes of the hearth before retiring for the night. Anyone whose stone had been disturbed during the night was said to be destined to die during the coming year.

13. How did these ancient Celtic practices come to America?

When the potato crop in Ireland failed, many of the Irish people, modern descendants of the Celts, emigrated to America bringing with them their folk practices which were remnants of the Celtic festival observances.

14. We in America view this as a harvest festival. Did the Celts also view it as such?

Yes. The Celts had 3 harvests. Aug 1, on Lammias, was the first harvest, when the first fruits were offered to the Gods in thanks. The Fall Equinox was the true harvest. This was when the bulk of the crops would be brought in. Samhain was the final harvest of the year. Anything left on the vines or in the fields after this date was considered blasted by the fairies ("puika") and unfit for human consumption.

15. Does anyone today celebrate Samhain as a religious observance?

Yes. Many followers of various pagan religions, such as Paganism and Wicca, observe this day as a religious festival. They view it as a memorial day for their dead friends and family, much as the mainstream US does the national Memorial Day holiday in May. It is still a night to practice various forms of divination concerning future events. It is also considered a time to wrap up old projects, take stock of one's life and initiate new projects for the coming year. As the winter season is approaching, it is a good time to do studying on research projects, and also a good time to begin handwork such as sewing, leatherworking, woodworking etc., for Yule gifts later in the year. And while "satanists" are using this holiday as their own, this is certainly not the only example of a holiday (or even religious symbols) being "borrowed" from an older religion by a newer one.

16. Does this involve human or animal sacrifice?

Absolutely NOT! Hollywood to the contrary, blood sacrifice is not practiced by modern followers of Wicca or Paganism. There may be some people who think they are practicing Wicca by performing blood sacrifice but this is not condoned by reputable practitioners of today's neo-Pagan religions.

Firestan Beltaine

Note: there is NO meeting dance before the ritual because the spiral dance occurs inside it.

CELEBRANTS:

BARD	PRIESTESS	GODDESS
FIREMAKER	PRIEST	GOD

BARD: (harp accompaniment)

This is the air of people; these are the creatures:

Fan-flying Goose; fan-screwing Hawk;

Owl who knows; Raven who talks;

Crow who dances; Thrush who sings;

Quail the humble; Wren the king;

Lark who reveals; Loon who weeps;

Jay who scatters; Buzzard weeps.

This is the air I conjure, and this is the birth of the world.

This is the fire of people; these are the creatures:

Prairie who hoards; Kinn who gives;

Angel heals; Chimera weaves;

Coal the slow; lightning the quick;

Salamander, power's witch;

Soul who praises; Gynphon sooms;

Phoenix dies and is reborn.

This is the fire I conjure, and this is the birth of the world.

This is the sea of people; these are the creatures:

Whale who chants; Polkinn who speaks;

Clam content; Salmon who seeks;

Pike who rages; Shark who mourns;

Walrus steadies; Lamp transforms;

Seal who gathers; Crab the loam;

Often wave-borne; Eel in stone;

This is the sea I conjure, and this is the birth of the world.

This is the earth, oh people; these are the creatures:

Peregrin who worries; Boon who schemes;

Cat who conjures; Sheep who dreams;

Hare the playful; Brock the stern;

Mouse who teaches; Horse who learns;

Wolf who wanders; Bear who stays;

Stag who guards; Puma who preys.

This is the earth I conjure, and this is the birth of the world.

Now is the darkness. Now is the pain. Now is the fear.

Now is the danger. Now is the hate. Now are the tears.

Call on our mother! She is the one! Hers is the way!

She will bring comfort. She will bring life. She will bring day.

PRIEST:

Earth Mother. Birth Mother. Birch Mother.

Sea Mother. Stone Mother. Star Mother!

Queen of night and death and birth.

Womb of deep and fertile earth.

Panna of heaven's silver wheel.

Lady of the greening field.

Keeper of the apple grove.

Mistress of the arts of love.

Shine out in the treasonous dark --

Teach us how to strike the spark.

People, we can feel Her near!

She is coming! She is here!

GODDESS: (emerging from hiding -- should be in green with amber & copper)

Now the veils of worlds are thin
To move out you must move in
Let the Balafires now be made,
Mine the spark within them laid.
This My gift: that people meet
In peace and plenty made complete.
This I give: the Sacred Way,
The strength, the soul, the sight, the say.
Move beyond the fiery screen
Between the seen and the unseen
Shed your anger and your fear,
Live anew in a new year!

FIREMAKER: (at each tree name, holds up twig, then binds all together into a torch)

The Nine I sing, the Nine blessed trees
Which were empowered of old:
Oak, thou arm'd's door, open the way for us.
Alder, thou knowledge-giver, break our circle of blindness.
Ash, thou world-supporter, drive away ill powers.
Birch, thou tree-mother, help in our healing.
Hawthorn, thou branch of May, give us light and hope.
Willow, thou soul-leader, grant us safe passage.
Holly, thou forest king, be our safe refuge.
Hazel, thou wise-one's branch, give us true vision.
Alder, thou river's love, let us flow outward.

In peace let us flow outward; in power let us flow outward; in beauty let us flow outward.

(The Goddess lights the torch, the Firemaker lights the two fires, which have been saturated with some flammable material, i.e. charcoal starter. White Sage and Cedar chips may be thrown thereon.)

FIRE-PASSING CHANT: (drum)

Dark to light, night to day,
Through the times lies the way;
Old to new, death to birth,
Between the worlds to our rebirth.

PRIESTESS: (once all have passed between the times)

Sky's Father, Wise Father, Wine Father,
Sun Father, Say Father, Song Father!
Lord of forest, field and beast,
Lord of harvest, hunt and feast,
King of heaven's golden time,
Parent of the soul's desire,
Master of the drum and flute,
Keeper of the vineyard's fruit,
Shine on us and warm our souls --
Teach us how to make us whole!
People, we can feel Him near!
He is coming! He is here!

GOP: (emerging from hiding, dressed in green with leaves & horns)

Let the light of living blaze!
Purge within the spiral maze;
Cry of pipe and thrum of drum;
Out you go and in you come!
Mine the living pole of May --
Outside, loving starts today!
This My gift: that lovers join
Touching at the lip and loam
This I give: the Joyous Purge,
Music, song, the vine, the altar!

Now do leap and anger cease:
Purge the healing and release!

[A fairly simple triple spiral should be traced on the ground in lime or flour, to give the people guidelines for dancing. The dance should go on until satiation or until the circle forms again: there is no one human focal point -- the intent should be for peace, understanding, tolerance, etc.]

SPIRAL-DANCING CHANT: (drum)

Joy, health and peace be in the world
That spins into the May-o.
For summer is a-comin' in
And winter's gone away-o.

BLESSING THE FOOD:

God: Mirta is the ripening sun
Goddess: Mirta is the nurturing soil.
God: Mirta is the fruit of the vine.
Goddess: Mirta is the creator of life.
Both: We are the blessing of wine! And the wine blesses us.

God: Mirta is the planted seed.
Goddess: Mirta is the fertile earth.
God: Mirta is the mower's blade.
Goddess: Mirta is the oven of making.
Both: We are the blessing of bread! And the bread blesses us.

Feasting, dancing, singing, partying etc. Some kind of grounding afterwards.

An Eclectic Circle Ceremony

Preliminaries

WATER:

Blessings upon thee, O creature of water, I cast out from thee all impurities and unhappiness of the spirits of phantasm, confusion or any other influence not for the thee will of all.

SALT:

Blessings be upon this creature of salt, let all malignity and hindrance be cast forth therefrom, and let all good enter therein. Wherefore I bless thee and invoke thee, that thou mayest aid me.

MIXING:

I take this salt of the Earth

Blessed with the will of Fire;

I take this water of spirit,

Exorcised with mind of merit,

I mix them with words of power,

Dedicating to every Town.

By the power of Moon and Sun

By the power of Spirit, Earth and Sea,

God and Goddess are part of One,

As I Will, so mote it be!

Casting of the Circle

I conjure thee, O circle of power,

As thou encircle every Town,

That thou best a place of Truth, Joy and Love,

Emulating Flight of Eagle, Hawk and Dove.

Mighty Treas of the Lady and Lord,
Rampart of thought, action and word.
To work in Peace, Powerful and Free,
Who walk between two worlds converge here;
A boundary to Protect, Concentrate and Contain,
That Power raised here be not in vain.

Wherefore do I bless thee and consecrate thee, in the names of Demmus and Anadia.

Sealing of the Circle

(Seal with water/salt mixture)

With potion of earth and water, I seal the sacred circle,
Linking air and time!

With potion of earth and air, I seal the sacred circle,
Linking time with water!

With potion of earth and time, I seal the sacred circle,
Linking water with the Earth!

As the four directions are brought to merge,
Let influence of the mighty ones converge!

(Seal with Brezen)

With Intense and aim of Mind,
East to South, I do Bind!

With Intense and aim of Mind,
South to West, I do Bind!

With Intense and aim of Mind,
West to North, I do Bind!

With Intense and aim of Mind,
North to East Completion Find!

(Seal with Circle)

With the Fire of emotion and will
East to South, our dedication fulfill!

With the Fire of veneration and Will,
South to West, our allegiance fulfill!

With the Fire of Devotion and Will,
West to North, our consecration fulfill!

With the Fire of Commitment and will,
From North to East, this inscription fulfill!

Within the circle till wills be free,
The circle is sealed, So Note it Be!

Setting the Watchtowers

Ye Lords of the Eastern Tower,

Army Lords of Spirit,

Let your influence of Power,

Tie our minds with merit!

I do summon, stir and call you up to witness these rites and to guard the circle,

Ye Lords of Southern Power

Fiermy Lords of Will,

I pray do grace your Tower,

Your Powers to fulfill!

I do summon, stir and call you up to witness these rites and to guard the circle,

Ye Lords of the Watahtomans of the West.

Watery Lords of Death and Initiation:

I do summon stin and call you up to witness these rites and to guard the Circle.

Ye Northern Lords of the Earth.

Though we be yet but Mortals:

Bless our work with worth.

Boreas, guardian of Northern portals.

I do summon stin and call you up to witness these rites and to guard the Circle.

Goddess and God, I would know.

'Tis 'tis above, so 'tis below

Blessings on this work, please bestow!

This be my will, true and true.

I do so will, so mote it be.

Invocation of the Elements

Air, Fire, Water, Earth.

Elements of astral birth.

I call you now, attend to me!

In the Circle, rightily cast.

Safe from curse or blast.

I call you now, attend to me!

From cave and desert, sea and hill.

By wand, blade and pentacle.

I call you now, attend to me!

This is my will, so mote it be!

A Mabon rite outline

General Mabon info to start with, set the mood &...

What is Mabon?

Mabon, sometimes known as the Harvest/Thanksgiving ritual of the Autumn Equinox, is one of the Spokes of the Wheel of the Year. In the many Earth or Pagan Religions, a special kinship with the passing of the seasons is felt... This is usually due to the history of said traditions, most of which stem from agrarian cultures where the seasons marked the way of life. From planting to reaping to winter to summer... the seasons were of great importance to our ancestors, for their very existence depended upon good harvests, mild winters, enough rainfall, and the like.

So... having shown the importance of the seasons, we shall turn to Mabon itself. Autumn... harvest time... the reaping of what was sown and cared thru during the year. A time of thankfulness and rejoicing. So, of course, someone at some point in time must have said... "Now that the work is over... LETS PARTY!!!!"

This is the essence of Mabon. Rejoicing in a bountiful harvest, thanking the Gods for being so kind during the year and, hopefully, helping in winning over the Gods' favor for the coming year.

About the Mabon rite itself:

Now, this will be a very Discordian ritual in that each participant will be (more or less) writing his/her own part. This outline is provided to sorta nudge (nudge, wink, wink, say no more, sin, say no more!) people into making their individual pieces able to fit into the whole thing... [I feel like the Green Ball outta "Heavy Metal", the movie, something which ties things together].

Back to the rite itself.

Basically, 6 personages will be represented: Callers or Watchers of the East, South, West and North, High Priest (HP) and High Priestess (HPS).

Of course, since this is a generic rite, the terms "Lord" and "Lady" will be used when referring to the Male and Female aspects of divinity/godhood/whatever... individuals may use which ever names they wish, for a Rose, by any other name, would still smell as sweet.

Outline:

- A. Invocation... once everybody has arrived, a Circle shall be cast, more or less, and the 4 Watchtowers/Corners each get to do their thing invoking that which that direction symbolizes to come and attend the festivities. After which, either the HPS, HP or both would consecrate the circle... in our case... the circle will be around each person at their 'quarters'... with a sense of being connected to each other via the others' 'quarters'. So... what we'll do is... after the circle is cast, and the four Corners have done their things, then the HP will call upon the Lord to attend, and the HPS shall call upon the Lady. (or, if we want to be different, we can have the HP call the Lady, and the HPS call the Lord... it's not as traditional, but I know of some Ladies who are more likely to pay attention to a young, handsome HP than any HPS, if you get my meaning [wink]).
- B. Once invoked... it's time for the thanksgiving part... we all got things we're thankful for... now's the chance.
- C. After the thanks are over, a customary requesting of blessing for the coming year is asked.
- D. That done with, it's time to dismiss the summoned ones... first, around the circle... each corner doing it's thing... the dismissal consists of a Hail to the being summoned, a flattery (as I call it), and then a structured dismissal (eg. "Hail of the East... blah, blah, blah... Go if thou must, but stay if thou wilt"). The HP and HPS dismiss the Lord and Lady last with similar words.
- E. PARTY TIME!!!! Get out the Beer, munchies, what have you... celebrate... you've earned it.

A MIDSUMMER CELEBRATION

Emydion

In addition to the four great festivals of the Pagan Celtic year, there are four lesser holidays as well: The two solstices and the two equinoxes. In folklore, these are referred to as the four 'quarter-days' of the year and modern Witches call them the four 'Lesser Sabbats' or the four 'Low Holidays'. The Summer Solstice is one of them.

Technically, a solstice is an astronomical point and, due to the precession to the equinox, the date may vary by a few days depending on the year. The summer solstice occurs when the sun reaches the Tropic of Cancer and we then experience the longest day and the shortest night of the year. Astrologers know this as the date on which the sun enters the sign of Cancer.

However, since most European peasants were not accomplished at reading an ephemeris or did not live close enough to Salisbury Plain to trot over to Stonehenge and sight down its main avenue, they celebrated the event on a fixed calendar date, June 24th. The slight forward displacement of the traditional date is the result of multitudinous calendrical changes down through the ages. It is analogous to the winter solstice celebration which is astronomically on or about December 21st, but is celebrated on the traditional date of December 25th, Yule, later adopted by the Christians.

Again it must be remembered that the Celts reckoned their days from sundown to sundown, so the June 24th festivities actually begin on the previous sundown (our June 23rd). This was Shakespeare's *Midsommer Night's Eve*, which brings up another point: our modern calendars are quite misguided in suggesting that 'summer begins' on the solstice. According to the old folk calendar, summer **BEGIN'S** on May Day and ends on Lammas (August 1st), with the summer solstice midway between the two, marking **MID**-summer. This makes more logical sense than suggesting that summer begins on the day when the sun's power begins to wane and the days grow shorter.

Although our Pagan ancestors probably preferred June 24th (and indeed most European folk festivals today use this date), the sensibility of modern Witches seems to prefer the actual solstice point, beginning the celebration at sunset. Again, it gives modern Pagans a range of dates to choose from, hopefully with a weekend embedded in it.

As the Pagan mid-winter celebration of Yule was adopted by Christians as Christmas (December 25th), so too the Pagan mid-summer celebration was adopted by them as the feast of John the Baptist (June 24th). Occurring 180 degrees apart on the wheel of the year, the mid-winter celebration commemorates the birth of Jesus, while the mid-summer celebration commemorates the birth of John the prophet who was born six months before Jesus in order to announce his arrival.

This last tidbit is extremely conspicuous, in that John is the ONLY saint in the entire Catholic hagiography whose feast day is a commemoration of his birth, rather than his death. A generation ago, Catholic nuns were fond of explaining that a saint is commemorated on the anniversary of his or her death because it was really a 'birth into the Kingdom of Heaven'. But John the Baptist, the sole exception, is emphatically commemorated on the anniversary of his birth into THIS world. Although this makes no sense viewed from a Christian perspective, it makes perfect poetic sense from the viewpoint of Pagan symbolism.

In most Pagan cultures, the sun god is seen as split between two rival personalities: the god of light and his twin, his 'wound', his 'other self', the god of darkness. They are Gwynn and the Green Knight, Gwyn and Gwythyr, Lleu and Gworyn, Lugh and Balor, Balan and Balin, the Holly King and the Oak King, etc. Often they are depicted as fighting seasonal battles for the favor of their goddess/lover, such as Cerridwen or Blodeuwedd, who represents Nature.

The god of light is always born at the winter solstice, and his strength waxes with the lengthening days until the moment of his greatest power, the summer solstice, the longest day. And, like a look in a mirror, his 'shadow self', the lord of darkness, is born at the summer solstice, and his strength waxes with the lengthening nights until the moment of his greatest power, the winter solstice, the longest night.

Indirect evidence supporting this mirror-birth pattern is strongest in the Christianized form of the Pagan myth. Many writers, from Robert Graves to Stewart Farrar, have repeatedly pointed out that Jesus was identified with the Holly King, while John the Baptist was the Oak King. That is why, of all the trees that are in the wood, the Holly tree bears the crown. If the birth of Jesus, the 'light of the world', is celebrated at mid-winter, Christian folk tradition insists that John the Oak King was born (rather than died) at mid-summer.

It is at this point that I must diverge from the opinion of Robert Graves and other writers who have followed him. Graves believes that at midsummer, the Sun King is slain by his rival, the God of Darkness; just as the God of Darkness is, in turn, slain by the God of Light at midwinter. And yet, in Christian folk tradition

(derived from the older Pagan strain), it is births, not deaths, that are associated with the solstices. For the feast of John the Baptist, this is all the more conspicuous, as it breaks the rules regarding all other saints.

So if births are associated with the solstices, when do the symbolic deaths occur? When does Gwynny slay Lleu and when does Lleu in turn slay Gwynny? When does darkness conquer light or light conquer darkness? Obviously (to me, at least), it must be at the two equinoxes. At the autumnal equinox, the hours of light in the day are eclipsed by the hours of darkness. At the vernal equinox, the process is reversed. Also, the autumnal equinox, called 'Harvest Home', is already associated with sacrifice, principally that of the spirit of grain or vegetation. In this case, the god of light would be identical.

In Welsh mythology in particular, there is a startling vindication of the seasonal placement of the sun god's death, the significance of which occurred to me in a recent dream, and which I haven't seen elsewhere. Lleu is the Welsh god of light, and his name means 'lion'. (The lion is often the symbol of a sun god.) He is betrayed by his virgin wife, Blodeuwedd, into standing with one foot on the rim of a cauldron and the other on the back of a goat. It is only in this way that Lleu can be killed, and Blodeuwedd's lover, Gwynny, Lleu's dark self, is hiding nearby with a spear at the ready. But as Lleu is struck with it, he is not killed. He is instead transformed into an eagle.

Putting this in the form of a Bardic riddle, it would go something like this: Who can tell in what season the Lion (Lleu), betrayed by the Virgin (Blodeuwedd), poised on the Balance, is transformed into an Eagle? My readers who are astrologers are probably already gasping in recognition. The sequence is astrological and in proper order: Leo (lion), Virgo (virgin), Libra (balance), and Scorpio (for which the eagle is a well-known alternative symbol). Also, the remaining icons, cauldron and goat, would arguably symbolize Gwynny and Gwynnyon, representing summer and winter, the signs beginning with the two solstice points. So Lleu is balanced between cauldron and goat, between summer and winter, on the balance (Libra) point of the autumnal equinox.

This, of course, is the answer to a related Bardic riddle. Repeatedly, the 'Mabinogion' tells us that Lleu must be standing with one foot on the cauldron and one foot on the goat's back in order to be killed. But nowhere does it tell us why. Why is this particular situation the ONLY one in which Lleu can be overcome? Because it represents the equinox point. And the equinox is the only time of the entire year when light (Lleu) can be overcome by darkness (Gwynny).

It should now come as no surprise that when it is time for Llew to kill Gwynn in his turn, Llew insists that Gwynn stands where he once stood while he (Llew) casts the spear. This is no mere vindictiveness on Llew's part. For, although the 'Mabinogion' does not say so, it should by now be obvious that this is the only time when Gwynn can be overcome. Light can overcome darkness only at the equinox -- this time the vernal equinox.

So Midsummer (to me, at least) is a celebration of the sun god at his zenith, a crowned king on his throne. He is at the height of his strength and still 1/4 of a year away from his ritual death at the hands of his rival. The spear and the cauldron have often been used as symbols for this holiday and it should now be easy to see why. Sun gods are virtually always associated with spears (even Jesus is pierced by one), and the midsummer cauldron of Caran is a symbol of the Goddess in her fullness. It is an especially beautiful time of the year for an outdoor celebration. May yours be magical!

Ceremony of Initiation

Author's note:

This ritual is a compilation of GARDNERIAN Fairy and traditional Wiccan sources and is intended to be used as an initiation for graduates of my training course in Basic Technologies of Witchcraft. While the ritual is powerful enough as it stands, I strongly recommend that it be reserved for people who have been prepared through training at least equivalent to that which I give, or much of the impact may be lost.

Blessed be!

Guided Meditation

[The following will be read to all participants in the form of a guided meditation prior to the procession. It helps if the first paragraph is read by a male voice and the second paragraph by a female voice. NOTE: All are mute; the initiate is also blindfolded.]

Hear the words of the Threestold Goddess, who of old was called Artemis, Astarte, Diana, Typhodite, Cybele, Isis, Anahkod, Brigit, Anadia and many other names:

"Whenever you have need of anything, come in the month and better yet when the moon is full, you shall assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit of Me who is Queen of all the Wise. She who would learn all sorcery yet has not won its dearest secrets, then I will teach her, in truth, all things as yet unknown and you shall be free from slavery, and as a sign that you be free you shall be raised in your rites. Sing, feast, dance, make music and love in My presence, for Mine is the ecstasy of the spirit and Mine also is joy on earth. For My law is love unto all beings. Nor do I demand aught of sacrifice, for behold, I am the mother of all things and My love is poured out upon the earth."

Processional

The Initiate is left to meditate as the others rise and follow the High Priest/ess into the Circle area and three times around, chanting:

"We all come from the Goddess,
and to her we shall return"

Like a drop of rain
Flowing to the ocean" (repeat)

Raising of the Circle

HIGH PRIEST/ESS takes the Sword from the altar and traces a circle around the covens. When he/she returns to the north, he/she kneels and salutes saying: "Hail and welcome, frosty Spirits of the North. Lead to us your power and protection this night that <Initiate's born name> may be given a true initiation to justly wield the power of Earth. So mote it be!"

ALL (envisioning a wall of dark green light springing up from the circle): "So mote it be!"

HIGH PRIEST/ESS advances to the east, kneels and salutes saying: "Hail and welcome, bright Spirits of the East. Lead to us your power and protection that <Initiate's born name> may be given a true initiation to justly wield the power of Air. So mote it be!"

ALL (envisioning a wall of lemon yellow light springing up from the circle, within the wall of green): "So mote it be!"

HIGH PRIEST/ESS advances to the south, kneels and salutes saying: "Hail and welcome, fiery Spirits of the South. Lead to us your power and protection that <Initiate's born name> may be given a true initiation to justly wield the power of Fire. So mote it be!"

ALL (envisioning a wall of crimson light springing up from the circle, within the walls of green and yellow): "So mote it be!"

HIGH PRIEST/ESS advances to the west, kneels and salutes saying: "Hail and welcome, timeless Spirits of the West. Lead to us your power and protection that <Initiate's born name> may be given a true initiation to justly wield the power of Water. So mote it be!"

ALL (envisioning a wall of dark blue light springing up from the circle, within the walls of green, yellow and red):
"So mote it be!"

Statement of Purpose

HIGH PRIEST/ESS: "I call upon the Horned God; I call upon the Maiden the Mother and the Crown;
I call upon the Spirits of Earth, Air, Fire and Water; I call upon the Hosts of the Mighty Dead; and I
call every true Witch within this circle to witness that we are here to consecrate <Initiate's name> as
Priest(ess) and Witch. The circle is cast!"

ALL (envisioning the walls of the circle bending together overhead and flowing together under the floor to form
a hemisphere of bright white light): "So mote it be!"

The Warning

HIGH PRIEST/ESS cuts a gate in the circle and roughly leads the Initiate to kneel at the edge
before the gate, then balances the sword-point over the Initiate's heart (the Initiate raises his hands to
support the point). "You stand at the edge of a place that is between the worlds, in the presence of the Gods
and under the watchful eye of the Mighty Dead. If you go any further, you embark on a path that cannot be
safely turned aside before your death. Feel the sharpness of the blade at your breast, and know this in your
heart that it would be better for you to throw yourself forward and spill out your life than to enter this
circle with fear or falseness in your heart."

INITIATE: "I come with penitent love and penitent trust."

HIGH PRIEST/ESS lays down the sword, lifts the Initiate to his or her feet and kisses him or her.
"Thus are all first brought into the Circle." then leads the Initiate to the altar and taking up the sword,
re-draws the circle over the gateway.

Administration of the Oaths

ALL (except the High Priest/ess and the Initiate) begin a quiet "Trum" and sustain it throughout the
Five-fold Kiss and the Oaths of Initiation.

HIGH PRIEST/ESS, administering the Five-fold Kiss: "Blessed are your feet, that have brought you to
this place. Blessed are your knees, that shall kneel at the altars of the Gods. Blessed is your sex, without
which we could not be. Blessed is your breast, formed in strength and beauty. Blessed are your lips which
shall speak the Words of Truth. Are you prepared to take the oath?"

INITIATE: "I am."

HIGH PRIEST/ESS: "Then kneel." (takes the Initiate's measure.) "You who have from birth been called <born name> but now seek to become <craft name> -- do you willingly pledge yourself to the God and the Goddess?"

INITIATE places his or her left hand on the top of the head and right hand on the soles of the feet.
"All between my two hands belongs to the Gods. So mote it be."

ALL others raise the volume of the "trum" slightly.

HIGH PRIEST/ESS: "And do you swear to keep silent all those things that must be kept silent and to respect that which is taught to you?"

INITIATE: "I willingly swear to keep silent all that must be kept silent and to respect that which is taught to me. So mote it be."

ALL others raise the volume of the "trum" a little more.

HIGH PRIEST/ESS: "And by what surety do you swear all of these things?"

INITIATE: "All of these things I do swear by my mother's womb and my hope of future lives, knowing well that my Measure has been taken in the presence of the Mighty Ones. Should I fail utterly in my oaths, may my powers desert me, and may my own tools turn against me. So mote it be. So mote it be. So mote it be!"

ALL yell quickly: "SO MOTÉ IT BÉ!"

Triggering of the Spell

ALL grab the Initiate quickly and hoist him completely into the air (if possible), chanting the Initiate's new name over and over again as fast as possible, as they carry him or her three times quickly around the circle. When they return to the starting point, they set him or her down face-down and press him or her firmly into the ground.

Gradually, the pressure relents to gentle massage. Through all of this they continue chanting the Initiate's new name, falling off in volume and speed as the pressure relaxes.

HIGH PRIEST/ESS: "Know that the hands that have touched you are the hands of love." (removes the Initiate's blindfold and helps him up.) "In the Burning Times, when each member of the Coven held the lives

of the others in her hand, this would have been kept and used against you should you endanger others. But in these happier times, love and trust prevail, so take this (hands the Measure to the Initiate), keep it on your altar, and be free to go or stay as you please."

Follow-through and Earthing of Power

HIGH PRIEST/ESS hands the sword to the Initiate and leads him to the East, where they both kneel. The Initiate salutes and the High Priest/ess announces: "Behold, restless Spirits of Water -- I bring before you (name), who has been consecrated as Priest/ess and Witch!" Repeats at the South, West, and finally North.

ALL (including High Priest/ess and Initiate) join hands in the Circle.

HIGH PRIEST/ESS: "Thank you Spirits of the Mighty Dead, Spirits of the Four Elements, and awesome Lord and Lady for hallowing our circle. Go or stay as you will -- our circle is ready."

ALL ground and unites, then absorb the power of the Circle and return it to the Earth beneath their feet.

HIGH PRIEST/ESS (after a suitable pause): "Our lovely rite draws to its end. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Blessed Be!"

ALL: "BLESSED BE!"

Invocations to Frigg, Baldur, Freyja, Freyr, Brigit, Henna and Thorr

INVOCATION TO FRIGG

- "Frigg, Daughter of Jord, Join us.
Frigg, Daughter of Fjorgyn, Join us.
Frigg, Wife of Odin, Join us.
Frigg, Sister of Thorr, Join us.
Frigg, Mother of Baldr, Join us.
Frigg, Mother of Hodr, Join us.
Frigg, Mother of Hermod, Join us.
Frigg, Mother of the gods, Join us.
Frigg, Wise in all fates, Join us.
Frigg, Who will tell no fortunes, Join us.
Frigg, First among the Asynium, Join us.
Frigg, Queen of Asgard, Join us.
Frigg, Mistress of home and hearth, Join us.
Frigg, Mistress of Earth, Join us.
Frigg, Mistress of healing, Join us.
Frigg, Your servant _____ calls you! Come to me NOW!"

INVOCATION TO BALDR

- "Baldr, Son of Frigg, Join us.
Baldr, Son of Odin, Join us.
Baldr, Husband of Nanna, Join us.
Baldr, Brother of Hodr, Join us.
Baldr, Brother of Hermod, Join us.
Baldr, Father of Forsetti, Join us.
Baldr, Slain by blind Hodr, Join us.

Baldn, Master of Breidablik, Join us.

Baldn, Who is much loved, Join us.

Baldn, Who Thohh alone would not mourn, Join us.

Baldn, The Fairest of the Aesir, Join us.

Baldn, Whose Judgments stand unaltered, Join us.

Baldn, Whose Judgments stand untraced, Join us.

Baldn, The Wisest of the Aesir, Join us.

Baldn, The Shining One, Join us.

Baldn, Your servant _____ calls you! Come to me NOW!"

INVOCATION TO FREYJA

"Freyja, Of the many names, Join us.

Freyja, Of the golden tears, Join us.

Freyja, Daughter of Njord, Join us.

Freyja, Wife of Od, Join us.

Freyja, Sister of Freyr, Join us.

Freyja, Mother of Hross, Join us.

Freyja, Claimed by Thrym, Join us.

Freyja, Princess of cats, Join us.

Freyja, Goddess of Fertility, Join us.

Freyja, Who shares the slain with Odin, Join us.

Freyja, Who taught the Aesir Magic, Join us.

Freyja, Lender of Falcons' Flight, Join us.

Freyja, Mistress of Brisingamen, Join us.

Freyja, Mistress of Folkvang, Join us.

Freyja, Mistress of nature, Join us.

Freyja, Your servant _____ calls you! Come to me NOW!"

INVOCATION TO FREYR

"Freyr, Son of Njord, Join us.

Freyr, Husband of Gerdr, Join us.

Freyr. Brother of Freyja. Join us.
Freyr. Father of kings. Join us.
Freyr. Whose sword would fight for itself. Join us.
Freyr. Who gave his sword for Gerd. Join us.
Freyr. Patron of married couples. Join us.
Freyr. Most beautiful of Gods. Join us.
Freyr. Whose tooth-gift was Atli. Join us.
Freyr. Master of Gullinbursti. Join us.
Freyr. Owner of Skidbladnir. Join us.
Freyr. Slayer of Beli. Join us.
Freyr. Master of Frodis Prætor. Join us.
Freyr. Who directs Man's good fortune. Join us.
Freyr. Who brings fruitful seasons. Join us.
Freyr. Your servant _____ calls you! Come to me NOW!

INVOCATION TO BRIGIT

"Brigit, Wise One,
We, your children, call to you
Lady, Smithy,
We, your children, invite you here,
Triple Goddess,
We, your children, ask your presence,
Brigit, Wise One,
We, your children, call to you
Lady, Smithy,
We, your children, invite you here,
Triple Goddess,
We, your children, ask your presence,
Brigit, Wise One,
We, your children, call to you
Lady, Smithy,

We, your children invite you here,
Trijala Goddess.

We, your children ask your presence, NOW."

INVOCATION TO HERNE

"Herne, Winter Lord,

We, your children call to you
Horned One, Hunter.

We, your children invite you here,
Woodland Spirit,

We, your children ask your presence,
Herne, Winter Lord,

We, your children call to you
Horned One, Hunter.

We, your children invite you here,
Woodland Spirit,

We, your children ask your presence,
Herne, Winter Lord,

We, your children call to you
Horned One, Hunter.

We, your children invite you here,
Woodland Spirit,

We, your children ask your presence, NOW."

INVOCATION TO THORR

"Thorr, Red-beard, Join us.

Thorr, Son of Jora, Join us.

Thorr, Brother of Frigg, Join us.

Thorr, Father of Modi, Join us.

Thorr, Father of Magni, Join us.

Thorr, Father of Thrudr, Join us.

Thorn, Husband of Sit, Join us.

Thorn, Humi bare, Join us.

Thorn, For of Jomungand, Join us.

Thorn, Who bears Marriage Hallowen, Join us.

Thorn, Who bears Death Hallowen, Join us.

Thorn, Who wields Mjolnir, Join us.

Thorn, Pretender of Asgard, Join us.

Thorn, Thunderer, Join us.

Thorn, Storm Lord, Join us.

Thorn, Your servant _____ calls you! Come to me NOW!"

An Isian Circle Casting

This requires the use of a duly consecrated wand, a chalice, an athame and a container for salt and water -- non-plastic, PLEASE -- on your altar as well as 2 candle sticks with candles in them and an incense burner for stick or hanging incense. You should work robed or nude as you prefer. In the 4 directions you should have either air (as incense) or fire (as candle -- lit, of course, and preferably red) in the east -- according to your tradition. The OTHER element -- the one not used in the east -- in the south, again according to your tradition.

(I prefer air/east -- wand, fire/south -- athame, personally -- but I realize there are differences in tradition.)

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF A CIRCLE IS THE FINAL SAY IN ANY RITE -- SO ALWAYS FOLLOW THEIR TRADITIONS.

A bowl -- again not plastic -- of water in the west and some rocks or a dish of salt in the North for Earth.

If you wish, you may lay a circle of salt on the floor, leaving a gate for the priest/ess to enter and leave for the temple purification or you may visualize the circle coming as electric blue light out of your athame point as you cast it. After she returns from purifying the outer perimeter, the gate would be closed and the circle cast (after the directions are called) by pointing the athame (or the sword) at the salt and charging it instead of casting into the air. The gate would be closed by completing the circle of salt.

Okay, I am writing this as used by a person working alone, but the P or PS in parenthesis is how it would be done if done by a couple. PS is the female and P is the male. This is the ideal form of the rite.

[PS] picks up bowl of salt and bowl of water on altar. [P] picks up athame and places it point down in the water and says: "Salt is pure. Let this salt be pure and let it purify our rites as we use it in the service of the Lady and the Lord."

All: "So mote it be."

(PS) pours some of the salt into the water. (P) stirs it with his athame and says: "May this sacred salt purify this water so it may be used in the service of the Lord and Lady, throughout this rite, in any way and at any time we may wish to use it."

All: "So mote it be."

(PS) takes the salt-water and sprinkles it about the perimeter of the circle (outer) saying the following while walking clockwise or counterclockwise (to banish):

"Salt and water where I cast thee
No spell or unknown purpose be
Unless in full accord with me
and as I will, so mote it be."

She returns to the circle. The (P) then takes the incense burner -- it a swinging one -- on the burning stick of incense and goes around the circle doing saying: "Even as we walk in the ways may we feel the presence of the Lady and the Lord. We know that in all we do they are even with us. They abide in us and we in them forever. No disharmony or imbalance can be entertained for purity, harmony and balance are the dwellers within and without us:

For good do we strive and
For good do we live.
Love unto all things.
So be it forever.
Love is the law and Love is the bond.
Blessed be the Lady and the Lord."

All: "So mote it be."

He returns to the circle. He then picks up his wand and goes to the East, raising it high he invokes the element of air visualizing either the ruler of that element as he understands that being OR a yellow pentacle can be substituted. I like to imagine a weeping willow tree budding in the spring being moved by the gentle breezes through the center of the pentacle -- as if through the center of a window. (If you use fire in the east, swap visualization here with the one I give in the south and change the invocations accordingly)

"Hail to thee
Lord of the Watchtowers of the East,
element of air (fire?).

We invite your presence and your power in our circle and
our magic this night.

All: "So mote it be."

[P]: "Welcome and Blessed Be."

All: "Blessed Be."

Go to the South and repeat this visualizing either your conception of the ruler of the watchtowers of the south OR a red pentacle -- I like to see a campfire through its center, as if through a window. Repeat invocation with raised wand making suitable changes of direction and element in it.

Go to the West and repeat this visualizing either your conception of the ruler of the watchtowers of the west OR a blue pentacle -- I like to see a mountain stream or the ocean through the center of it, as if through a window. Repeat invocation making suitable changes of direction and element in it.

Go to the North and repeat the process visualizing either your conception of the ruler of the north OR a green pentacle -- I like to see mountains rising up in the distance through the middle of it, again as if through a window. Repeat invocation making suitable changes of direction and element in it.

He returns to the altar and replaces the wand.

THE [PS] takes up her s and invokes the Deities: "Hail to Thee, Lord and Lady." (Substitute aloud or silently the names you are using for the Goddess and the God here -- with non-initiates, some prefer to use the generic "Lord and Lady" out loud, keeping the names by which the inner circle of initiates know them a secret. This is also a good idea to use when you have members of several traditions present who may not agree on what names are used for them.) "We invite your presence and power in our circle and our magic this night."

All: "So mote it be."

[PS]: "Welcome and Blessed Be."

All: "Blessed Be."

She then replaces her wand on the altar and picks up her athame on the cover sword and casts the circle -- either straight out, visualizing blue light coming from its point --- or, if a circle of salt is used, straight DOWN at the salt, to charge it.

This is done clockwise (counterclockwise), of course, just like the raising of the circle was done earlier. The only time widdershins is used is the salt-water banishing / cleansing to prepare for circle casting and in opening the circle.

First casting: "I conjure this circle, a mighty Psychic rampart that turns back ALL^Y excess positive or negative energy which may come to do us harm"

All: "So mote it be."

Second casting: "I cast this circle, a place that is not a place, a time that is not a time, a sacred place between the worlds, a place to commune with eternity (on THE LADY AND THE LORD)"

All: "So mote it be."

Third casting: "I charge this circle, a place of perfect love and of perfect trust where all may know peace profound"

All: "So mote it be."

She returns to the altar. If a bell is used (brass or silver ONLY please) she rings it and says: "Now is the circle cast."

All: "So mote it be."

The circle then perform the full-moon rite, raising the power and drawing down the energy into themselves by whatever rites they use and Magic is performed as is appropriate and necessary OR the ritual for one of the 8 sabbats is performed -- a much lighter and informal occasion -- according to the time and purpose of the circle.

The cakes and ale/wine (I substitute APPLE juice or SPRING water, as I am allergic to alcohol) are consecrated by the athame in the chalice.

NOTE --- the words should be as natural as possible. Show some respect! Please, no twiddles or oops ---
I've seen some "people" do that!

Circle closing

The (P) takes up his wand and goes to the 4 quarters, beginning at the north and going widdershins, where he raises his wand at each and dismisses the rulers of the elements thusly:

"Farewell to thee

Lord of the watchtower of the (direction)

element of (name element)

We thank you for our presence and power
in our circle and our magic this night."

All: "So mote it be."

(P): "Merry part and Blessed Be."

All: "Blessed Be."

As he does this, he visualizes whatever he visualized earlier and then "sees" it fading out. When he has done all 4 quarters he replaces his wand on the altar.

THE (PS) picks hers up, raises it high and says: "Farewell to the Lord and Lady" (again names may be substituted silently or aloud) "We thank you for your presence and your power in Our circle and our magic this night."

All: "So mote it be."

(PS): "Go if you must, stay if you will. Blessed be."

All: "Blessed be."

She then picks up her athame (or sword) and pointing it either in the air or at the salt, whatever she did before, she walks widdershins and as she opens the circle she pictures in her mind's eye the electric blue light fading out or being reabsorbed by the tool she carries as she says: "THE CIRCLE IS OPEN, YET REMAINS UNBROKEN."

ALL: "So mote it be."

[PS: "Merry part and blessed be."

ALL: "Blessed be" (they all hug each other in many circles here.)

(candles are snuffed on altar here -- never blow out candles) If bell is used, she rings it and says: "The circle is now open"

Note -- our circle in New England, which met only for the Sabbats except for its leadership which did the full-moons themselves as it was a training coven, tended to use a lot of chanting and simple ritual drama to raise energy as we worked in a very confined space. Other methods can be used. In full-moon work I like active deep-meditation or guided trance and chanting because of size of space available to me at this time. However, many covens also use the dance, the cords, the Great Rite (actual or symbolic) and other methods. Always remember there is no one right path.

There is also no one right way of casting a circle. Different traditions differ greatly. The main body of this rite is that used by the community of Isis -- but I have added invocations at the circle cleansing that I like which come from Al Marning (for the salt-water) and Ray Buckland (for the cleansing of the circle). The blessing of the salt and water are also from Ray Buckland's teachings. Because of its clarity of intent, I prefer his method to the one I learned, so I use it here.

Part of the circle closing was also adapted from Starhawk. Many people like to elaborate on the invocations at the quarters and present them in poetic formats, as they do with the invocation of the Lord and Lady.

Circles, why use them?

They say that the longest journey begins with a single step. So, too, the exploration of Magical studies begins with a single step. Though the first step in a physical journey is often self-evident, the First Step on a Magical journey is often not quite so clear. While formally organized groups often have a path of lessons to instruct newcomers, the solitary or isolated student is often left standing in perplexity on this broad plain of knowledge, wondering just where in the heck to begin and wondering, too, if it's "okay" to start just anywhere.

While it's true that studies can begin in any direction that attracts you, the necessary first step must be learning to make psychic shields. There are "Things of the Park" out there. There are any number of explanations for what these things might be -- ghosts, demons, or simply uncontrolled urges of the subconscious mind. In truth, it doesn't matter what they are. What does matter is that their effect is very real and unless they are put under your control, they will drag you over the borders of sanity into psychosis. You are most vulnerable to them while you're in an "open" trance or meditative state. That's why the wise practitioner always begins by taking steps to define exactly what will be permitted through the portals of their "psychic shields" -- no matter how simple the ritual. And this, in a nutshell, is what "protective magic" is about.

There are a number of ways to do this. The most common is to begin by drawing a circle (around a group or yourself) and invoking the one or more protective powers. Generally, this is done by candlelight, in front of an altar that holds certain magical objects. The circle may be further "secured" and "cleared" by using salt, salt water, rum, incense, or some other method. You may be wearing a special robe and will have taken a bath (or performed a cleansing ritual) earlier. The powers that protect you will be called on and then you will begin your ritual.

Is it psychological? Absolutely! Is there a reason why protection rituals always take this form? Positively! Let's take a step back and see what you're actually doing and how the process works -- from a psychological standpoint -- and how to use this knowledge to help you refine your circles to enhance your rituals.

Psychologists and psychiatrists alike view the mind's structure as a three-part entity: The Ego (that which you think of as yourself), the Superego (the "higher self") and the Id (the child within). The Id is, in a sense, a

computer. Like most computers, it operates on the GIGO (Garbage In, Garbage Out) principle. There's an old superstition: "As you name something, so will it become." Tell yourself that you're very unlucky and your Id will obligingly give you bad days by enhancing any negatives in your environment. Tell yourself that you are clumsy, and your Id-computer will obligingly arrange for you to break a leg while stepping off the sidewalk. The bad news is that the Id can't make a judgement as to whether or not this is a good idea. It only knows that it's received these "instructions" and must carry them out. The good news is that you can actually program/reprogram this portion of your mind.

You begin programming this Internal Servant of yours by first drawing its attention to what you want done and then explaining what you need done in a simple and clear manner. Repeating the instructions in a chant help fix the goals for the Id -- rhymed chants seem to be easier for it to process. Each time you perform the ritual and repeat the chant, the programming is strengthened. Never mind that your ego and superego understand that you're going to program the child-like Id. It works just the same.

To direct the Id's attention to the process, you first have to impress it. Using special tools and clothing alert it that something unusual is going on and that it must pay attention. Acquiring hard-to-obtain items, drawing symbols, performing a symbolic sacrifice (donating money, say, to a good cause) are all ways of reinforcing the Id's impression that this ceremony is very special and that the result will be very powerful. Organized, meaningful symbols, speak to your subconscious mind in ways it understands, reinforcing the goals you have set.

Praying the circle itself establishes boundaries within your environment ("The rest of the world can do what it likes. Out There. All within this circle is in my control"). Purifying the circle and consecrating it (sprinkling water which has been blessed and salt added) further entone your territory, defining the borders where you are "safe". Nothing can enter this area except what you invite inside. You further tighten these borders by calling on certain Powers.

You can call on any powers you like. Some use traditional Christian images. Others call up deities from the religion they are most comfortable with. And many people use the thought/image of a beam of light that represents either God/Goddess (whichever one they like) or the power of light and life and goodness in the Universe.

The number of powers called as guardians varies. You may choose to invoke one powerful being to protect your circle. Or you might call on the Universal Being/Light and four guardians (one for each quarter of the

compass). A third approach is to use a guardian for the four quarters of the compass and no higher being.

There is no "absolutely correct" system; the correct system is the one that you are comfortable with.

Take time to choose the guardians of your circle carefully. You should select guardians (gods or animals or some form of life) which have a deeper meaning to you and whose qualities are in harmony with your goals. For

the new student, it's best to have all your Powers and Guardians from the same belief system/religion/mythic universe, so that the symbols will be consistent and not confuse the Id.

You can use people -- saints, movie actors, figures from favorite books as guardians. Do, however, pick someone who's dead or non-existent. The dead can't argue with your interpretation of them, whereas the living may be highly offended to be approached as gods/guardians.

As your studies continue, you will find that your totems or guardians change. This is to be expected; as you explore new realms in your studies, you may find you need guardians who deal with very specific areas to strengthen and guide you in these new fields.

But don't make the mistake of assuming that you'll become so powerful that you will never need the protection of the psychic shielding circle in some form. And don't assume that you will not need a circle for "positive" magics such as healing. Open is open -- and open is vulnerable. And circles strengthen and protect you by defining what psychological influences will be allowed to work with you.

Handfasting (Wedding)

[PRIEST] We have come together here in celebration of the joining together of [BRIDE] and [GROOM]. There are many things to say about marriage. Much wisdom concerning the joining together of two souls has come our way through all paths of belief and from many cultures. With each union, more knowledge is gained and more wisdom gathered. Though we are unable to give all this knowledge to these two who stand before us, we can hope to leave with them the knowledge of love and its strengths and the anticipation of the wisdom that comes with time. The law of life is love unto all beings. Without love, life is nothing, without love, death has no redemption. Love is anterior to Life, posterior to Death, initial of Creation and the exponent of Earth. If we learn no more in life, let it be this.

Marriage is a bond to be entered into only after considerable thought and reflection. As with any aspect of life, it has its cycles, its ups and its downs, its trials and its triumphs. With full understanding of this, Groom and Bride have come here today to be joined as one in marriage.

Others would ask, at this time, who gives the bride in marriage, but, as a woman is not property to be bought and sold, given and taken, I ask simply if she comes of her own will and if she has her family's blessing.

Bride, is it true that you come of your own free will and accord?

[BRIDE] Yes, it is true.

[PRIEST] With whom do you come, and whose blessings accompany you.

[FATHER] She comes with me, her father, and is accompanied by all of her family's blessings.

[PRIEST] Please join hands with your betrothed and listen to that which I am about to say.

Above you are the stars, below you are the stones, as time doth pass, remember...

Like a stone should your love be firm, like a star should your love be constant. Let the powers of the mind and of the intellect guide you in your marriage, let the strength of your wills bind you together, let the power of love and desire make you happy, and the strength of your dedication make you inseparable. Be close, but not too close. Possess one another, yet be understanding. Have patience with one another, for storms will come, but they will pass quickly.

Be true in giving affection and warmth. Have no fear and let not the ways of the unenlightened give you
unease, for God is with you always.

Groom, I have not the right to bind thee to Bride, only you have this right. If it be your wish, say so at this
time and place your ring in her hand.

[GROOM] It is my wish.

[PRIEST] Bride, if it be your wish for Groom to be bound to you, place the ring on his finger. (Bride
places ring on Groom's left ring finger.)

Bride, I have not the right to bind thee to Groom, only you have this right. If it be your wish, say so at this
time and place your ring in his hand.

[BRIDE] It is my wish.

[PRIEST] Groom, if it be your wish for Bride to be bound to you, place the ring on her finger. (Groom
places ring on Bride's left ring finger.)

(to Groom) Repeat after me:

I, [Groom (full name)], in the name of the spirit of God that resides within us all, by the life that courses
within my blood and the love that resides within my heart, take thee, [Bride (full name)], to my hand, my heart
and my spirit, to be my chosen one. To desire thee and be desired by thee, to possess thee and be possessed
by thee without sin or shame, for naught can exist in the purity of my love for thee, I promise to love thee
wholly and completely without restraint, in sickness and in health, in plenty and in poverty, in life and beyond,
where we shall meet, remember, and love again. I shall not seek to change thee in any way. I shall respect
thee, thy beliefs, thy people and thy ways as I respect myself.

(to Bride) Repeat after me:

I, [Bride (full name)], in the name of the spirit of God that resides within us all, by the life that courses
within my blood, and the love that resides within my heart, take thee, [Groom (full name)], to my hand, my
heart, and my spirit to be my chosen one. To desire and be desired by thee, to possess thee and be
possessed by thee without sin or shame, for naught can exist in the purity of my love for thee, I promise to
love thee wholly and completely without restraint, in sickness and in health, in plenty and in poverty, in life and

beyond, where we shall meet, remember, and love again I shall not seek to change them in any way. I shall respect them, thy beliefs, thy people and thy ways as I respect myself.

[PRIEST] (hands chalice to the groom, saying:) May you drink your fill from the cup of love.

(Groom holds chalice to bride while she sips then bride takes chalice and holds it to groom while he sips. The chalice is then handed back to the Priest who sets it on the table. Next the Priest takes the plate of bread, giving it to the groom. Same procedure repeated with bread, groom feeding bride and bride feeding groom.)

By the power vested in me by God and the State of Alabama, I now pronounce you husband and wife. May your love so endure that its flame remains a guiding light unto you.

Initiation Into The Coven, Outdoor Version

Candidates for initiation should be in good mental and physical health. They should also be of legal age and have sought out the Craft of their own free will.

(All references below are to a female candidate. In case of a male, all instances of 'she' become 'he' and the High Priest and High Priestess swap roles.)

Before being accepted into the Coven she should spend sometime learning about the Craft and magic and such. She should know about practices that most people get uptight about. She should be told that initiations are perfectly safe and voluntary. Also, if at any time prior to taking the oath she wants to back out, she can do so with out fear or other repercussions.

The candidate must choose a Craft name. This name should not be a common American name and must have personal meaning to the candidate.

Traditionally the apprenticeship lasted for a year and a day. This is a good idea if it can be done. Before she can be initiated, the Coven must vote. A single no is sufficient to not allow the candidate to be initiated into that particular Coven.

This ritual is written for use in the woods. There has to be a path leading from the staging area to a clearing where a fire can be lit. To save time, the fire should be setup but not lighted.

The bathtub should be set up along the path and filled with warm water and the other ingredients. The water will also have to be consecrated.

The candidate should be brought to the staging area by their sponsor. She should be wearing clothing that can be cut away easily by a sword without undoing buttons or stepping out of pants legs. The candidate should be lead down the path by the sponsor. After a little ways a member of the Coven, the Challenger, should step onto the path. They might want to wear a mask. They take the sword that they carry and say: "Who comes to the gate?"

The candidate, coached beforehand, answers: "It is I, [new Craft name], child of earth and starmy heaven"

Challenger: "Who speaks for you?"

Sponsor: "It is I, [redacted], who vouches for her."

The Challenger holds the point of the sword up to the candidate's heart, and says: "You are about to enter a vortex of power, a place beyond imagining, where birth and death, dark and light, joy and pain, meet and make one. You are about to step between the worlds, beyond time, outside the realm of your human life. You who stands on the threshold of the dread Mighty Ones, have you the courage to make the essay? For know it is better to fall on my blade and perish than to make the attempt with fear in thy heart!"

The apprentice answers: "I tread the path with perfect love and perfect trust."

The Challenger replies: "Prepare for death and rebirth."

And the Challenger takes the sword and cuts off the apprentice's clothing till she is standing naked. The Challenger grounds their sword to the Earth. The Challenger should then blindfold the candidate and tie a cord around their wrists and one ankle while saying: "And she was bound as all living things must be, who would enter the Kingdom of Death. And her feet were neither bound nor free."

The candidate is led to the tub and bathed, while still blindfolded, by the rest of the Coven. While being bathed, she must remain quiet. She is helped from the tub and dried off. The candidate is then carried to the Circle. Everyone in the Coven, starting with the High Priest, kisses her and says: "Thus are all first brought into the world, and thus are all first brought into the Coven."

The High Priest now leads the candidate to each of the four corners and introduces her to the Guardians, of course, going clockwise.

"Hail Guardians of the Watchtowers of the East and all the Mighty Ones of the Craft. Behold [redacted] (new name), who will now be made Priestess and Witch."

The candidate is brought back to the altar. The High Priest kneels and gives her the Five Fold Kiss: that is, he kisses her on both feet, both knees, womb, both breasts, and the lips, starting with the right of each pair. He says as he does this:

"Blessed be thy feet, that have brought thee in these ways.
Blessed be thy knees, that shall kneel at the sacred altar.
Blessed be thy womb, without which we would not be.

Blessed be thy breasts, formed in beauty,
Blessed be thy lips, that shall utter the Sacred Names."

For the kiss on the lips, they embrace length-to-length, with their feet touching each others. When he reaches the womb, she spreads her arms wide, and the same after the kiss on the lips. The candidate is then measured with the other piece of cord from head to toe. The cord is cut. She is then measured around the head and chest and knots are tied to mark these lengths. The High Priestess rolls up the cord and asks the candidate: "Are you willing to swear the oath?"

The candidate answers: "I am."

The High Priestess asks: "Are you willing to suffer to learn?"

The candidate answers: "Yes."

The High Priestess takes the apprentice's hand and with a needle, properly purified by fire and water, pricks her finger, squeezing a few drops out onto the measure. The candidate then kneels and places one hand on her head and the other beneath her heel and she repeats what is read to her. The High Priest says:

"This is the Charge of the Covenant:

That I will keep secret what I am asked to keep secret, and never divulge the names or dwelling places of our people, unless by their consent.

That I will learn and try to master the Art Magical; but never remember the motto: "What good be the tools without the inner light? What good be magic without wisdom sight?"

That in due course I will strive to find a worthy pupil in magic, to whom in future years I can hand down the knowledge I acquire.

That I will never use the Art Magical merely to impress foolish persons, nor for any wrongful end.

That I will help the Craft of the Wise, and hold its honor as I would my own.

That I consider these vows taken before the Elder Gods; and that if I betray this Charge I accept as my just reward that retribution of destiny which overtakes those who basely betray the trust and confidence that others have placed in them.

Know that none can escape the fate, be it curse or blessing, which they make for themselves, either in this life or in another life."

The High Priestess says: "Repeat after me:
I, [redacted], do of my own free will most solemnly swear to protect, help and defend my sisters and
brothers of the Art and to keep the Coven's Charge.
I always keep secret all that must not be revealed.
This do I swear on my mother's womb and my hopes of future lives, mindful that my measure has been
taken and in the presence of the Mighty Ones.
All between my two hands belongs to the Goddess."

The candidate repeats the oath. The Coven shouts: "So mote it be!"

The High Priest says: "Arise and be appointed."

The High Priest then makes an X mark on the initiate's forehead, breast and genitals while saying: "May your
mind be true, May your heart be true, May your body be true, I give you the Great name of [redacted]"

The rest of the Coven members grab her suddenly, lift her if possible and carry her three times around the
Circle, laughing and shrieking. They then lay her face down before the altar and press her into the ground.
Gradually the pressure changes to stroking. They chant her new name, raising a Cone of Power over her. The
blindfold is removed and she is told:

"Know that the hands that have touched you are the hands of love. Thus are all first brought into the world,
and thus are all first brought into the Coven."

The Charge of the Goddess is spoken and any other myths, mysteries, and secrets are revealed. She is also
told the Coven names of all the members. The High Priestess returns the measure, saying:

"In the Burning Times, when each member of the Coven held the lives of the others in their hands, this
would have been kept and be used against you should you endanger the others. But in these more fortunate
times, love and trust prevail, so take this, keep it on, burn it, and be true to go on to stay as your heart
leads you."

The service goes on as usual, be it New or Full Moon or Sabbat. Before the Circle is opened, the new
initiate is taken to the town commons again and introduced to the Guardians again.

A Celebration of May Day

"Perhaps it's just as well that you won't be here... to be offended by the sight of our May Day celebrations."

Lord Summerisle to Sgt. Hooper from "The Wicker Man"

There are four great festivals of the Pagan Celtic year and the modern Wiccan calendar, as well. The two greatest of these are Halloween (the beginning of winter) and May Day (the beginning of summer). Being opposite each other on the wheel of the year, they separate the year into halves. Halloween (also called Samhain) is the Celtic New Year and is generally considered the more important of the two, though May Day runs a close second. Indeed, in some areas --- notably Wales --- it is considered the great holiday.

May Day ushers in the fifth month of the modern calendar year, the month of May. This month is named in honor of the goddess Maia, originally a Greek mountain nymph, later identified as the most beautiful of the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades. By Zeus, she is also the mother of Hermes, god of magic. Maia's parents were Atlas and Pleione, a sea nymph.

The old Celtic name for May Day is Beltane (in its most popular Anglicized form), which is derived from the Irish Gaelic "Bealtaine" or the Scottish Gaelic "Bealtuinn", meaning "Beltime", the time of the Celtic god of light (Bel, Beli or Belinus). He, in turn, may be traced to the Middle Eastern god Baal.

Other names for May Day include: Cetsamhain ("opposite Samhain"), Walpurgisnacht (in Germany), and Roodmas (the medieval Church's name). This last came from Church Fathers who were hoping to shift the common people's allegiance from the Maypole (Pagan lingam --- symbol of life) to the Holy Rood (the Cross --- Roman instrument of death).

Incidentally, there is no historical justification for calling May 1st "Lady Day". For hundreds of years, that title has been proper to the Vernal Equinox (approx. March 21st), another holiday sacred to the Great Goddess. The nontraditional use of "Lady Day" for May 1st is quite recent (within the last 15 years), and seems to be confined to America, where it has gained widespread acceptance among certain segments of the Craft population. This rather startling departure from tradition would seem to indicate an unfamiliarity with European calendar customs, as well as a lax attitude toward scholarship among too many Pagans. A simple glance at a dictionary ("Webster's 3rd" or O.E.D.), encyclopedia ("Barnet's"), or standard mythology reference

(Jobe's "Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore & Symbols") would confirm the correct date for Lady Day as the
Vernal Equinox.

By Celtic reckoning, the actual Beltane celebration begins on sundown of the preceding day, April 30, because the Celts always figured their days from sundown to sundown and sundown was the proper time for Prides to kindle the great Bel-fires on the tops of the nearest beacon hill (such as Tara Hill, Co. Meath, in Ireland).

These "weed-fires" had healing properties, and shy-lad Witches would jump through the flames to ensure
protection.

Sgt. Howe (shouted): "But they are naked!"

Lord Summerisle: "Naturally. It's much too dangerous to jump through the fire with your clothes on!"

Frequently, cattle would be driven between two such bonfires (oak wood was the favorite fuel for them) and, on the morrow, they would be taken to their summer pastures.

Other May Day customs include: processions of chimney-sweeps and milk maids, archery tournaments, Morris dances, sword dances, feasting, music, drinking, and maidens bathing their faces in the dew of May morning to retain their youthful beauty.

In the words of Witchcraft writers Janet and Stewart Farrar, the Beltane celebration was primarily a time of "...unshamed human sexuality and fertility." Such associations include the obvious phallic symbolism of the Maypole and riding the hobby horse. Even a seemingly innocent children's nursery rhyme, "Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross..." retains such memories. And the next line "...to see a fine Lady on a white horse" is a reference to the annual ride of "Lady Godiva" through Coventry. Every year for nearly three centuries, a shy-lad village maiden (elected Queen of the May) enacted this Pagan rite, until the Puritans put an end to the custom.

The Puritans, in fact, reacted with pious horror to most of the May Day rites, even making Maypoles illegal in 1644. They especially attempted to suppress the "greenwood marriages" of young men and women who spent the entire night in the forest, staying out to greet the May sunrise, and bringing back bouquets of flowers and garlands to decorate the village the next morning. One angry Puritan wrote that men "do use commonly to runne into woodes in the night time, amongst maidens, to set bowes, in so much, as I have hearde of some maidens which went to set May, and some of them came home with childen." And another Puritan complained that, of the girls who go into the woods, "not the least one of them comes home again a virgin."

Long after the Christian form of marriage (with its insistence on sexual monogamy) had replaced the older Pagan handfasting, the rules of strict fidelity were always relaxed for the May Eve rites. Names such as Robin Hood, Maid Marion and Little John played an important part in May Day folklore, often used as titles for the dramatic personae of the celebrations. And modern summaries such as Robinson, Hodson, Johnson and Godkin may attest to some distant May Eve spent in the woods.

These midwood antics have inspired writers such as Kipling:

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight,
Or he would call it a sin;
But we have been out in the woods all night,
A-conjuring Summer in
The Leamen and Lows;
It's May! It's May!
The lusty month of May!...
Those dreamy vows that everyone takes,
Everyone breaks,
Everyone makes divine mistakes!
The lusty month of May!

It is certainly no accident that Queen Guinevere's "abduction" by Meliagrance occurs on May 1st when she and the court have gone a-Maying, or that the usually efficient Queen's guard, on this occasion, rode unarmed.

Some of these customs seem virtually identical to the old Roman feast of flowers, the Floralia, three days of unrestrained sexuality which began at sundown April 28th and reached a crescendo on May 1st.

By the way, due to various calendrical changes down through the centuries, the traditional date of Beltane is not the same as its astrological date. This date, like all astronomically determined dates, may vary by a day or two depending on the year. However, it may be calculated easily enough by determining the date on which the sun is at 15 degrees Taurus. British Witches often refer to this date as Old Beltane, and folklorists call it Beltane O.S. ("Old Style"). Some Covens prefer to celebrate on the old date and, at the very least, it gives one option. If a Coven is operating on "Pagan Standard Time" and misses May 1st altogether, it can still

throw a viable Beltane bash as long as it's before this date. This may also be a consideration for lovers that need to organize activities around the week-end.

This date has long been considered a "power point" of the Zodiac and is symbolized by the Bull, one of the four "tetramorphi" figures featured on the Tarot cards the World and the Wheel of Fortune. (The other three are the Lion, the Eagle and the Spirit.) Astrologers know these four figures as the symbols of the four "fixed" signs of the Zodiac (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius, respectively) and these naturally align with the four Great Sabbats of Witchcraft. Christians have adopted the same iconography to represent the four gospel-mysteries.

But for most, it is May 1st that is the great holiday of flowers, Maypoles, and greenwood frivolity. It is no wonder that, as recently as 1977, Ian Anderson could pen the following lyrics for Jethro Tull:

For the May Day is the great day,
Sung along the old straight track,
And those who ancient times did lay
Will heed this song that calls them back.

THE END

Midwinter Night's Eve: Yule

Our Christian friends are often quite surprised at how enthusiastically we Pagans celebrate the 'Christmas' season. Even though we prefer to use the word 'Yule', and our celebrations may peak a few days before the 25th, we nonetheless follow many of the traditional customs of the season: decorated trees, carolling, presents, Yule logs, and mistletoe. We might even go so far as putting up a 'Nativity set', though for us the three central characters are likely to be interpreted as Mother Nature, Father Time, and the Baby Sun-God. None of this will come as a surprise to anyone who knows the true history of the holiday, of course.

In fact, it truth be known the holiday of Christmas has always been more Pagan than Christian with its associations of Nordic divination, Celtic fertility rites and Roman Mithraism. That is why both Martin Luther and John Calvin abhorred it, why the Puritans refused to acknowledge it, much less celebrate it (to them, no day of the year could be more holy than the Sabbath), and why it was even made illegal in Boston. The holiday was already too closely associated with the birth of older Pagan gods and heroes. And many of them (like Odysseus, Theseus, Hercules, Perseus, Jason, Prometheus, Apollo, Mithra, Horus and even Arthur) possessed a narrative of birth, death and resurrection that was uncomfortably close to that of Jesus. And to make matters worse, many of them predated the Christian Savior.

Ultimately, of course, the holiday is rooted deeply in the cycle of the year. It is the Winter Solstice that is being celebrated, seed-time of the year, the longest night and shortest day. It is the birthday of the new Sun King, the Son of God -- by whatever name you choose to call him. On this darkest of nights, the Goddess becomes the Great Mother and once again gives birth. And it makes perfect poetic sense that on the longest night of the winter, 'the dark night of our souls', there springs the new spark of hope, the Sacred Fire, the Light of the World, the Coel Coeth.

That is why Pagans have as much right to claim this holiday as Christians. Perhaps even more so, as the Christians were rather late in laying claim to it, and tried more than once to reject it. There had been a tradition in the West that Mary bore the child Jesus on the twenty-fifth day, but no one could seem to decide on the month. Finally, in 320 C.E., the Catholic Fathers in Rome decided to make it December, in an attempt to co-opt the Mithraic celebration of the Romans and the Yule celebrations of the Celts and Saxons.

There was never much pretense that the date they finally chose was historically accurate. Shepherds just don't tend their flocks by night in the high pastures in the dead of winter! But if one wishes to use the New Testament as historical evidence, this pretense may point to sometime in the spring as the time of Jesus's birth. This is because the lambing season occurs in the spring and that is the only time when shepherds are likely to 'watch their flocks by night' -- to make sure the lambing goes well. Knowing this, the Eastern half of the Church continued to reject December 25, preferring a 'movable date' fixed by their astrologers according to the moon.

Thus, despite its shaky start (for over three centuries, no-one knew when Jesus was supposed to have been born), December 25 finally began to catch on. By 528, it was a civic holiday, and all work or public business (except that of cooks, bakers or any that contributed to the delight of the holiday) was prohibited by the Emperor Justinian. In 562, the Council of Braga forbade fasting on Christmas Day, and four years later the Council of Tours proclaimed the twelve days from December 25 to Epiphany as a sacred, festive season. This last point is perhaps the hardest to impress upon the modern reader, who is lucky to get a single day off work. Christmas, in the Middle Ages, was not a single day, but rather a period of twelve days, from December 25 to January 6. The Twelve Days of Christmas, in fact. It is certainly lamentable that the modern world has abandoned this approach along with the popular Twelfth Night celebrations.

Of course, the Christian version of the holiday spread to many countries no faster than Christianity itself, which means that Christmas wasn't celebrated in Ireland until the late fifth century, in England, Switzerland and Austria until the seventh, in Germany until the eighth, and in the Slavic lands until the ninth and tenth. Not that these countries lacked their own mid-winter celebrations of Yuletide. Long before the world had heard of Jesus, Pagans had been observing the season by bringing in the Yule log, wishing on it, and lighting it from the remains of last year's log. Riddles were posed and answered, magic and rituals were practiced, wild boars were sacrificed and consumed along with large quantities of liquor, corn dollies were carried from house to house while carolling, fertility rites were practiced (girls standing under a spray of mistletoe were subject to a bit more than a kiss), and divinations were cast for the coming Spring. Many of these Pagan customs, in an appropriately watered-down form, have entered the mainstream of Christian celebration, though most celebrants do not realize (or do not mention it, if they do) their origins.

For modern Witches, Yule (from the Anglo-Saxon 'Yula', meaning 'wheel' of the year) is usually celebrated on the actual Winter Solstice, which may vary by a few days, though it usually occurs on or around December

21st. It is a Lesser Sabbat or Lower Holiday in the modern Pagan calendar, one of the four quarter-days of the year, but a very important one. This year (1988) it occurs on December 21st at 9:28 am CST. Pagan customs are still enthusiastically followed. Once, the Yule log had been the center of the celebration. It was lighted on the eve of the solstice (it should light on the first try) and must be kept burning for twelve hours, for good luck. It should be made of ash. Later, the Yule log was replaced by the Yule tree, but instead of burning it, burning candles were placed on it. In Christianity, Protestants might claim that Martin Luther invented the custom, and Catholics might grant St. Boniface the honor, but the custom can demonstrably be traced back through the Roman Saturnalia all the way to ancient Egypt. Needless to say, such a tree should be cut down rather than purchased, and should be disposed of by burning, the proper way to dispatch any sacred object.

Along with the evergreen, the holly and the ivy and the mistletoe were important plants of the season, all symbolizing fertility and everlasting life. Mistletoe was especially venerated by the Celtic Druids, who cut it with a golden sickle on the sixth night of the moon, and believed it to be an aphrodisiac. (Magically -- not medically! It's highly toxic.) But aphrodisiacs must have been the smallest part of the Yuletide menu in ancient times, as contemporary reports indicate that the tables fairly wobbled under the strain of every type of good food. And drink! The most popular of which was the 'wassail cup' deriving its name from the Anglo-Saxon term 'wæs hæl' (be whole or hale).

Medieval Christmas folklore seems endless: that animals will all freeze down as the Holy Night arrives, that bees from the '100th psalm' on Christmas Eve, that a windy Christmas will bring good luck, that a person born on Christmas Day can see the Little People, that a cricket on the hearth brings good luck, that if one opens all the doors of the house at midnight all the evil spirits will depart, that you will have one lucky month for each Christmas pudding you sample, that the tree must be taken down by Twelfth Night or bad luck is sure to follow, that 'if Christmas on a Sunday be, a windy winter we shall see', that 'hours of sun on Christmas Day, so many frosts in the month of May', that one can use the Twelve Days of Christmas to predict the weather for each of the twelve months of the coming year, and so on.

Remembering that most Christmas customs are ultimately based upon older Pagan customs, it only remains for modern Pagans to reclaim their lost traditions. In doing so, we can share many common customs with our Christian friends, albeit with a slightly different interpretation. And thus we all share in the beauty of this

most magical of seasons, when the Mother Goddess once again gives birth to the baby Sun God and sets the wheel in motion again. To conclude with a long-overflowing paraphrase: 'Goddess bless us, every one!'

Winter Solstice on Yule

The High Priestess says:

"This is the night of the solstice, the longest night of the year. Now darkness triumphs; and yet, gives way and changes into light. The breath of nature is suspended: all waits while within the Cauldron the Park King is transformed into the Infant Light. We watch for the coming of dawn, when the Great Mother again gives birth to the Prime Child Sun, who is bringer of hope and the promise of summer. This is the stillness behind motion, when time itself stops: the winter is also the circumference of all. We are awake in the night. We turn the Wheel to bring the light. We call the sun from the womb of night. Blessed Be!"

Purity, cast the circle, but do not light the candles. Invoke the Goddess and God. All sit down and begin an antiphonal chant.

All:

"To die and be reborn. The Wheel is turning. What must you lose to the night?" (repeat)

Covenant: "Fear."

All:

"Fear is lost to the night.

Fear is lost to the night.

To die and be reborn.

The Wheel is turning.

What must you lose to the night?"

Continue interpreting lines and echoing each other until the energy dies away. Stand up and link hands. The High Priest stands before the altar, holding an animal skull filled with salt. The High Priestess leads a slow spiral procession that first snakes outward so that each member is brought to face the High Priest. They are chanting:

"The light was born

And the light has died." (repeat)

Another Priestess whispers:

"Everything passes,
All fades away." (repeat)

The High Priest places a pinch of salt on each member's tongue and says:

"My body is salt,
Taste the breath of death."

The High Priestess leads the spiral inward, until the members are huddled together. She leads an improvised trance induction slowly suggesting that they crumble to the Earth and sleep. As all lie down, they are sent into a deeper trance with a multivoiced induction. As it fades out, they are told:

"You are entering a space of greatest freedom."

Time is allowed for trance in the state of suspension before birth.

The High Priestess approaches one of the coverers, stands by her head with her legs apart and pulls her through, symbolically giving her birth. She becomes part of the birth canal; they continue the process with the other coverers, the birth canal growing longer. The men of the coven take the newborns one by one and lay them back down to sleep, telling them:

"Sleep the sleep of the newborn."

As all sink back into trance, they are guided into a visualization of their hopes for their new life to come.

Priestess smears honey on their tongues, one by one, saying:

"Taste the sweetness of life."

A new chant begins softly, builds in power as it gradually wakes the sleepers, who join in on repeating lines:

"Set sail, set sail,

Follow the twilight to the West,

Where you may rest.

Set sail, set sail,

Turn your face where the sun grows dim,

Beyond the rim, beyond the rim.

Set sail, set sail.

One thing becomes another,
In the Mother, in the Mother.

Set sail, set sail,
Make of your heart a burning fire,
Build it higher, build it higher.

Set sail, set sail,
Pass in an instant through the open gate,
It will not wait, it will not wait.

Set sail, set sail,
Over the dark of the sunless sea,
You are there, you are there.

Set sail, set sail,
Guiding the ships of the rising sun,
You are the one, you are the one.

Set sail, set sail,
Into the raging wind and storm,
To be reborn, to be reborn.

Set sail, set sail,
Over the waves where the spray blows white,
To bring the light, to bring the light."

All:

"We are awake in the night!
We turn the Wheel to bring the light!
We call the sun from the womb of night!"

The High Priestess says:

"He sets his face to the West, but in the East arises!"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Who goes down in darkness?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Who sails?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "The Kerenien."

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Who brings the golden fruit?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Unstained."

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Whose hands are open?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Whose eyes are bright?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Whose face is shining?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Mornny's hope."

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Who passes the gate?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "Who returns in light?"

All: "Who is that?"

P: "A glow between twin pillars."

All: "Who is that?"

P: "A cry between thighs."

All: "Io! Evolve! Io! Evolve!"

High Priestess: (reading, repeated by all)

Queen of the sun

Queen of the Moon

Queen of the horns!

Queen of the fires!

Bring to us the Child of Promise!

It is the Great Mother

Who gives birth to Him.

It is the Lord of Life,

Who is born again!

Pain and tears

Are set aside,

When the sun comes up again!

Golden sun

Of hill and field,

Light the earth!

Light the skies!

Light the waters!

Light the times!

All: "Io! Evolve! Io! Evolve!"

The High Priest lights the fire and joint candles and all begin chanting:

"I who have died am alive again today.

And this is the sun's birthday! (repeat)

This is the birthday of life and love and wings.

And the gay great happening illimitably earth.

We are born again, we shall live again! (repeat).

The Sun Child, the Winterborn King!

Build a Power Chant, focused on reawakening life, share, feasting and friendship, ideally until dawn. Before

ending, the High Priestess says:

"The Park God has passed the Gate.

He has been reborn through the Mother.

With Him we are each reborn!"

All:

"The tide has turned!

The light will come again!

In a new dawn in a new day.

The sun is rising!

Io! Evolve! Blessed Be!"

Open the Circle.

Yule in Britain

Midwinter has long been a traditional time for celebration and merry-making in Britain. All of the activities at midwinter were meant to ensure that the season would renew itself and the days would begin to grow longer again. Greenery was brought into decorate the house; evergreen to symbolize the promise of life to come even in the darkest winter; the mistletoe, believed to hold the life of the host tree even when the tree itself appeared to be dead in winter; and the holly and ivy, symbols of male and female, both of course necessary for new life. Carols, some of which survive to this day, such as the Green Wassail, were sung. The earliest carols consisted of taking hands and singing while dancing in a ring or around a bush, May tree, or even an apple tree (as in the case of the Apple Tree Wassail, sung in hopes of a good crop of cider the following year).

The Wassail Carols in particular date back to the Viking invasions of England, about 700 A.D., when the greeting was "Ves hail". By Anglo-Saxon times, the greeting had evolved into "Waes thu hal", meaning "be whole" or "good health". The response was "drink hail", meaning "I drink and good luck be to you". People would travel from house to house in the village bringing good wishes and carrying an empty bowl. The master of the house being wassailed was expected to fill the bowl with a hot spicy ale and then it would be passed around to the carolers.

Midwinter was also a time for exchanging gifts and for feasting. Turkey only dates to the 1500's. Much more common were boar, geese, capons, swans, and pheasants. Minced pies were originally made with meat, and with the coming of spices to England during the Crusades, plum pudding became quite the traditional dish. Plum pudding makes a great dish for cakes and wine in the Yule circle, especially if you pour warmed brandy over it and set it afire before the blessing.

While I am writing about midwinter customs in Britain because our heritage in N.A.M. is largely Celtic in origin, the Isles do not have a monopoly on Yule. The Romans celebrated Saturnalia for seven days around the Solstice, and it was a time to look ahead and rejoice in the longer days to come. Slaves and masters switched places at table, and presents were exchanged. The Persian Mithraists held December 25th as sacred to the birth of their Sun God, Mithras, and celebrated it as a victory of light over darkness. And in Sweden December 13th was sacred to the Goddess Lucia, Shining One, and was a celebration of the return of the light. On Yule itself, around the 21st, bonfires were lit to honor Odin and Thor.

Midwinter has always been a Pagan holiday, so much so that during the 1600's the Christian Christmas was recognized as a celebration based on Pagan customs and was outlawed in England and many of the colonies in America.

Recipe for Wassail for 8

2 red apples
2 oz brown sugar
2 pints brown ale, apple cider, or hard cider
1/2 pint dry sherry or dry white wine
1/4 tsp cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ginger
strips of lemon peel

Coke and heat apples with brown sugar and some of the ale or cider in an oven for 20 minutes. Put in large pan and add rest of spices and lemon peel, simmer on stove top of 5 minutes. Add most of the alcohol at the last minute so it heats up but does not evaporate. Burgundy and brandy can be substituted to the ale and sherry. White sugar and halved oranges may also be added to taste.

Plum Pudding

1/4 lb. flour
1/4 lb. currants
1 tsp. salt
1/4 lb. sultanas (small raisins)
1 tsp. allspice
2 cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped
1 tsp. ginger
1 cup or cut mixed (citrus) peel
1 tsp. cinnamon
2 oz. shredded almonds
pinch fresh grated nutmeg
Juice and grated rind of 1 orange and 1 lemon

1/4 lb. fresh breadcrumbs

1/4 lb. molasses (treacle)

1/2 lb. shredded sweet

1 large egg

1/4 lb. brown sugar

2 tbs. brandy

1/4 lb. dried chopped apricots

1/4 lb. prunes

1/4 lb. dates

Sift flour, salt and spices into a large bowl. Stir in breadcrumbs, sweet and sugar. Add fruits, peel and rind. Beat lemon and orange juice, molasses and eggs together and add to other ingredients. Steam for 6 hours - a coffee tin filled with the mixture and placed in a steamer in a covered pan does well. A little vinegar and lemon juice in the water will prevent the pan from discoloration. After steaming cover in a cool place and let age as long as possible -- usually about 3 weeks. To serve, re-steam for another 2 hours. Remove from tin, douse with warm brandy and set it ablaze!

If you haven't got six weeks before Yule to prepare a proper pudding (I never do) a tinned one from Crosse & Blackwell will do fine. Just be sure to always heat the pudding first, no matter who made it, or all the warmed brandy in the world won't help. And don't forget the hard sauce!

Witches' Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram

Non-Solar symbolism

A ritual can be modified in many ways, to ritit it for a different set of symbols, for example, I have taken the liberty of doing some research into alternate symbols for the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram since I know that you work a lunar-feminine current (Wicca) whereas I use more solar-masculine symbols in my current (Thelemite). The Qabalistic Cross This might be used as is, though you could use the English if you don't feel that the Hebrew is relevant. I am sure you recognize the words as being similar to the end of the Lord's Prayer in the King James Version: 'Unto thee, the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory, forever!' Amen. I would point out that this formula was around a long time before Christ, much less the translations of the Standard Revised Version of the Bible. If you dislike such a specifically Christian form, it may be replaced with the words KETHER (KETH-THER) MALKUTH, GEBURATH, GEDULATH (or Crown, Kingdom, Power, Mercy), the spheres of occult energy that you are invoking with the Q-Cross. The mental images remain the same. You could even avoid these Hebrew symbols entirely, using Names and formulae more suitable to raising the Cone of Power, which is what you are doing here in Wiccan terms. See the 'Wiccan Cross' below.

The principle is:

1. Invoke strongly the presence of the Supreme Creative Principle as you conceive it (or in your case, Her) to be. Your Name for the Goddess as Creatrix would be most suitable.
2. Draw down power from this Godhead and project it through your body into the Earth. Invoke strongly the Supreme symbol of Creation in your Tradition: maybe the God -- as Son of the Goddess and Lord of the Trees, and as John Barleycorn, the ever-born and dying One.
3. Establish on your right side the Active Principle -- Yang -- the Projective Energy of the Universe. A God image, I should think.

4. Establish on your left side the Passive Principle -- Yin -- the Receiving Energy of the Universe.
A Goddess force I feel.
5. Strongly visualize yourself at the center of these axes between the Initiatives. This centers you at the middle of the Sacred Space to be created -- the still point at the center of the universe.

The Pentagrams

Again the pentagram should be used. This symbol is universal to many, many systems of magic, including Wicca, as you know. The five-pointed star has supreme power over the Elements: Spirit, Fire, Water, Air and Earth. It drives off negative influences and attracts positive ones. It is an essential part of the rite and there is no symbol that can take its place as effectively.

The Names

I prefer using the Hebrew God-Names as is. In this connection they express formulae that govern the Elements and are no more religious than $E=MC^2$ squared. However, there are equivalent Wiccan God-Names, which I describe in the next section as substitutes for the Archangels. The use of the same Names to activate the stars and to invoke the Elemental forces is quite in keeping with the Wiccan tradition which does not use the same hierarchical system of God-Name, Archangel, Angel, Ruler, Spirit, etc. that Gabbalism does.

The Archangelic Invocation

Instead of the Hebrew Archangels I described, you could use Wiccan Deities to invoke the 'pure' form of the Elements.

AIR - EAST:

The Air image in Wicca seems to be masculine and relates to Hermes, the Black Man, the messenger of the Gods, or the Sky Gods: Odin or Lugh as the rising Sun God. The God can be imagined as riding through the night sky, at the head of the Wild Hunt, or rising above the branches of the world-ash. Instead of the sword given to Ragnhvald, the God might carry a staff, spear or wand, which is attributed to Air in most Wiccan traditions.

FIRE-SOUTH:

The Fire image is definitely masculine and relates to the Horned God: Cerrunos, Llewelyn call Him what you will. He stands in the hot light of the noonday sun radiating fiery energy. He would bear an Athame or sword, which is the weapon of Fire in most Wiccan styles.

WATER-WEST:

The Water image is the Maiden, the mistress of the Moon and the Tides: Aradia, Artemis, Venus rising from the waves. Her image is lit by the silver light of the moon upon a tranquil reach of water or the foaming sea. She might hold the chalice, symbol of water (alternatively, the cauldron might be envisioned).

EARTH-NORTH:

The Goddess in Her aspect as Earth Mother is here: Hecate, Hecabondia, Permeten. She stands beneath the golden life-giving sun surrounded by the fruits of the Earth. Before her a platter flows with good things of the Earth, for the dish/shield/platter is the pentacle, magical instrument of Earth. These are only bare sketches of the magical images that a witch might use to replace the Qabalistic images of the traditional pentagram ritual. I offer them for what they are worth.

A few points to note:

1. The phases of the sun used in the triangular images (East: Dawn; South: Noon; West: Sunset; North: Midnight) are not the same, nor are they as important to Wicca. Instead, the poles of day and night are established: Night for the East-West axis and Day for the North-South axis.
2. The male-female poles are established with the masculine images (Hecate and Cerrunos) attributed to the active Elements (Air and Fire) and the feminine images (Aradia and Hecabondia) to the passive Elements (Water and Earth). Note that one figure of each gender stands in light, and one in darkness. This male-female/positive-negative/active-passive polarity is central to virtually all systems of magic, eg. the yin/yang symbol in oriental systems. I may be betraying solar-phallic tendencies by these assignments, and you may want to use different attributions: The Maiden can be Air and the Mother switch to Water, with the Hunter moving into Earth, for example. Heck, the dual God Forms should perhaps be invoked in each quarter, eg. Venus/Ariadis imagery in East or South; Hecate/Hecate in West, etc.

The Star Of David

The last line of the Invocation refers to a 'six-rayed star' and the mental work calls for imagining a Star of David. This is not a specifically Jewish symbol in this context. The six-pointed star, or hexagram, is the Gnostic symbol par excellence of initiation and spiritual illumination. The upward-pointing triangle represents the aspiration of the magician to the Gods, and the downward-pointing triangle represents the divine power flowing down to the world. These meet at the moment of magic and the interlaced triangles forming the hexagram symbolize the power of this meeting. Should you prefer not to use the Star of David, you can replace the mental image with any symbol showing the meeting of your soul and the power of the Goddess. This can even be a private symbol, one that is meaningful only to you. Alternatively, you can just envision the sphere of white light from the Q-Cross, as a symbol of divine power. Replace the words about the 'six-rayed star' with some descriptive term: 'the seal of the Goddess,' or 'the sign of my awakening,' or simply 'the light Pyra'.

Wiccan Pentagram ritual

WICCAN CROSS

Face East. Touch forehead. Say IO EVOE HERTHA ('Blessed be Hertha' or other Name by which you worship the Goddess as Creatrix) Touch solar plexus or genitals. Say IO EVOE CERNUINOS ('Blessed be Cernunnos' or other name by which you worship the Horned God as the Earth) Touch right shoulder. Say EKO EKO AZARAK ('Hail, hail tower of time) Touch left shoulder. Say EKO EKO AMELAK ('Hail, hail to the glory') Extend arms in form of a cross. Say IO EVOE ('Blessed be') Clasp hands upon breast and say 'So mote it be.'

CIRCLE OF PROTECTION

Trace pentagram in East. Say HERNÉ. Trace circle of protection until facing South. Trace pentagram in South. Say CERNUINOS. Trace circle of protection until facing West. Trace pentagram in West. Say TRAPIA. Trace circle of protection until facing North. Trace pentagram in North. Say HABONDIA. Finish tracing circle, closing it in the East.

INVOCATION OF THE GREAT GODS

Return to center of circle and face East. Extend arms in form of a cross. Chant:

Before me HERNÉ The Huntsman

Behind me TRAPIA The Maiden

On my right hand CERNUINOS, the Horned God

On my left hand HABONDIA, the Great Mother

About me flame the pentagrams

And above me shines the light of the Goddess.

Repeat the Wiccan Cross. Rather than performing this in the rather measured cadences of Cabalistic Ritual, a form of dancing and chanting more pleasing to the God-forms of Wicca might profitably be devised.

On the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram

The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram is one of the chief rituals of Western Magic. It has been with us at least since the Golden Dawn of the nineteenth century, and it has penetrated into all the many Golden Dawn spinoffs, including Neo-Paganism. Yet there is still no widely available, clear instruction. The directions of the magical orders are mere mnemonics for those who are assumed to have personal instructors. To formulate my personal approach to the ritual, to aid any others who may be considering practicing the LBR, and to satisfy the idle curiosity of any gawking onlookers, I have put together this short discussion of the ritual and its symbolism and pentagrammatics.

A. Intent of the Ritual

The real action of a magical ritual takes place in the mind. Ritual is a form of moving meditation. The effect is also primarily psychological.* The LBR is a tool to facilitate meditation.

[*Not all players would agree with this statement. Many would say that the effect of the LBR is a fortified and cleansed area on the astral plane, which they think is as real as Hooberan if not more so. It doesn't really matter in practice.]

The experience of a proper LBR is pleasurable and soothing, yet energizing and empowering. One is made at home in the mystical realm, protected from lunacies and phantasms by strongly imagined wards. This solace from mundane experience is a precondition for more serious works of meditation or ritual, but it can also form a healthy part of the life of the mind by itself.

B. The Ritual

I'll just reprint the description of the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram from Liber O, a publication of the occult order T.O.T.

- i. Touching the forehead, say "Ateh (Unto Thee)."
- ii. Touching the breast, say "Malkuth (The Kingdom)."
- iii. Touching the right shoulder, say "ve-Geburah (and the Power)."

- iv. Touching the left shoulder, say "ve-Ge'ulah (and the Glory).
- v. Claspng the hands upon the breast, say "le-Olam, Amen (To the Ages, Amen)."
- vi. Turning to the East, make a pentagram (that of Earth) with the proper weapon (usually the Wand). Say (i.e. vibrate), "IHVH" (Ye-ho-wah*).
- vii. Turning to the South, the same, but say "ADNI" (Adonai).
- viii. Turning to the West, the same, but say "ADIH" (Elohim).
- ix. Turning to the North, the same, but say "ADLA" (Aglia).
- x. Extending the arms in the form of a cross say:
 - xi. "Before me Raphael;
 - xii. Behind me Gabriel;
 - xiii. On my right hand Michael;
 - xiv. On my left hand Anael;
 - xv. For about me flames the Pentagram.
- xvi. And in the Column stands the six-rayed Star."
- xvii. until xxi. Repeat steps (i) to (v), the "Cabalistia Cross."

[* Modern scholarship has a different take on the pronunciation of the Big Guy's name. I use "Yahweh" rather than the "Ye-ho-wah" of Liber 0 because that's what the Catholic priests of my youth taught me to say, and I've never been able to shake it off. Use whatever pronunciation you prefer, on a different name altogether.]

C. Politics of the Ritual

With practice, you will no doubt come up with your own style of performance, and your own different symbolism for ritual acts. Different people do rituals as differently as actors play parts, even though the lines and motions may be fundamentally the same. [The alternative is an authoritarian, dogmatic horror which is alien to

the deep occult understanding of religion, but is still common in magical groups.) Slavish imitation will get you nowhere in Magic -- except, perhaps, to some high spiritual degree!

The Christianity -- or at least angelic monotheism -- of the ritual symbolism may give a start to some. Many of us involved in occultism have strongly negative feelings about Christianity. These are perhaps justified, but there are a few saving graces here.

First, as with any ritual, you should feel free to make it yours, to mess around with it. If you don't start to at least play with the styles of a ritual after a while, you are probably not doing it very well. It is perfectly legitimate to substitute cograte symbols at any time. However, the saying in the martial arts is that one first learns another's style, and after mastering it, moves on to create one's own. For a beginner, it will be easiest simply to use an existing ritual form in order to explore the meaning of a banishing ritual.

Given that experience, which transcends any mere set of symbols, one may devise a form more in keeping with the emergence of one's personal style. For instance, Neo-Pagans use a highly ritualized form of the same basic ritual in many of their traditions, but with non-Christian deities, spirits, and heroes at the quarters. Theister Crowley wrote a new version which made the performance more dance-like, and used the names of Thelamite deities and officers rather than monotheist gods and angels. My private version, called "Opening the Threshold", is entirely atheistic and philosophical.

In any case, of those people who so abhor Christianity, how many have looked at some of the practices of historical pagans in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas? No religion should ever be "accepted" by an occultist. When using any religion's symbolism, the adept should cut to its sacred poetical core and discard the political dross. By this standard, Christianity looks about as good as any other religion. Without this standard and by factoring in historical excesses and power plays, almost all known religions look just about as bad as Christianity.

In other words, someone who will happily use Norse gods, Arthurian heroes, Taoist immortals, Vodoun loa, or what have you in rituals, but will never touch a Christian angel, is guilty of the same narrowness he or she probably imputes to the Christians.

The Vibration of God-Names

In the LBR, the vibration of the god-names "changes" or "enters" the pentagrams in the air. This is difficult to describe, but easy to recognize. There is a feeling of presence in one of these changed warding images -- though not necessarily a feeling of true externality or separate intelligence. We are told to "vibrate" the names. The description and illustration of the "vibration" given in Liber O have been known to mislead people into hilarious postures. What the picture most resembles is the shuffling monster from the movie *The Mummy*. To the modern eye, it is remarkable how truly unclear a photograph can be. I didn't learn how to vibrate a god-name until I signed up with yet another occult order and was taught it in person. I wouldn't wish the ensuing experience on anyone, so here is a description which I hope will be adequate in print.

Vibration phase i -- The Sign of the Entrepreneur (1-4)

1. Stand upright. Blow all the air out of your lungs. Hold your arms straight out at your sides.
- 2a. Close your eyes and inhale nasally, imagining that the breath is the name. The exact nature of this imagination differs from person to person. Thus, you imagine yourself inhaling the name into your lungs.
- 2b. As you inhale, sweep your forearms smoothly and deliberately up so that your fists rest on your temples.
- 2c. Imagine the breath moving down through your torso slowly, and through your pelvis, your legs, and finally to the soles of your feet. (Don't do this so slowly that you are hunting for air when the name reaches your feet).
- 3a. The instant the inhaled vibrational name hits the soles of your feet, imagine it rushing back up and out.
- 3b. Simultaneously, throw yourself forward, thrusting your left foot forward about twelve inches (or thirty centimeters) and catching yourself on it. Your hands shoot forward, together, like a given. You bend forward at the waist so that your torso winds up parallel to the floor.
4. The air in your lungs should be blown out through your nose at the same time, but imagine the name shooting out straight ahead.

Steps 2-4 are known as the Sign of the Entrepreneur, or of Honor. This symbolizes powerful active energy. The Entrepreneur should be something of a "rush". The vibrational name is projected outwards into more tangible manifestation -- in this case, in the pentagrams of the LBR, which are changed by the force of the projected god-names.

It is highly inadvisable to omit the portion of step (1b) which reads "watching yourself on it." But again, I have no desire to intringe on your freedom of choice.

Vibration phase ii -- The Sign of Silence (S)

S. Finally, withdraw into a standing position, left arm hanging at your side, right forefinger on lips, left foot pointing ninety degrees out from the body.

Step S is called the Sign of Silence, or of Harpocrates. This Egyptian god was mistakenly believed (at the turn of the century) to pertain to silence, because his finger or thumb was touching his lips. This gesture is now believed to be a symbol of childhood; this connection appears in the World card of Crowley's "Book of Thoth" Tarot deck. Harpocrates was the god of the Sun at dawn, and so symbolizes women, beauty, potential, growth.

So, step S may be done in this academically corrected light instead.

However, the "hush" gesture of the Golden Prawn Sign of Silence is adequate for the modern occultist, even if deprived of its Prime Identification. It is a common gesture, at least in the European culture, meaning silence. Silence perhaps balances the ultra-active Sign of the Entertainer better than does the more scholarly positive/active "Sign of Harpocrates the Rising Sun", and silence is surely no alien concept to mystics.

The Invocation

The pentagrams are given form by the drawing, life by the vibration, identity by the four-part prayer of steps (x) to (xiv). Some people do very elaborate visualizations of angelic guardians on each of (xi) to (xiv). Because of my tragic personal deficiencies, I am content with strong feelings of presence, identity, and divinity in each of the four directions.

A horizontal cross is built up step by step as you say, "Before me Raphael", etc. with you at the center, and the position of your arms forms a vertical cross, a renewal of the Cabalistic Cross from the start of the ritual. You may feel a quite peculiar rising and expansion when both of these crosses are formulated. One has become the center of the geometry of the space, and it is like a little world in itself, cut apart from the mundane currents of everyday experience.

Steps (xv) and (xvi) are when the real banishing takes place, during "For about me flames the pentagram, and in the column stands the six-rayed star." A great pulse of force is emitted during these steps, imposing the personal will on the space and clearing it of all hostile influences.

After this is done, the involved "archangels" maintain the banishing effect, guarding in all four directions. Of course this talk of angels is all bullshit -- the importance lies in the psychological effect. Whether there "really is" an archangel standing there, keeping out inimical spirits is not important. The "feeling of cleanliness" is what matters.

Concluding Cross

The final Qabalistic Cross is an affirmation of the completeness and symmetry of the ritual, and also a new self-consecration. This is more efficacious than the previous Cross because it is done in a banished environment.

One is now ready to do a formal invocation, an evocation, a meditation on whatever the overall purpose may be. The LBR is a preliminary ceremony, although it has a beneficial effect in itself. It can profitably be done as a stand-alone ritual, but you should move on. The LBR should keep away the horrible ideas that turn so many novices away from Magick. Its mastery is a first step to adeptship.

Mystical Pentagram

The Mystical Pentagram is a technique which will enhance psychic self-awareness. Practiced on a daily basis it will produce surprising individual results. One of the features of this technique is that it encourages personal development by allowing each entity to discover a personal mantra which corresponds to the five elements.

To begin you will need a table of correspondences such as "777" by Aleister Crowley. Look up the names of the gods and goddesses which correspond to the air element. Pick a name which when chanted 'feels' right to you. For example, Nu is the Egyptian lord of the firmament and corresponds to air. If I were inclined towards Egyptian deities, I would chant the name Nu for several minutes to see what effect transpired. If I felt relaxed, comfortable, and generally positive I would inwardly know that this name would be in tune with my inner self. Proceed to find correspondences for fire, water, and earth in the same manner and finally for spirit since it is the aggregate of the four common elements.

Once you have found a personal mantra or a chant consisting of five names, vowel sounds, etc. You are ready to proceed with the practical application of the Mystical Pentagram.

Assume your favorite meditation position, relax and begin to breathe in a rhythmic pattern; i.e. inhale count one, two, three, four, exhale count one, two, three, four and so on. Continue to breathe in such a manner for about five minutes so that a definite rhythm is firmly established.

Visualize the five psychic centers. Memorize their positions so that you become familiar with the positions.

Next visualize a brilliant white light forming a circle above your head in the spirit center. Mentally draw a white light pentagram within the circle of light. This should be an invoking pentagram.

If your mind should begin to wander, gently bring it back and vocally vibrate the mantra you have chosen for the spirit center. Let your mind dwell on this center and intone your mantra several times for at least five minutes.

Next see a shaft of white light radiate down through your skull stopping at your throat near the adam's apple. See a circle of white light begin to form and pulsate. Mentally draw an invoking pentagram within the

circle of light and vocally vibrate your chosen mantra for the air center. Continue to stimulate this center for at least five minutes.

Now see a shaft of white light radiate down through your torso stopping at your fire center. This is located just above the navel. See a brilliant white light begin to pulsate at this center and draw an invoking pentagram within the circle of light. As your mind begins to wander gently guide it back to the image of the glowing white pentagram. Here vibrate your chosen fire mantra. Once this center is stimulated the sensation is unmistakable. A mild tingling or vibration of the solar-plexus area is physically experienced. Continue to dwell on this center for at least five minutes.

See the shaft of white light push down to the water center which is located in the groin area. Here, too, a brilliant circle of white light should be visualized. Again draw an invoking pentagram within the circle of light. Intone the mantra for the water center and repeat the sound several times for the next five minutes.

Having arrived thus far, see the shaft of white light radiate down through your legs stopping at the bottom of your feet which is the earth center. Form a brilliant, white, pulsating circle of light and draw an invoking pentagram within the circle. Intone your earth mantra and vocally vibrate the sound several times during the next five minutes.

When all of the energy centers have been stimulated, direct the light energy from the spirit center to the earth center. As you exhale see the light travel from the top of your head down through your body to the bottom of your feet. As you inhale see the energy travel from your feet up through your body up to the top of your head, the spirit center. These circulations should be persisted for at least seven complete circuits.

See the energy cleanse and vitalize every part of your being and expand your awareness to cosmic consciousness. As you continue to repeat this technique each day you will begin to see and feel a change in your psychic awareness and a marked improvement in your health.

Don't become discouraged if you don't achieve results immediately. This technique produces very positive effects but they are cumulative in nature. Be gentle with your inner self however you must also be persistent and keep the communication open. It is also a good idea to perform this exercise at the same time each day in order to allow your body cycles incorporate the energy flow in a natural order.

Basic Spell Construction

Because of the very nature of Magic, each working should be highly individualized and personal. Even if following a traditional spell, it should be tailored to your specific needs to be most effective for you. Understanding the basics of Spell Construction will enable you to formulate your own specific, effective spells for any purpose you desire.

Preliminary planning is necessary. The very first step is to decide precisely what your desired end result is to be. Before you can start, you must decide where you are going. You must be very explicit.

It is important, also, that you choose your time carefully. You should take into consideration all astrological implications, energy currents and Moon phases.

The Moon is the astronomical body closest to us and, therefore, has a profound influence upon us. It is very important to choose a time when the Moon is in an astrological sign which is appropriate for your working. For example: Aries/Aktion --- Enthusiasm, Taurus/Renewal --- Sensuality, Gemini/Communication --- Curiosity, Cancer/Emotion --- Nurturing, Leo/Vitality --- Determined, Virgo/Organizing --- Studious, Libra/Balance --- Cooperation, Scorpio/Sexual --- Philosophical, Capricorn/Truthfulness --- Ambitious, Aquarius/Innovation --- Social, Pisces/Sensitivity --- Idealistic.

Bear in mind that magical workings for gain, increase or bringing things to you, should be initiated when the Moon is Waxing (from New to Full); when the Moon is Waning (from Full to New), it is time for magical workings of decrease or sending away.

The highest energy occurs at the Full Moon and, therefore, this is the most powerful time for magical workings. The New Moon is the next most powerful time for Magic.

Whenever possible, follow Nature's own energy flows. There is a natural time for starting things (a planting time), for maturing things (a growing time), for reaping things (a harvest time) and, of course, a time for rest and planning.

Flowing with these currents will make your magical work much easier.

Remember to plan your project for a time of uninterrupted privacy. It is important that you have no distractions. Generally speaking, it is best to work as late at night as possible. A time when there is less frantic energy is most appropriate. You might consider Midnight or later.

In choosing a place to do your magical working pay particular attention to your needs. For you must be comfortable. Your place should be private, quiet and secure. If at all possible, set aside a special place for this purpose only. An unused room, a special corner of your bedroom, a quiet, secluded spot in your garden. A place that is yours. A place that you can come to whenever need arises and that is as free from intrusion of others as possible.

Prior to the night of your magical working, gather together the things that you will need. All of the things used are tools. They have no inherent magic. They are to help you create a mood. If correctly made and used, they will trigger primitive responses from deep within you. They should be chosen with care. Consider the purpose of your ritual and choose your tools accordingly. If your magic is to be sexual, your candles, oils, incenses and so forth should bring forth a sexual response. If the desired result of your Magic is tranquility, then the tools should make you feel calm, peaceful and serene. Any candles you might use should not have commercially added fragrances as these may not be appropriate for your working.

Prior to your ritual, prepare yourself and your equipment by any means necessary to clean and purify. Historically, people have fasted, followed meticulous and detailed bathing practices, practiced chastity and used many other methods.

Most often a ritual bath is the preferred method. A bath frequently utilizing candlelight, fragrant herbs, bath salts or sensuous oils. A sumptuous hot bath, special bathing preparations and appropriate lighting, combined, can create the soothing effect which will help in the very important step of relaxing and clearing the mind completely of all mundane thoughts and experiences of the day. Your ritual bath should, also, begin to set the specific vibrations conducive to your purpose into motion. You must not only cleanse and purify but must also begin to create the type of energy necessary. Once your purification process has been accomplished, you are now ready to begin. Proceed to the special place you have previously chosen in which to perform your magic. If at all possible, you should make use of the primitive responses set into motion by a well chosen piece of music.

Your music should start slowly and build to a rousing climax.

As you use your oils, light your candle, or incense (or utilize any other tool you have chosen), you should begin to further intensify the energy that you have set into motion around you. A high degree of intensity is vitally important.

The Altered State of Consciousness that you must reach is not a meditative state. Anything that interferes with your ability to concentrate upon reach and control the high energy state necessary to perform magic should be avoided, such as screaming children, a sink full of dirty dishes, use of alcohol or drugs, etc.

Do not scatter your energy by attempting to do more than one magical working at a time.

Remember that Magic is the manipulation of energy, a thought is a form of energy and a visualization is an even stronger form of energy. Your visualization can be a method used to intensify further and direct your will. Your visualization can be the method by which you control the magical energy you have produced. You must know what you want. You must see it. You must feel the high energy flow. You must direct it.

One of the most important elements in the practice of any form of Magic is the Universal Law of Cause and Effect. This means that whatever you do (or don't do) you cause something to happen.

The most important consideration is the Universal Law of Retribution. This means that no matter what you do, it comes back to you in like kind.

It is the nature of things that as you send something out it gains momentum, so that, by the time it comes back to you, it is three times stronger. If you do something nice for someone, someone will do something nice for you.

"As you weave and
spin your spell,
Three fold return
the tale will tell."

Tool Blessing Ritual

A purification of objects for ritual use and their transformation into magical items.

(The area is prepared by placing a quantity of each element in the proper quarter, as well as preparing the altar in the usual way. If available, a cauldron (empty) is placed in the center of the circle. Candles are placed at each of the four corners and lit, progressing clockwise from the east. Salt and water are blessed, and the celebrants are purified with them. A magic circle is cast, and wárittonens summoned. The god is then drawn down as follows:

The priest stands before the altar in the Osiris position, arms crossed across chest and feet together. The Priestess kneels before him with face and arms upraised.)

PS: Hephaestus, forger of magic,
descend upon this the body of thy priest and servant,
lead us the strength of your arms.
Prometheus, shaper of man,
descend upon this the body of thy priest and servant,
lead us your fire and foresight.
Morpheus, weaver of dreams,
descend upon this the body of thy priest and servant,
lead us your subtlety and vision.

P: I am he, the shaper-god,
forger, builder, artisan, smith.
With strength and craft I form the world.

(The Priest helps the Priestess to rise and she stands in the center of the circle in the god position, extending her arms outward and down, palms facing forward. The Priest kneels before her with head bowed.)

P: Clotho, spinner of the strand of life,
descend upon this the body of thy priestess and servant,
lead us your wheel of making.
Hecate, caster of spells,
descend upon this the body of thy priestess and servant,
lead us the power of your magic.
Aphrodite, goddess of love,

Presend upon this the body of thy priestess and servant.

Grant us eros, philos, aristos, agape.

PS: I am she, the weaver-goddess.

Painter, poet, sculptor, witch.

With art and love I form the world.

[The priestess extends her hands to the priest and helps him rise. The priest cups both hands and scoops from the cauldron, then offers to the priestess.]

P: Drink now from the cauldron of Cerriamen, whose draughts bring knowledge, peace and life.

[The priestess sips from the cupped hands, after which the priest drinks. The objects to be blessed are taken from the altar by the priest and moved widdershins to the west quarter, and immersed in the water there.]

P: Spirits of the west, in water born

In cool waters cleanse these tools

And wash from them all hurt and harm

This I ask, this charge I lay.

By oak and ash and bitter thorn

[The objects are moved by the priestess to the south quarter and moved above the flames there.]

PS: Spirits of the south, in fire born

In shining flames purify these tools

And burn from them all impurities

This I ask, this charge I lay.

By oak and ash and bitter thorn

[The objects are moved to the east quarter by the priest and moved through the incense smoke.]

P: Spirits of the east, in sweet air born

In smiling winds polish these tools

And sweep from them all phantasm and illusion

This I ask, this charge I lay.

By oak and ash and bitter thorn

[The objects are moved to the altar by the priestess, and placed upon the pentacle.]

PS: Spirits of the north in cool earth born
In mother earth ground these tools
And take from them all spirits dark
This I ask, this charge I lay,
By oak and ash and bitter thorn.

(The person consecrating the tools now offers an invocation or prepared charge to the stems, stating their purpose and mode of use. They are then taken up by the priestess and moved to the east quarter.)

PS: Spirits of the east, from the bright air come,
Fill these tools with the smiling energies of the whirlwind
Make them float like the breeze
Spirits of air, hearken unto me,
As I do will, so mote it be.

(The tools are now taken up by the priest and moved to the south quarter.)

P: Spirits of the south, from mild fire come,
Fill these tools with the burning energies of the flames
Make them glow with bright fire
Spirits of fire, hearken unto me,
As I do will, so mote it be.

(The tools are now taken up by the priestess and moved to the west quarter.)

P: Spirits of the west, from soothing water come,
Fill these tools with the calming energies of the warm rain
Make them flow like the tide
Spirits of water, hearken unto me,
As I do will, so mote it be.

(The tools are now taken up by the priestess and moved to the altar.)

PS: Spirits of the north, from firm earth come,
Fill these tools with the ordering energies of the growing crops
Make them flourish like grasses on the vine
Spirits of earth, hearken unto me,
As I do will, so mote it be.

(The priest takes the tools from the altar and steps backwards. The priestess stands at the altar facing south towards the priest. The priest extends his right arm in parallel to the ground, between he and the priestess, with the tools in his hand.)

P: I am the god, ever desiring.
I am the stag in the woods.
I am the sun in the noonday sky.
I am the lover in the dark.
I offer passion strength, devotion and the sweetness of the fruit.

(The priestess extends her right arm in like fashion, and places her hand over that of the priest.)

P.S: I am the goddess, ever nurturing.
I am the tempting beauty of the maid.
I am the quiet strength of the mother.
I am the infinite wisdom of the crone.
I offer life, love, warmth and the fruitfulness of the fields.

(Both step towards each other and turn their hands and arms so the fingers point upwards with the palms facing their own chest, cupping the other's palm between and holding the tools. They clasp each other with their left arms.)

P&P.S: Male and female, yin and yang, light and dark, action and stillness. Apart we are, forever incomplete, but together we form one. In our joining we are blessed. In our union the limitless energy of universe is released and captured here.

P: As I do will.

P.S: As I do will

P&P.S: As we do will, so mote it be.

(The priest and priestess kiss, then release grasps. If the number and size of the tools precludes them being held in one hand simultaneously, the latter changing section should be repeated for each. The tools are replaced on the altar. Cakes and wine are blessed and consumed and a period of relaxation and rest follows.

(The water-towers are then dismissed and the circle opened.)

Dedication of Altar and Athame

Altar

This Altar in the circle's center,
A focal point that only good may enter.

Erected to God and Goddess in strength,
Circular, it has neither breadth nor length.

Focal point in A Circle of Power,
A mighty lens for every Tower!

Sacred to Lord, Maiden, Lady and Crown,
The foundation of many a powerful Crown!

Resting Place of Magick and its implements,
Let veneration and Love be our only sentiments!

A tool of will, powerful and true,
As it is willed, So Motre it Be!

Athame

Mighty Priestess, Gracious Lady and Mighty Lord,
As I perform this ritual, I may hearken to my word.

This tool, conceived in Mind of Air. (point east)
Forged and formed in Fire of the South. (point south)
Power tool for those who dare,
I CLAIM thee with my mouth! (hiss blade)

Tempered with Water for Strength. (point west)
Also dedicated to the Earthin Power. (point north)
Blessed be, entire in length. (hissommel)
As it paralyzes of every Tower!

By the Power of Cosmos, As above, (point up)
The Expression of Cosmos, is below. (point down)
Upon this instrument of Will and Love,
My Sacred Tie I bestow! (1 drop of blood on each side and hilt)

This tool is dedicated to my service of Lady and Lord,
Please find this work beneficial and good.
Bound to thee by homage, dedication, effort and word,
Bound to me by words, will and blood.

By the powers of earth, sky, star and sea;
Such is my will, So mote it be!

Beltane: Its History and Modern Celebration in Wicca in America

The celebration of May 1st, or Beltane as it is known in Wicca Circles, is one of the most important festivals of our religious year. I will attempt here to answer some of the most often asked questions about this holiday. An extensive bibliography follows the article so that the interested reader can do further research.

1. Where does the festival of Beltane originate?

Beltane, as practiced by modern day Witches and Pagans, has its origins among the Celtic peoples of Western Europe and the British Isles, particularly Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

2. What does the word Beltane mean?

Dr. Proinsias MacLiam defines the word as follows: "... the Irish name for May Day is Beltane, of which the second element, 'tane', is the word for fire, and the first, 'bel', probably means 'shining or brilliant.'" The festival was known by other names in other Celtic countries. Beltaine in Ireland, Bealtunn in Scotland, Sŵann do Boaldyn on the Isle of Mann and Galan May in Wales.²

3. What was the significance of this holiday to the ancients?

To the ancient Celts, it symbolized the coming of spring. It was the time of year when the crops began to sprout, the animals bore their young and the people could begin to get out of the houses where they had been cooped up during the long dark cold winter months. Keep in mind that the people in those days had no electric lights or heat and that the Celtic countries are at a much more northerly latitude than many of us are used to. At that latitude, spring comes much later and winter lasts much longer than in most of the US. The coming of fair weather and longer daylight hours would be most welcome after a long cold and dark winter.

4. How did the ancient Celts celebrate this festival?

The most ancient way of observing this day is with fire. Beltane, along with Samhain (Nov. 1), Imbolc (Feb. 1), and Lughnassadh (Aug. 1), was one of the four great "fire festivals" which marked the turning points of the Celtic year. The most ancient records tell us that the people would extinguish all the hearth fires in the country and then relight them from the "need fires" lit by the druids (who used friction as a means of ignition). In many areas, the cattle were driven between two great bonfires to protect them from disease during the coming year. It is my personal belief, although I have no documentation to back up the assumption, that certain herbs would have been burnt in the fires, thus producing smoke which would help destroy parasites which might make cattle and other livestock ill.

5. In what other ways was this festival celebrated?

One of the most beautiful customs associated with this festival was "bringing in the May." The young people of the villages and towns would go out into the fields and forests at Midnight on April 30th and gather flowers with which to bedeck themselves, their families and their homes. They would process back into the villages, stopping at each home to leave flowers and to receive the best of food and drink that the home had to offer. This custom is somewhat similar to "trick or treat" at Samhain and was very significant to the ancients. John Williamson in his study "The Oak King, the Holly King and the Yule King" writes: "These revelers were messengers of the renewal of vegetation and they assumed the right to punish the niggardly, because avarice (as opposed to generosity) was dangerous to the community's hope for the abundance of nature. At an important time like the coming of summer, food, the substance of life, must be ritually circulated generously within the community in order that the cosmic circuit of life's substance may be kept in motion (trees, flocks, harvests, etc.)."² These revelers would bless the fields and flocks of those who were generous and wish ill harvests on those who withheld their bounty.

6. What about maypoles?

The maypole was an adjunct to the festival of bringing in the May. It is a phallic symbol, and as such represented fertility to the participants in the festival. In older days, the revelers who went into the woods would cut a tree and bring it into town, decking it with flowers and greenery and dance

around it clockwise (also called deosil, meaning "sun-wise", the direction of the sun's apparent travel across the face of the Earth) to bring fertility and good luck. The ribbons which we associate with the maypole today were a later addition.

7. Why was fertility important?

The people who originated this custom lived in close connection with the land. If the flocks and fields were fertile, they were able to eat; if there was famine or drought, they went hungry. It is hard for us today to relate to this concept, but to the ancients, it was literally a life and death matter.

The Celts were a very close tribal people, and fertility of their women literally meant continuity of the tribe.

8. How is the maypole connected with fertility?

Many scholars see the maypole as a phallic symbol. In this aspect, it is a very powerful symbol of the fertility of nature and spring.

9. How did these ancient customs come down to us?

When Christianity came to the British Isles, many of the ancient holy sites were taken over by the new religion and converted to Christian sites. Many of the old Gods and Goddesses became Christian saints, and many of the customs were appropriated. Charles Squire says, "An ingenious theory was invented after the introduction of Christianity, with the purpose of allowing such ancient rites to continue with a changed meaning. The passing of

persons and cattle through flame or smoke was explained as a practice which interposed a magic protection between them and the powers of evil."⁴ This is precisely what the original festival was intended to do: only the definition of "evil" had changed. These old customs continued to be practiced in many areas for centuries. "In Scotland in 1282, John, the priest in Ivenhething, led the young girls of his parish in a phallic dance of decidedly obscene character during Eastern week. For this, penance was laid upon him, but his punishment was not severe, and he was allowed to retain his benefice."⁵

10. Were sacrifices practiced during this festival?

Scholars are divided in their opinions of this. There is no surviving account of sacrifices in the legends and mythology which have come down to us. As these were originally set down on paper by Christian monks, one would think that if such a thing had been regularly practiced, the good brothers would most certainly have recorded it, if for no other reason than to make the pagans look more depraved. There are, however, some surviving folk customs which point to a person representing the gloom and ill fortune of winter being ostracized and forced to jump through the fires. Some scholars see this as a survival of ancient human sacrificial practices. The notion that animals were sacrificed during this time doesn't make sense from a practical standpoint. The animals which had been retained a breeding stock through the winter would either be lean and hungry from winter feed, or would be mothers nursing young, which could not be spared.

11. How do modern day pagans observe this day?

Modern day pagan observances of Beltane include the maypole dances, bringing in the May, and jumping the cauldron for fertility. Many couples wishing to conceive children will jump the cauldron together at this time. Fertility of imagination and other varieties of fertility are involved along with sexual fertility. In Wiccan and other Pagan circles, this is a joyous day, full of laughter and good times.

12. What about Walpurgisnacht? Is this the same thing as Beltane?

Walpurgisnacht comes from an Eastern European background, and has little in common with the Celtic practices. I have not studied the folklore from that region and do not consider myself qualified to write about it. As the vast majority of Wiccan traditions today stem from Celtic roots, I have confined myself to research in those areas.

Casting the Circle

Set up: place a candle in each of the four cardinal directions. Lay the rest of the tools on the altar cloth or near it. The altar can be on the ground, a table, a rock or a stump. The altar should be in the center or just north of center of the Circle. Light the six candles and the incense, start the music and begin the ritual.

The Ritual

Facing North, the High Priest and Priestess kneel in front of the altar with him to her right. She puts the bowl of water on the altar, places the point of her athame in it and says:

"I exorcise thee, O Creature of Water, that thou cast out from thee all impurities and uncleanness of the world of phantasm in the names of Cerunnos and Aradia"

She then puts down her athame and holds up the bowl of water in both hands. The High Priest puts the bowl of salt on the altar, puts his athame in the salt and says:

"Blessings be upon this Creature of Salt; let all malignity and hindrance be cast forth hence, and let all good enter herein; wherefore, so I bless thee, that thou mayest aid me, in the names of Cerunnos and Aradia."

He then puts down his athame and pours the salt into the bowl of water the High Priestess is holding. The High Priest then stands with the rest of the Coven outside the Circle. The High Priestess then draws the Circle with the sword.

leaving a gap in the Northeast section. While drawing the Circle, she should visualize the power flowing into the Circle from off the end of the sword. She draws the Circle in a East to North or deosil or clockwise direction. She says:

"I conjure thee, O Circle of Power, that thou beest a meeting place of love and joy and truth; a shield against all wickedness and evil; a boundary between men and the realms of the Mighty Ones; a rampart and protection that shall preserve and contain the power that we shall raise within thee.

Wherefore do I bless thee and consecrate thee, in the names of
Cerrunos and Anadia."

The High Priestess lays down the sword and admits the High Priest with a kiss while spinning him deosil and whispers "Blessed Be". He then admits a woman the same way. Alternate male/female/male. Then the High Priestess finishes closing the Circle with the sword. She then names three witches to help strengthen the Circle. The first witch carries the bowl of consecrated water from East to East going deosil, sprinkling the perimeter as she/he goes. They then sprinkle each member in turn. If the witch is male, he sprinkles the High Priestess last who then sprinkles him. If female she sprinkles the High Priest last, who then sprinkles her. The bowl is replaced on the altar. The second witch takes the incense burner around the perimeter and the third takes one of the altar candles.

While going around the perimeter, each person says:

"Black spirits and white,

Red spirits and grey.

Harken to the words I say.
Four points of the Circle, weave the spell,
East, South, West, North, your tasks tell.
East is for break of day,
South is white for the noontide hour,
In the West is twilight grey,
And North is black, for the place of power.
Three times round the Circle's cast,
Great ones, spirits from the past,
Witness it and guard it fast."

All the Coven pick up their athames and face the East with the High Priest and Priestess in front, him on her right. The High Priestess says:

"Ye Lords of the Watchtowers of the East, ye Lords of Air; I do summon, stir, and call you up to witness our rites and to guard the Circle."

As she speaks she draws the Involving Pentagram of Earth in the air with her athame. The High Priest and the rest of the Coven copy her movements with their athames. The High Priestess turns and faces the South and repeats the summoning:

"Ye Lords of the Watchtowers of the South, ye Lords of Fire; I do summon, stir, and call you up, to witness our rites and to guard the Circle."

She does the same pentagram and then faces West and says:

"Ye Lords of the Watchtowers of the West, ye Lords of Water, ye Lords of Death and Initiation, I do summon, stir, and call you up, to witness our rites and to guard the Circle."

She faces North with rest of the Coven and says:

"Ye Lords of the Watchtowers of the North, ye Lords of Earth; Boreas, thou gentle guardian of the Northern Portals; thou powerful God and gentle Goddess; we do summon, stir and call you up, to witness our rites and to guard the Circle."

The Circle is completed and sealed. If anyone needs to leave, a gate must be made. Using the sword, draw out part of the Circle with a widdershins or counterclockwise stroke. Immediately reseal it and then repeat the opening and closing when the person returns.

Wiccan Tool List Master

Equipment:

- a pentacle
- 6 candles; 1 for each direction, 2 for altar
- chalice of wine (hard apple, eaten on Samhain)
- wand
- sprig of silken cords
- small bowl of water
- small bowl of salt
- 3 cords, one red, one white, one blue, 9' long each
- white-handled knife
- individual athames
- incense burner and incense
- small hand bell
- dish of cakes
- sword
- chalk

- altar cloth of any color
- cauldron
- tape recorder and tapes of appropriate music
- veil for Great Rite of a Goddess color: Blue, green, silver or white

For New or Dark Moon Esbat:

- extra incense
- an apple and a pomegranate
- cauldron with a fire in it and/or a bonfire
- crystal ball or other scrying tools
- white tabard with hood for Priestess

For Winter Solstice (Yule):

- cauldron with candle on oak bonfire
- wreaths, 1 of holly and 1 of mistletoe
- crowns, 1 of oak and 1 of holly
- blindfold
- sistrum
- animal skull filled with salt

For Spring Equinox:

- cords as described in preparations
- hard-boiled eggs
- a bonfire ready to ignite on a taper
- flowers in the cauldron

For Beltane Sabbat:

- bonfire

For Initiations:

- anointing oil
- tub to bathe the candidate in
- towels
- salts, herbs and oils to add to the bath
- a blindfold
- a shirt or other clothing that can be cut
- a length of string to measure the person
- two lengths of cord to bind the hands and feet
- bonfire for warmth if needed

For Blessings:

- anointing oil

- w_{11}

All Hallow's Eve

Samhain. All Hallows. All Hallow's Eve. Hallow E'en. Hallowe'en. The most magical night of the year. Exactly opposite Beltane on the wheel of the year, Hallowe'en is Beltane's dark twin. A night of glowing jack-o'-lanterns, bobbing for apples, tricks or treats, and dressing in costume. A night of ghost stories and séances, tarot card readings and scrying with mirrors. A night of power, when the veil that separates our world from the Otherworld is at its thinnest. A 'spirit night', as they say in Wales.

All Hallow's Eve is the eve of All Hallow's Day (November 1st). And for once, even popular tradition remembers that the Eve is more important than the Day itself, the traditional celebration focusing on October 31st, beginning at sundown. And this seems only fitting for the great Celtic New Year's festival. Not that the holiday was Celtic only. In fact, it is startling how many ancient and unconnected cultures (the Egyptians and pre-Spanish Mexicans, for example) celebrated this as a festival of the dead. But the majority of our modern traditions can be traced to the British Isles.

The Celts called it Samhain, which means 'summer's end', according to their ancient two-fold division of the year, when summer ran from Beltane to Samhain and winter ran from Samhain to Beltane. (Some modern Covens echo this structure by letting the High Priest 'rule' the Coven beginning on Samhain, with rulership

returned to the High Priestess at Beltane.) According to the later four-fold division of the year, Samhain is seen as 'autumn's end' and the beginning of winter. Samhain is pro-nounced (depending on where you're from) as 'sow-in' (in Ireland), or 'sow-reen' (in Wales), or 'sav-er' (in Scotland), or (inevitably) 'sam-hain' (in the U.S., where we don't speak Gaelic).

Not only is Samhain the end of autumn; it is also, more importantly, the end of the old year and the beginning of the new: Celtic New Year's Eve, when the new year begins with the onset of the dark phase of the year, just as the new day begins at sundown. There are many representations of Celtic gods with two faces, and it surely must have been one of them who held sway over Samhain. Like his Greek counterpart Janus, he would straddle the threshold, one face turned toward the past in commemoration of those who died during the last year, and one face gazing hopefully toward the future, mystic eyes attempting to pierce the veil and divine what the coming year holds. These two themes, celebrating the dead and divining the future, are inexorably intertwined in Samhain, as they are likely to be in any New Year's celebration.

As a feast of the dead, it was believed the dead could, if they wished, return to the land of the living for this one night, to celebrate with their family, tribe, or clan. And so the great burial mounds of Ireland (sidhe mounds) were opened up, with lighted torches lining the walls, so the dead could find their way. Extra places were set at the table and food set out for any who had died that year. And there are many stories that tell of Irish heroes making raids on the Underworld

while the gates of fairy stood open, though all must return to their appointed places by cock-crow.

As a feast of divination, this was the night par excellence for peering into the future. The reason for this has to do with the Celtic view of time. In a culture that uses a linear concept of time, like our modern one, New Year's Eve is simply a milestone on a very long road that stretches in a straight line from birth to death. Thus, the New Year's festival is a part of time. The ancient Celtic view of time, however, is cyclical. And in this framework, New Year's Eve represents a point outside of time, when the natural order of the universe dissolves back into primordial chaos, preparatory to re-establishing itself in a new order. Thus, Samhain is a night that exists outside of time and hence it may be used to view any other point in time. At no other holiday is a tarot card reading, crystal reading or tea-leaf reading so likely to succeed.

The Christian religion, with its emphasis on the 'historical' Christ and his act of redemption 2000 years ago, is forced into a linear view of time, where 'seeing the future' is an illogical proposition. In fact, from the Christian perspective, any attempt to do so is seen as inherently evil. This did not keep the medieval Church from co-opting Samhain's other motif, commemoration of the dead. To the Church, however, it could never be a feast for all the dead, but only the blessed dead, all those hallowed (made holy) by obedience to God -- thus, All Hallow's, or Hallowmas, later All Saints and All Souls.

There are so many types of divination that are traditional to Halloween, it is possible to mention only a few. Girls were told to place hazel nuts along the front of the firegrate, each one to symbolize one of her suitors. She could then divine her future husband by chanting, 'If you love me, pop and fly; if you hate me, burn and die.' Several methods used the apple, that most popular of Halloween fruits. You should slice an apple through the equator (to reveal the five-pointed star within) and then eat it by candlelight before a mirror. Your future spouse will then appear over your shoulder. Or, peel an apple, making sure the peeling comes off in one long strand, reciting, 'I pare this apple round and round again; / My sweetheart's name to flourish on the plain; / I fling the unbroken paring o'er my head; / My sweetheart's letter on the ground to read.' Or, you might set a snail to crawl through the ashes of your hearth. The considerate little creature will then spell out the initial letter as it moves.

Perhaps the most famous icon of the holiday is the jack-o'-lantern. Various authorities attribute it to either Scottish or Irish origin. However, it seems clear that it was used as a lantern by people who traveled the road this night, the scary face to frighten away spirits or faeries who might otherwise lead one astray. Set on porches and in windows, they cast the same spell of protection over the household. (The American pumpkin seems to have forever superseded the European gourd as the jack-o'-lantern of choice.) Bobbing for apples may well represent the remnants of a Pagan 'baptism' rite called a 'seining', according to some writers. The water-filled tub is a latter-day Cauldron of Regeneration, into

which the novice's head is immersed. The fact that the participant in this folk game was usually blindfolded with hands tied behind the back also puts one in mind of a traditional Craft initiation ceremony.

The custom of dressing in costume and 'trick-or-treating' is of Celtic origin with survivals particularly strong in Scotland. However, there are some important differences from the modern version. In the first place, the custom was not relegated to children, but was actively indulged in by adults as well. Also, the 'treat' which was required was often one of spirits (the liquid variety). This has recently been revived by college students who go 'trick-or-drinking'. And in ancient times, the roving bands would sing seasonal carols from house to house, making the tradition very similar to Yuletide wassailing. In fact, the custom known as 'caroling', now connected exclusively with mid-winter, was once practiced at all the major holidays. Finally, in Scotland at least, the tradition of dressing in costume consisted almost exclusively of cross-dressing (i.e., men dressing as women and women as men). It seems as though ancient societies provided an opportunity for people to 'try on' the role of the opposite gender for one night of the year. (Although in Scotland, this is admittedly less dramatic -- but more confusing -- since men were in the habit of wearing skirt-like kilts anyway. Oh well...)

To Witches, Halloween is one of the four High Holidays, or Greater Sabbats, or cross-quarter days. Because it is the most important holiday of the year, it is sometimes called 'The Great Sabbat'. It is an ironic fact that the newer, self-created Witches tend to use the older name of the holiday, Samhain, which they

have discovered through modern research. While the older hereditary and traditional Covens often use the newer name, Halloween, which has been handed down through oral tradition within their Coven. (This is often holds true for the names of the other holidays, as well. One may often get an indication of a Coven's antiquity by noting what names it uses for the holidays.)

With such an important holiday, Witches often hold two distinct celebrations. First, a large Halloween party for non-Witch friends, often held on the previous weekend. And second, a Coven ritual held on Halloween night itself, late enough so as not to be interrupted by trick-or-treaters. If the rituals are performed properly, there is often the feeling of invisible friends taking part in the rites. Another date which may be utilized in planning celebrations is the actual cross-quarter day, on Old Halloween, or Halloween O.S. (Old Style). This occurs when the sun has reached 15 degrees Scorpio, an astrological 'power point' symbolized by the Eagle. This year (1988), the date is November 6th at 10:55 pm CST, with the celebration beginning at sunset. Interestingly, this date (Old Halloween) was also appropriated by the Church as the holiday of Martinmas.

Of all the Witchcraft holidays, Halloween is the only one that still boasts anything near to popular celebration. Even though it is typically relegated to children (and the young-at-heart) and observed as an evening affair only, many of its traditions are firmly rooted in Paganism. Interestingly, some schools have recently attempted to abolish Halloween parties on the grounds that it violates the separation of state and religion. Speaking as a Pagan, I would be saddened by

the success of this move, but as a supporter of the concept of religion-free public education, I fear I must concede the point. Nonetheless, it seems only right that there SHOULD be one night of the year when our minds are turned toward thoughts of the supernatural. A night when both Pagans and non-Pagans may ponder the mysteries of the Otherworld and its inhabitants. And if you are one of them, may all your jack-o-lanterns burn bright on this All Hallow's Eve.

Samhain Revealed

Samhain (pronounced saw-^{an}), commonly referred to as Halloween, is a religious holiday celebrated by Wiccan and witch. The festival traditionally is a feast for the gathering of the family in love and remembrance. All the family including one's ancestors.

Wiccans do not regard physical death as an end but merely one more event in a continuing progress of the soul's in its path toward fulfillment of divine destiny. Because of these beliefs, it is only natural at this time of year to invite our beloved ancestors to remember and to celebrate with us.

Now, after you have shared the bounty of your harvest with the children of your neighborhood (candy, etc) and the house has settled down for the night, disconnect or turn off your telephone so that this state of serenity will continue uninterrupted.

Prepare a special feast of whatever foods reminds you of a special departed friend or family member, or of past family gatherings. While you are preparing this feast think of all of the good times you had with them.

When the feast is prepared, set your holiday table with a special place of honor for the departed friend or family member.

Decorate the table and room as you would for a holiday dinner with the family, add those special things that are important to you and your family (flowers, candles, etc.) If you have a picture of the loved one, it is nice to place it at their place at the table.

Speak to that special person and invite them to join you in this celebration and time of remembrance. It is completely appropriate to say grace or offer any prayer that you feel is fitting.

The following is done in complete silence:

Serve the meal remembering to serve your honored guest (or guests) first. If wine or other alcoholic beverages are served, it is recommended that they be kept in moderation as you and your guests need to have a clear head.

Now sit down to the table with your loved ones and enjoy your feast. When you address them in your mind, always see them as well. (Try not to say in your mind, "if you can hear me...", etc.). After the meal, the time of silence is over. Do whatever you normally do at a family holiday gathering (clean the table, play games, sing songs, etc.). Enjoy the companionship.

When the evening is over, or in the morning if you wish to make it an all night party, thank your invited guests for being with you and for making your celebration a special one.

There are a few words of caution that I will offer.

1. If this ritual does not feel right for you, do not do it. Follow your instincts.

2. Remember that crossing over does not necessarily change a person, so if you could not get through a meal in peace with them while they were alive, you will probably have the same problem with their spirit.
3. Do not ask your guest to grant you wishes or do you favors. It is rude to invite a guest and then make it obvious that a favor is the reason they were asked, not because of love and respect. Spirits do not like rudeness! Besides, spirits often forget that you are limited in ways that they are not. If you ask them for \$1,000, it may come as an insurance settlement after a painful break in your water pipe with all the delight in cleaning up the mess from ensuing water damage.

Samhain Notes

The High Priestess wears her white tabard if she has one for the opening ritual, with the veil thrown back.

After the Witches' Run, the High Priest and High Priestess take up their athames. He stands with his back to the altar, she faces him across the cauldron. They then simultaneously draw the Invoking Pentagram of Earth in the air with their athames towards each other, after which they lay down their athames: he on the altar, she by the cauldron.

The High Priestess scatters incense on the charcoal in the cauldron. When she is satisfied that it is burning, she stands still facing the High Priest across the cauldron. She then declaims (if needed, ask a man to bring one of the altar candles and hold it for her):

"Pread Lord of Shadows, God of Life, and the Given of Life,
Yet is the knowledge of thee, the knowledge of Death.
Open wide, I pray thee, the Gates through which all must pass.
Let our dear ones who have gone before
Return this night to make merry with us.
And when our time comes, as it must,
O thou the Comforter, the Consoler, the Given of Peace and Rest,
We will enter thy realms gladly and untraid;
For we know that when rested and refreshed among our dear ones

We will be reborn again by thy grace and the grace of the Great Mother.

Let it be in the same place and the same time as our beloved ones,
And may we meet, and know, and remember,
And love them again.

Resound, we pray thee, in thy servant and priest."

The High Priestess then walks around the cauldron and gives the High Priest the Five-fold Kiss.

She returns to her place and pulls the veil of her tabard over her face. She then calls on each woman, by name to come forward and give the High Priest the Five Fold Kiss.

When they have all done so, the cover forms up around the circle, alternating male and female with the Maiden next to the West candle. As soon as they are in place, the High Priestess says:

"Behold, the West is Amenti, the Land of the Dead, to which many of our loved ones have gone for rest and renewal. On this night, we hold communion with them; and as our Maiden stands in welcome by the Western gate, I call upon all of you, my brothers and sisters of the Craft, to hold the image of these loved ones in your hearts and minds, that our welcome may reach out to them. There is mystery within mystery; for the resting place between life and life is

Caren Ariarnhod, the Castle of the Silver Wheel, at the hub of the turning stars beyond the North Wind. Here reigns Ariarnhod, the White Lady, whose name means Silver Wheel. To this, in spirit, we call our loved ones. And let the Maiden lead them, moving widdershins to the center. For the spiral path inward to Caren Ariarnhod leads to night, and rest, and is against the way of the Sun."

The Maiden should spiral into the center, taking three or four circuits to do so. During this time, the women should maintain absolute silence and concentrate on welcoming their dead friends.

When she reaches the center, she faces the High Priestess across the cauldron. They touch palms and the High Priestess says:

"Those who you bring with you are truly welcome to our Festival. May they remain with us in peace. And you Maiden, return by the spiral path to stand with our brothers and sisters; but desist for the way of rebirth, outwards from Caren Ariarnhod, is the way of the Sun."

The women break contact and the Maiden returns to the West candle. When she is there, the High Priestess says:

"Let all approach the walls of the Castle."

Everyone moves in and sits in a close ring around the cauldron. The High Priestess renews the incense. Now is the time for communion with the dead. When finished scrying, the cauldron is placed next to the East candle.

The spirits of the dead must be thanked and released. The High Priestess leads the rest of the Coven in saying:

"We thank you our friends for visiting here this night. We bid you a pleasant repose in Caran Ariannah. We also thank you, the Great Lord of Shadows for taking care of them and giving them comfort."

The next thing to do is the Great Rite.

O.T.O. Samhain Ritual

Open the Temple in fire.

Banishing ritual.

Hierophant: Po what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Hierophant: Ve Gabolah.

Ring bell S-S-S-S-S

Priest strikes staff upon ground N-N-N, S-S-S-S-S, N-N-N

Return bell and staff to altar.

Hierophant: Let all adore the King of Fire.

All do the god form of

PUER, the fire of

NOX, facing Altar.

AMM

Hierophant picks up dagger and points toward the East, standing in the West.

(Fire with)

TETRAGRAMMATON TZABOATH (all repeat)

ALGA (all repeat)

BITOM (all repeat)

Hierophant: In the sacred names and letters:

OIP * TETH * PPOEE *

In thy name: IHVH TZABAVTH

Hierophant: I declare the sacred fire one and eternal in all worlds seen and unseen.

(arrest lights unseen)

Hierophant: Glory be the light, eternal fortress on the frontiers of darkness. Blessed Be. (all repeat)

Priest drops more intense in unseen.

Hierophant: Hail those from the caverns of the dark. (sign of entrance)

Bell: Z-Z-Z S-S-S-S-S Z-Z-Z

(sign of silence)

Hierophant: O great and dreaded Lord of Shadows

He who is God of all Life & the giver of life.

It is There we invoke. (all repeat last line)

Hierophant: Behold, the West is Ameti, Land of the Dead to which many have gone for rest and renewal.

OPEN WIDE THE GATES THROUGH WHICH ALL MUST
PASS

LET THE SHELLS OF KINDRED SOULS RETURN THIS
NIGHT

GUIDED BY THE SACRED FIRE SEEN IN ALL WORLDS

DESCEND UPON US. ALL ARE TRULY WELCOME TO OUR
FESTIVAL.

MAY YOU REMAIN AMONG US TILL THE FIRST LIGHT OF
DAWN...

IN PEACE AND HARMONY

APPROACH THE WALLS OF OUR CASTLE (all repeat)

S-S-S, S-S-S-S-S, S-S-S

(put more intense in version)

Hierophant: Hail those from the caverns of the dark. (all repeat)

pick up contract at sacrifice:

KINDRED SOULS HERE THIS NIGHT. TO THEE WE GIVE
OUR SACRIFICE

UPON THIS PAPER WE EACH HAVE WRITTEN A
CONTRACT BINDING OF SOULS TO SOULS

SO INTO THE FLAMES & LET IT BE CONSUMED

IT IS BETWEEN YOU AND I, NO ONE ELSE.

as written, to bind the contract, drink of the blood.

...done

So mote it be (all repeat).

Others who desire a sacrifice may now do such; come forward one after another.

all participating in the sacrifice

drop in 'contract' repeating as before

with wine then saying 'so mote it be'...

all should repeat after each sacrifice 'so mote it be'.

After last sacrifice; all raise hands upward, vibrating

AMM

Hierophant: Our sacrificing done, I proclaim this evening rite over.

LOVE IS THE LAW, LOVE UNDER WILL. (all repeat)

Two Witches

A Modern Craft Fairy-Tale

Once upon a time, there were two Witches. One was a Feminist Witch and the other was a Traditionalist Witch. And, although both of them were deeply religious, they had rather different ideas about what their religion meant. The Feminist Witch tended to believe that Witchcraft was a religion especially suited to women because the image of the Goddess was empowering and a strong weapon against patriarchal tyranny. And there was distrust in the heart of the Feminist Witch for the Traditionalist Witch because, from the Feminist perspective, the Traditionalist Witch seemed subversive and a threat to "the Cause".

The Traditionalist Witch tended to believe that Witchcraft was a religion for both men and women because anything less would be divisive. And although the Goddess was worshipped, care was taken to give equal stress to the God-force in nature, the Horned One. And there was distrust in the heart of the Traditionalist Witch for the Feminist Witch because, from the Traditionalist viewpoint, the Feminist Witch seemed like a late-comer and a threat to "Tradition". These two Witches lived in the same community but each belonged to a different Coven, so they did not often run into one another. Strange to say, the few times they did meet, they felt an odd sort of mutual attraction, at least on the physical level. But

both recognized the folly of this attraction, for their ideologies were worlds apart, and nothing, it seemed, could ever bridge them.

Then one year the community decided to hold a Grand Coven, and all the Covens in the area were invited to attend. After the rituals, the singing, the magicks, the feasting, the poetry, and dancing were concluded, all retired to their tents and sleeping bags. All but these two. For they were troubled by their differences and couldn't sleep. They alone remained sitting by the campfire while all others around them dreamed. And before long, they began to talk about their differing views of the Goddess. And, since they were both relatively inexperienced Witches, they soon began to argue about what was the "true" image of the Goddess.

"Prescribe your image of the Goddess to me," challenged the Feminist Witch. The Traditionalist Witch smiled, sighed, and said in a raspy voice, "She is the embodiment of all loveliness. The quintessence of feminine beauty. I picture her with silver-blond hair like moonlight, rich and thick, falling down around her soft shoulders. She has the voluptuous young body of a maiden in her prime, and her clothes are the most seductive, gossamer thin and clinging to her willowy frame. I see her dancing like a young elfin nymph in a moonlit glade, the dancer of a temple priestess. And she calls to her lover, the Horned One, in a voice that is gentle and soft and sweet, and as musical as a silver bell frosted with ice. She is Aphrodite, goddess of

sensual love. And her lover comes in answer to her call, for she is destined to become the Great Mother. That is how I see the Goddess."

The Feminist Witch hooted with laughter and said, "Your Goddess is a Cosmic Barbie Doll! The Jungian archetype of a cheer-leader! She is all glitter and no substance. Where is her strength? Her power? I see the Goddess very differently. To me, she is the embodiment of strength and courage and wisdom. A living symbol of the collective power of women everywhere. I picture her with hair as black as a moonless night, cropped short for ease of care on the field of battle. She has the muscular body of a woman at the peak of health and fitness. And her clothes are the most practical and sensible, not slinky cocktail dresses. She does not paint her face or perfume her hair or shave her legs to please men's vanities. Nor does she do pornographic dances to attract a man to her. For when she calls to a male, in a voice that is strong and defiant, it will be to do battle with the repressive masculine ego. She is Artemis the huntress, and it is fatal for any man to cast a leering glance in her direction. For, although she may be the many-breasted Mother, she is also the dark Crone of wisdom, who destroys the old order. That is how I see the Goddess."

Now the Traditionalist Witch hooted with laughter and said, "Your Goddess is the antithesis of all that is feminine! She is Yahweh hiding behind a feminine mask! Don't forget that it was his followers who burned Witches at the stake for the "sin" of having "painted faces". After all, Witches with

their knowledge of herbs were the ones who developed the art of cosmetics. So what of beauty? What of love and desire?"

And so the argument raged, until the sound of their voices awakened a Coven Elder who was sleeping nearby. The Elder looked from the Feminist Witch to the Traditionalist Witch and back again, saying nothing for a long moment. Then the Elder suggested that both Witches go into the woods apart from one another and there, by magic and meditation, that each seek a "true" vision of the Goddess. This they both agreed to do.

After a time of invocations, there was a moment of perfect stillness. Then a glimmer of light could be seen in the forest, a light shaded deepest green by the dense foliage. Both Witches ran toward the source of the radiance. To their wonder and amazement, they discovered the Goddess had appeared in a clearing directly between them, so that neither Witch could see the other. And the Traditionalist Witch yelled "What did I tell you!" at the same instant the Feminist Witch yelled "You see, I was right!" and so neither Witch heard the other.

To the Feminist Witch, the Goddess seemed to be a shining matrix of power and strength, with courage and energy flowing outward. The Goddess seemed to be holding out her arms to embrace the Feminist Witch, as a comrade in arms. To the Traditionalist Witch, the Goddess seemed to be the zenith of feminine beauty, lightly playing a harp and singing a siren song

of seduction. Energy seemed to flow towards her. And she seemed to hold out her arms to the Traditionalist Witch, invitingly.

From opposite sides of the clearing, the Witches ran toward the figure of the Goddess they both loved so well, desiring to be held in the ecstasy of that divine embrace. But just before they reached her, the apparition vanished. And the two Witches were startled to find themselves embracing each other.

And then they both heard the voice of the Goddess. And, oddly enough, it sounded exactly the same to both of them. It sounded like laughter.

Wicca From My Point of View

I can give you a brief overview of Wicca. (I don't speak for all Wiccans, only myself. There are some differences in the different Traditions.)

We believe that the ultimate godhead is unknowable. This doesn't make for a good working relationship with the deity, however. So, we break it down into a Goddess and a God. Different Wiccans worship different Gods/Goddesses.

We can utilize *any* pantheon. Some worship Pan/Piaia, some Cernunnos/Aradia, Isis/Osiris, and many others.

We see our Goddess as being Triple Aspected -- Maiden, Mother and Crone, and she is reflected in the phases of the Moon -- Waxing, Full and Waning. We see the God as the Lord of Nature, and he is reflected in the seasonal changes. Like Jesus Christ, he dies for the land and the people, and is reborn.

In general, we believe in reincarnation and karma. What you call Heaven, we call the Summerlands. We don't believe that Hell exists (or Satan either.) We believe that there should be balance in all things -- when the balance is disturbed, that's when 'evil' occurs. Fire, for example is not 'evil'. It could be considered such when it becomes out of balance, as in a forest fire, or house fire. Controlled fire is a useful tool. Anger is not 'evil', but when unbridled can't help but lead to negative things. When properly

expressed and balanced with constructive working to correct that which involved the anger -- it, too, can be a useful tool.

We regard the Earth as our Mother and try to have respect for Her by not polluting Her and try to live in harmony with Her and Her ways.

Women revere the Goddess, Men revere the God, so the Wicca have a Priestess and Priest to 'run' the religious services. We call our services circles.

The following is an excerpt from "Witchcraft: The Old Religion"

Questions and Answers.

Q. What is the best way for one who is interested in the Old Religion to make contact with a genuine coven?

A. Subscribe to all of the Pagan and Witchcraft publications. It's easier to get into a Pagan grove which often acts as a backdoor to the Craft, since many are Wicca-oriented in their worship and rituals. Fill out a Coven-Craft application form issued by W.I.C.T. To obtain yours, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. W.I.C.T.'s address is Suite 1B, 155 West 80 Street, New York 10024.

Q. What are the major feast-days of Witches? Could you tell me more about the origins of Halloween?

A. Most Anglo-American covens celebrate the following holy days. The four major ones are Oimela or Candlemas on February 2; May Eve, Beltane, or Walpurgisnacht on April 30; Lammastide on July 31 or August 1; and of course Halloween or Samhain on October 31. The four minor Holy Days are the two solstices: Yule, around December 22; and Midsummer, around June 21 or 22. The other two are the equinoxes: March 20-21 for spring and the fall equinox on September 22 or 23. The following will help to give you some idea of the origins of Halloween.

November Eve, All Hallows' Eve, the Gaelic fire festival of Samhain, now generally called Halloween, represents the summer's end, when the Earth Goddess turns over her reign to the Horned God of the Hunt, the transition from life to death, from an agrarian time to one of hunting, from summer to winter, from warmth to coldness, from light to darkness. It has been Christianized into All Saints' Day, a time when the souls of the departed wander the land and in some cases where the souls of the living temporarily join their spirit brethren, a time for mediumship, remembrance of departed loved ones, and celebration (as opposed to mourning) of the dead. The Roman Goddess of fruits and seeds, Pomona, was worshipped on this day. The stored fruits and seeds of the summer were then opened for the celebrants. Apples and nuts were the main fruits. This was also the autumn harvest festival of the Druids.

They believed in the transmigration of souls and taught that Saman, the Lord of Death, summoned those wicked souls who were condemned to occupy the bodies of animals in the preceding twelve months. The accused believed that they could propitiate Saman by gifts and incantations, thus lessening if not eliminating their sentences. This was also the time when the Druids lit huge bonfires in honor of Baal, a custom continued in Britain and Wales until recent times. In Ireland October 31 was called Oidhelte Shamhna, or Vigil of Saman. In his *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, Villanueva says that in Ireland the peasants assembled with clubs and sticks, "going from house

to house, collecting money, breadcake, butter, cheese, eggs, etc., for the feast, repeating verses in honor of the solemnity, demanding preparations for the festival in the name of St. Columb Kill, desiring them to lay aside the fattened calf and to bring forth the black sheep. The good women are employed in making the girdlecake and candles; these last are sent from house to house in the vicinity, and are lighted up on the (Saman) next day, before which they pray, or are supposed to pray, for the departed soul of the donor. Every house abounds in the best viands they can afford: apples and nuts are devoured in abundance; the nutshells are burnt, and from the ashes many strange things are foretold; cabbages are torn up by the root; hemp-seed is sown by the maidens, and they believe that if they look back they will see the apparition of the man intended for their future spouse; they hang a smock before the fire, on the close of the feast, and sit up all night, concealed in the corner of the room, convinced that his apparition will come down the chimney and turn the smock; they throw a ball of yarn out of the window, and wind it on the reel within, convinced that if they repeat the Pater Noster backwards, and look at the ball of yarn without, they will then also see his sith or apparition; they dip ten apples in a tub of water, and endeavor to bring one up in the mouth; they suspend a cord with a cross-stick, with apples at one point, and candles lighted at the other, and endeavor to catch the apple, while it is in a circular motion in the mouth."

Vallancey concludes that these practices are the remnants of Druidism and will never be eradicated while the name of Saman remains. In this brief passage we will see the origins of many modern Halloween practices, such as trick or treat, the Jack-o-Lantern, and apple bobbing.

In the island of Lewis the name Shamhna, or Saman, was called Shomy. One writer in disgust described "an ancient custom here to sacrifice to a sea-god, called Shomy, at Hallowtide." The supposed Christian inhabitants would gather at the Church of St. Mulvay, each family bringing provisions and malt which was brewed into ale. They chose one of themselves to wade into the sea at night up to his waist. He then poured out a cup of ale calling upon Shomy to bless his people for the coming year. "At his return," this writer says, "they all went to church, where there was a candle burning upon the altar, and then standing silent for a little time, one of them gave a signal, at which the candle was put out, and immediately all of them went to the fields, where they fell a-drinking ale, and spent the rest of the night in dancing and singing. The ministers in Lewis told me they spent several years before they could persuade the vulgar natives to abandon this ridiculous piece of superstition."

The name Saman shows evidence of Druidism in the Irish. Another word, the name of a drink, is "lambswol." It is made from bruising roasted apples and mixing it with ale or milk. The Gentlemen's Magazine for May, 1789, says, "this is a constant ingredient at a merrymaking on Holy Eve."

Vallancey shrewdly traced its etymological origin when he said, "The first day of November was dedicated to the angel presiding over fruits, seeds, etc., and was therefore named La Mas Ubbal, that is, the day of the apple fruit, and being pronounced Lamasool, the English have corrupted the name to Lambs-wool." The angel referred to of course is the Roman Goddess Pomona.

Q. Are these Holy Days the same throughout the world?

A. No. However, there are many universal similarities between all the pagan religions. Names, dates and days vary according to national origin. For instance, one of the Holy Days still celebrated by many Italian and some Sicilian traditions is the Lupercalia, on February 15. It has since been Christianized into St. Valentine's Day on Feb. 14. Let me quote from the WICCA Newsletter: Ancient Roman festival honoring Lupercus, God of Fertility. It was called dies februatius meaning 'day of expiation'. The Lupercal--'wolf's grotto'--a cave on the western slope of Palatine Hill. Near it was the ficus ruminalis, the fig tree under which Romulus and Remus were found and nursed by a she-wolf. The Lupercal who celebrated this yearly festival were made up of the Fabian who belonged to the Sabines and the Quinctilian Lupercal, the Latins. Later in honor to Julius Caesari, there was added the Julian Brotherhood. They sacrificed a goat. Young neophytes were brought in. The High Priest touched their foreheads with the bloody knife. Then another priest wiped away the blood with wool

dipped into milk. The feast began with the celebrants clothed only in goat skins and carrying (really hiding) thongs made from the same goat hides. They ran up and down the streets of the city striking anyone who passed them. Women came forward to be hit by the goat-thongs, believing it enhanced their own fertility. This was also a symbolic purification of the land and of the persons touched. This was one of the last Pagan rites to be given up before Christianity completely dominated the country. It is still celebrated today but in modern form, without the goat or any other kind of sacrifice, but all wearing skins and goat horns in a special strength ritual."

Q. What are some of the Christian holy days that are based upon or borrowed from ancient Pagan Religions?

A. You'll find many of them discussed in this book. However, briefly, here are some of them. December 25 in ancient times was the day celebrated in honor of the sun, deified in such figures as Mithra, Osiris, Horus, and Adonis. It was also the feast day of Bacchus, Krishna, Saktia, and others. The legends of these Gods were the same as those attributed to Jesus Christ by the early Church. Pope Julius I in A.D. 337 made December 25 the official day to celebrate Jesus's birth, following older traditions who honored their founders on that date. It was also the ancient celebration of the winter solstice. There is absolutely no record in the Bible or elsewhere of when Jesus Christ was born. All of us are still paying tribute to the ancient Gods and Goddesses by the names of our days of the week.

English	French	Italian	Spanish	Planet	Deity
Sunday	Dimanche	Domenica	Domingo	Sun	Mithra
Monday	Lundi	Lunedì	Lunes	Moon	Panna
Tuesday	Mardi	Martedì	Martes	Mars	Tiw
Wednesday	Mercredi	Mercoledì	Miércoles	Mercury	Mercury
Thursday	Jedi	Giovedì	Jueves	Jupiter	Jove-Thon
Friday	Vendredi	Venerdì	Viernes	Venus	Venus-Freya
Saturday	Samedi	Sabato	Sabado	Saturn	Saturn

Two of the English names come from Old Saxon rather than Latin. Tiw's Day became Tuesday in honor of the old Teutonic deity, Tiw or Tives. Wednesday is named after the old Teutonic Norse God Wodan or Wotan. The Saxon word for day is *doeg*. In older times the days were called Jove's *Doeg* (Thursday), Mercury's *Doeg* (Wednesday), Mars' <sic> *Doeg* <sic> (Tuesday), etc. Friday was the day when the ancients paid tribute to Venus--the love day. When Christianity became dominant, Friday was no longer considered lucky--Jesus was crucified on that day; also, the uninhibited sexual rites dedicated to the love Goddess Venus was considered a great "sin." Besides the days of our week our months are also named after the ancient deities:

January: From Latin *Januarius*, honoring Janus, a Roman God. He presided over the Gates of Heaven, which the Christians later assigned to St.

Febru. The Anglo-Saxons called it ~~Febru~~-Mure, and prior to that Wolf-monat.

February: From Februus, another name for the God of purification Faunus, thus fertility. The feast was held on February 15 (see Lupercalia) and was called Februa.

March: Aften Mars, God of War. Anglo-Saxons called it ~~Febru~~-monat, rugged month, or ~~Febru~~-monat, stormy month. A stormy March was an omen of poor crops. A dry March indicated a rich harvest.

April: From Latin aperio "to open," like buds. Anglo-Saxons called it Easter-monat, in honor of the Teutonic Goddess of the same name. She ruled spring and light. The Romans dedicated this month to Venus, often referring to it as Mensis Venenis instead of Aprilis.

May: Named after Maia Majesta, ancient Roman Goddess of Spring. Considered Vulcan's wife. Look up the folklore regarding the May Day celebrations, bonfires, and other rites celebrated throughout Europe.

June: Named after the Roman Goddess Juno. Called Sean-monat by Anglo-Saxons. Juno was Queen of Heaven and Guardian of Marriage and ruled childbirth. June is still the most favored month for marriage today.

July: Originally called Quintilis, the fifth month. Old Saxons called it ~~Febru~~-monat, "mead month" the time to gather honey for the drink called mead.

August: Named after the Roman Emperor Augustus. Was once called Sestilis, the sixth month.

September: Named after the Latin number for seven, that being the month in the old calendar <sic>. Saxons called it Genst-monat, barley month, as this crop was usually gathered then.

October: From octo, the eighth month in the old calendar. Saxons named it Wyn-monat, "wine month." This was harvest time, and Bacchus and Dionysius and all the other ancient deities were honored. See Halloween above.

November: From the ninth month in old Roman calendar. Saxons called it Blot-monat, "blood month." This was when the cattle and sheep were slaughtered for food and sacrifices.

December: Named after the tenth month in the old calendar. It was consecrated to Saturn, and on December 17 the great feast of Saturnalia began, lasting several days. It coincided with the winter solstice and the Yule season. The Anglo-Saxons called it Yule-monat, "midwinter month." It coincided with the winter solstice and the Yule season.

A Classic Binding Spell

Come ye as the charm is made!
Queen of Heaven, Queen of Hell,
Horned Hunter of the night
Lend your power unto the spell,
And work our will by magic rite!
By all the power of land and sea,
By all the might of moon and sun
I call the Earth to bind my spell.
Till to spread it well.
Bright as Fire shall it glow:
Deep as tide of Water flow:
Count the elements fourfold,
In the fifth the spell shall hold.

Saxon Wicca Rites

Legend of Woden/Odin retrieving the Runes

The Snake came crawling and struck at none
But Woden took nine glory-twigs (pieces of wood on which were carved runic inscriptions) and struck the adder so that it flew into nine parts.

This quote shows how Woden/Odin was a master magician and drew his power from the runes. To this day many Saxon Pagans work much of their Magic with runes, inscribing them on candles in candle magic, incorporating them into talismans or symbols of protection that they wear, carry or keep in their homes (can also be for other purposes, etc. They can even be put somewhere invisibly by tracing them with a scented oil. For example, a rune or runic monogram (several runic letters overlaying one another) can be inscribed on your place of business in Money in Abundance oil on some other money --- oriented oils of your own preference. For healing a rune or runic monogram of healing can be written on the body of the patient with an oil of healing, after the regular transfer of Pranic energy or "laying --- on --- of --- the --- hands" healing has occurred. (including use of crystals, if that is so desired) Etc. etc. etc. Why are runes so important? For the same reason that they were in Cabalistic Magic among the Jews and in Sialta Yoga. In India among the Sialhis the Shakti or Feminine aspect of Peity (as Shiva is the male) has many aspects through which the world was emanated --- one of the more important aspects is matritia shakti or the

power of sound to create via the letters of the alphabet forming themselves into Words. In both systems --- Kabbalah and Sidha Yoga --- it is believed that the universe was created by words. This is reflected in modern New Age work with Affirmations used by such diverse sources as Marion Weinstein, Psychic Witch, as described in her book "Positive Magic" (Phoenix Publishing) and the Unity School of Christianity as well as the Religious Science and Christian Science and Prime Science and all the other "science" churches. Shakti Gawain, author of "Creative Visualization" teaches it from the New Age perspective as well. It is through words we create out our reality and right use of them for good and in loving ways is one of the most powerful of Magicks. (Note by Matritia)

From the old Norse Verse, Lay of the High one, stanzas 128, 129, and 131

Woden/Odin is speaking

" I know that I hung there
on the windy tree
swing there nights, all of mine
gashed with a blade
bloodied by Odin
myself an offering to myself
knotted to that tree
no man knows whether the root of it runs

None gave me bread
None gave me drink
down to the depths I preferred
to scratch up mummies
with a roaring screech
and fall in a dizzying faint

Wellspring I won
and wisdom too
and grew and joyed in my growth
from a word to a word
I was led to a word
from a deed to another deed"

As you can see this legend, which in the original sources pre-dates Christianity, has much in common with the legend of Jesus's Crucifixion/Resurrection in the Newer religion -- but then there are similar themes in the story of Tammuz from the Middle East, the story of Osiris in Egypt and in many other sources. The story of the fallen God who is resurrected with great power and wisdom reflects the Shaman's confrontation with his own death -- either in a literal sense through sickness or accident, or in a Psychological sense or by other means such as the mild, natural hallucinogens used by the Native Americans and other tribal peoples. (Note, I am not endorsing their use; they are completely

unnecessary) -- but nevertheless, this is the practice in some cultures, where they know how to handle the power of these drugs and guide one safely through the experience. It is important to note this is not done lightly or playfully either and that the drugs they use are natural substances, not the harsher chemical ones abused in our modern society for recreational use.)

It also represents the natural cycles of the year -- the grain grows and is cut down or sacrificed only to be reborn again, the trees lose their leaves and seem to die only to resuscitate. (which is why the tree of life/cross image developed) some animals hibernate and come back, etc. etc. etc.

Now here is the legend of the Goddess in the Saxon form as the search by Freya for the necklace Broosingarne -- a silver circlet worn about her neck as a chaplet. As with the Gandarvian Wicca legend of the descent of the Goddess to the Underworld, it reflects the cycles of the year -- when fertility seems to sink into the earth and vanish during winter's barren months only to have the Lady and her bounty return to us in the spring.

(Matrika's notes)

1. All day long Freya, most lovely of the Goddesses, played and romped in the fields. Then did she lay down to rest.
2. And while she slept, deft Loki, the prankster, the mischief-maker of the Gods, did espy the glimmering of Broosingarne, fanned of Galdr.

(magick) Her constant companion. Silent as the night did Loki move to the Goddess's side and with fingers formed over the very eyes in lightness did remove the silver curtain from about her snow white neck.

2. Straightaway did Freya arouse; on sensing it's loss. Though he moved with the speed of the winds, yet Loki she glimpsed as he passed swiftly from sight into the barrow (burial mound) that leads to Pnurn (land of the dead, the underworld)
4. Then was Freya in despair. Darkness descended all about her to hide her tears. Great was her anguish. All light, all life, all creatures joined in her doom.
5. To all corners were sent the Searchers, in quest of Loki; yet knew they, they would find him not. For who is there, may descend to Pnurn and return again from thence?
6. Excepting the Gods themselves and, alas, mischievous Loki.
7. So it was that, still weak from her grief, Freya herself elected to descend in search of Broisingarne. At the portals of the Barrow was she challenged, yet recognized and passed.
8. The multitude of souls within cried joyfully to see her, yet could she not tarry as she sought her stolen light.

9. The infamous Loki left no trail to follow, yet was he everywhere, past seen. Those to whom she spoke held to Freya (that) Loki carried no Jewels as he went by.
10. Where, then was it hid?
11. In despair she searched an age. Heavhden (also known as Heimdall) the mighty smith of the Gods, did arise from his nest to sense the bewailment of the souls to Freya's sorrow. Striding from his smithy, to find the cause of the sorrow, did he espy the Silver Cinchet where Loki Mischief-maker had laid it, upon the rock before his door.
12. Then was all clear.
13. As Heavhden took hold of Broisingame (then did) Loki appear before him, his face wild with rage.
14. Yet would Loki not attack Heavhden, this mighty smith whose strength was known even beyond Pnenn.
15. By wiles and tricks did he strive to get his hands upon the (silver) cinchet. He shape-shifted; he darted here and there; he was visible, then invisible, yet could he not sway the Smith.
16. Tired of the fight, Heavhden raised his mighty club. Then sped Loki away.

17. Great was the joy of Freya when Heanliden placed Brosingame about her snow-white neck.

18. Great were the cries of Joy from Penn and above.

19. Great were the thanks that Freya and all People gave to the Gods for the return of Brosingame.

This tale and the Ganderian legend of the descent of the Goddess into the Underworld (told in the 2d degree initiation) and similar myths from around the world, such as the legend of Kwan Yin's descent to the land of death and her being expelled for spreading mirth and joy, show that women also shared a very important role in the shamanism/priesthood of the European Pagan traditions and also faced the orials -- i.e. the physical or psychological confrontation with death. And again, it reflects the times of darkness and light in the year -- the waxing and waning of the moon each month and the waxing and waning of the sun each year from Yule or Winter solstice to Mid-summer's night or Summer solstice when the light grows stronger and the remainder of the year, when light grows weaker.

Wiccan Shamanism

Shamanism exists in tribal cultures around the world and has done so for centuries. Yet, in reading most anthropological texts on Shamanism, there is little, if any reference made to shamanism in Europe. However Shamanism has existed among the peoples of Europe not only in ancient times, but also through the present day. During the Middle Ages, the Old Ways largely disappeared from public view because of persecution. Yet they were not eradicated but took a more underground existence. Today, there are some of us of European ancestry that are bringing Shamanic ways rooted in pre-Christian Europe back into the light.

Wiccan Shamanism is a term I began using several years ago in an attempt to describe my own path of magic and spirituality in relation to the other forms of Shamanism on the Planet. Wiccan Shamanism draws on the Old but it is not simply an attempt re-construction and revival of the Old Ways of tribal Europe. Wiccan Shamanism blends both the Old and the New to suit the modern times in which we live. Although emphasis is on European symbology and traditions Wiccan Shamanism is multi-cultural, incorporating ways of other healers and magical workers from many places and eras.

What follows is a glimpse into Wiccan Shamanism as I know it and practice it. While Jim, Parris, and others who help with various aspects of CIRCLES work may share many of these concepts, I speak here only for

myself - for at the heart of this spiritual approach is the idea that each person must seek their own connection with the Divine, within their own Self, rather than having me or anyone else do this for them. This is not a path of a leader with followers, but a path where each becomes their own leader.

I call to the Powers of the Four Quarters -- to Earth in the North which is the Realm of the Physical Body and Material Plane, to Air in the East which is the Realm of Thoughts and Intellect, to Fire in the South which is the Realm of Will Power and Action, and Water in the West which is the Realm of Emotions and Intuition. My Medicine Wheel is the Magic Circle which connects the Four Quarters. The sacred places I frequent include a high rock, a crystal clear spring fed pool in a hidden valley and a circle of stones in a grove of Oak and Birch on a mound.

I am a channel between Planet Earth beneath my feet and the Heavens above my head. I become the World Tree when I Shamanize, linking the transforming Path of the Underworld with the Awakening Light of the Upperworld.

I am the Crystal Light that is at the Center of the Circle and is the fifth Element Spirit. I seek always to act out of MY own Inner Self which is at the center of MY being, for my Inner Self in the Balance of all the Elements, of my Female and Male sides, of my Lunar and Solar natures of my intellect and intuition my Inner Self is my doorway into the realm where All is One.

I see the Circle of Life from the Center. I watch the Seasons change as the Wheel of the Year turns and I celebrate the 8 sabbats. I connect with the dance of Night and Day, of Fair and Stormy Weathers, of the Waxing and Waning Moon. I see the cycle of Birth, Growth, Maturity, Death, and Rebirth in all of Nature. I examine the cycles of my own life and of the lives of those who seek healing aid from me.

I am the traveler between the World of Daily Life and the Otherworld which is the land of Dreams, visions and Spirits. I am a Consciousness Explorer. The Otherworld is as real and as important to me as the Day-to-Day World. I bridge the Worlds rather than seeking to dwell solely in one or the other. I journey into the Otherworld for a reason -- to bring back healing and knowledge to apply to Daily Life, helping others, myself and the Planet.

I see the Divine in all things. My friends and allies include not only humans but also plants, animals, rocks, winds, waters, fire, stars, and other life forms. I commune with the Source, some call "God" as both Mother Goddess and Father God, for both aspects are necessary for the Unity.

The main focus of my Shamanic work is Healing. I was called to this path as a young child in dreams and Out-of-Body experiences, but I didn't begin my work until my adult years when I started Healing myself. To do this I journeyed alone into the Pit of my Shadow Self and came face-to-face with my problems and hang-ups: my doubts, fears, disillusionments.

rejections, angers and hurts; with all My false self images. Words can not begin to express the misery, the utter despair, the powerlessness I felt during this time. Yet coming apart was essential; it enabled me to break through the barriers which I had formed and let others form in my psyche that had kept me from being one with my True Self. In the deepest Darkness, I felt the Light of my own Inner Self beginning to shine through. I focused on the Light and slowly emerged from the Pit, stronger and more integrated than ever before and with the power to heal others as well as myself. As a result of this transformation process, my life's work became clear. I now help others from their own pits of negativity and become whole again.

Yet my work also extends to more than Humankind; it involves bringing Healing to the Planet as a whole. In my communing with the Land, I have heard the cries of the Earth Mother, sorrowing over the self-centered, greedy, intolerant, and destructive behaviors of many of Her human children who are polluting the soils, water, and air; who are playing power games with nuclear fire; and who are polluting the spiritual atmosphere of the entire world with their narrow-mindedness and hate. I am deeply concerned about survival -- not of the Planet Herself for all the humans in the world can not destroy Her even with all their weapons. She is too strong and powerful for that to happen. What I am concerned about is the survival of the human race. -- will we annihilate ourselves and many of the life

forms around us, or will we wake up in time to see the larger picture, find and implement creative solutions to the world's problems, and enter a New Age of expanded consciousness?

The Balance of Life can be restored on Planet Earth. Harmony can be restored between humankind and other life forms; Love consciousness can increase and be prevalent on the Earth. I, along with numerous other healers and ministers from a variety of spiritual traditions around the world today have responded to the upset of Mother Earth by dedicating our lives to this Planetary Healing Work, each in our own way. It is this Great Work that underlies all the healing and other things I do. It is the Heart of Wiccan Shamanism.

A Healing Myth

This story can have a powerful healing effect when read out loud (or recorded and then played) to someone suffering from a phobia or other effect of childhood trauma. While names, settings, and style can be varied to suit individual tastes, the sequence which the apprentice describes, the sequence the princess goes through, and the vagueness of the "bad thing" descriptions should remain unchanged and no element of the story should be left out.

Once, in another time and another place, a kingdom of magic and beauty knew a time of peace. No armies threatened its borders, no bandits plundered its trade routes, no plagues sickened its people. Yet even in such peaceful times, bad things could happen: accidents, misunderstandings, even good people doing bad things.

The third daughter of the king was a bright and cheerful sort. She wasn't the strongest or the prettiest of the royal princesses, but she did have the nicest wings of anyone her age. She loved to fly around the countryside and explore the groves and meadows she found...they were always full of surprises.

One day she found a particularly pretty grove, with a pond glistening in a little clearing in the middle. As she went in for a closer look, she saw images start to form. She saw her own reflection, and as she lightly touched the ground she saw that her reflection was watching reflections of her own...dim watery reflections from her past.

"So you can see the pictures." The voice from among the trees made her jump. "Don't worry," continued the young man as he stepped out from among the trees. "nobody else can see the same images, Princess. It's part of the magic."

"How...?" she asked, looking him up and down. He was a young man, no older than the princess herself, dressed in the rough tunics of a wizard's apprentice. "Who are you? How did you know who I am, what I saw?"

"I am apprenticed to the Court Wizard. Everybody knows who you are, Princess...and besides, I have seen you at the palace when I have been there with my master." He paused, glancing at the ground and lowering his voice. "As to the images... well, at one time I had need of their magic."

"When I entered the Wizard's service, I had a great and secret fear. Something...bad...happened to me when I was younger. It hurt to even think about, and after time I didn't think about it much. But ever since that time, I had lived with the fear. When my master learned of this, he taught me the magic of this pool and its stream."

"The pool reflects images from your mind...scenes from your past, dreams of the future, even fantasies of the present. The stream flows like time itself, upstream into the past, and downstream into the future. If I followed the ritual he described, these magics could wash clean the tear."

She made a face. "I suppose this ritual involves deep magics usable only by Wizards?"

"Not really. All the magic is in the waters, and anyone can use the ritual. Even a lowly apprentice." He grinned. "It's pretty simple. After he told me about it, he brought me here and then stood back by the trees. He said that he would answer any questions I had but otherwise I was on my own."

"I stood where I could see my reflection in the pool, and then thought about my tear. As I thought, my reflection watched a reflection of my thoughts...like a stage where dimly lit actors played out the scene against a colorless backdrop. I looked up and saw that I was still here, in the glade. I looked back at the water, holding on to a small part of the special feeling of tear it had given me. As I turned and looked back upstream, I saw more images...each earlier than the last. I relaxed and let the feeling guide me back to the earliest image. When I had that, I turned back to the pool and found my reflection watching the same colorless players in their dim reflection of the memory. As my reflection watched, the image went from a time shortly before the bad thing happened, through the whole thing, and on to a time when it was all over. When it passed the ending that way, it

stopped...like a drawing. Then the drawing faded away, and I was just looking at my reflection. The Wizard had told me that if I stepped into that last part of the image, it would run very quickly backwards, with full color and sound and me living backwards through it all...all the way through to the part before the beginning. It sounded very strange. As I looked at my reflection again, it was watching the image go forward again in its dim, colorless way. When it reached the drawing at the end, I stepped into the image and was plunged into a world going backwards! It went clear through to before the beginning in less than a second, then stopped. Startled, I let the water carry me downstream, through all that had happened since, with the fear gone and the memory unable to hurt me. When I reached the here-and-now, I got out and just stood there, knowing that the fear would trouble me no more." He stopped, and suddenly seemed to remember where he was, and who he was talking to. "That was over a year ago, and the fear is still gone. The Wizard says it is gone for good."

She thought for a moment. "So all there is to this ritual is think of the problem until your reflection sees it, follow a part of the feeling upstream to my earliest memory of it, wait for my reflection to see it all the way through, step into the ending, and live it backwards quickly? What kind of magic is that?"

He thought for a minute, shrugged, and said "Effective? If you wish, I will withdraw to the trees while you try it."

"What makes you think that I need it?"

"Because the images only come to those who do." His voice faded to an embarrassed silence as he realized what he had said. "I'll go now."

"Yes, do." She said absently, already thinking. Then: "But not too far, in case I need you." She was remembering an incident a few days back which had set off her special fear, and just as the apprentice had described, her reflection in the pool was watching a dim and watery scene of the memory. Startled, she looked up again. Yes, she was in the clearing, with the trees all around and the apprentice all but lost among the closer ones. She could still feel a part of that fear, so she kept that feeling while she looked back up stream at all the images from the past that the feeling had touched...until she found the earliest of them all. She brought that memory back to the pool and released it as her reflection started to watch it unfold in its dim and watery way. Her reflection seemed to have a life of its own as it watched the pale scene start before anything happened, run through the bad parts, and then pause at a time when it was all over. She watched her reflection shift as she prepared for what she would do. Her reflection settled as it watched the scene unfold again. The dim scene passed through the beginning, through the bad time and on past again. When it stopped, she jumped in to it. Suddenly, she was there again, back where and when it had happened. Everything was moving backwards, and in a flash she had lived backwards through it and past the beginning. Shocked, she let

the water carry her down stream, forward through all the rest of her yesterdays without the bad times for company. When she got to today, she stood up. There she was...standing, dripping in a stream in the clearing. She looked around for the apprentice, half expecting him to be laughing at the soggy mess she must be. He was there, by the trees...not laughing, just smiling in an understanding way.

In the years that followed, they became friends. Although they went their separate ways...he, as wizard to one of the King's high lords and she as wife to a neighboring prince... they valued that friendship to the end of their days. And from that time on, neither was ever again troubled by their great fears.

Candlemas: The Light Returns

It seems quite impossible that the holiday of Candlemas should be considered the beginning of Spring. Here in the Heartland, February 2nd may see a blanket of snow mantling the Mother. Or, if the snows have gone, you may be sure the days are filled with drizzle, slush and steel-grey skies -- the dreariest weather of the year. In short, the perfect time for a Pagan Festival of Lights. And as for Spring, although this may seem a ferocious beginning, all the little buds, flowers and leaves will have arrived on schedule before Spring runs its course to Beltane.

'Candlemas' is the Christianized name for the holiday, of course. The older Pagan names were Imbolc and Oimela. 'Imbolc' means, literally, 'in the belly' (of the Mother). For in the womb of Mother Earth, hidden from our mundane sight but sensed by a keener vision, there are stirrings. The seed that was planted in her womb at the solstice is quickening and the new year grows. 'Oimela' means 'milk of ewes', for it is also lambing season.

The holiday is also called 'Brigit's Day', in honor of the great Irish Goddess Brigit. At her shrine, the ancient Irish capitol of Kildare, a group of 19 priestesses (no men allowed) kept a perpetual flame burning in her honor. She was considered a goddess of fire, patroness of smithcraft, poetry and healing (especially the healing touch of midwifery). This tripartite symbolism was occasionally expressed by saying that Brigit had two sisters, also named Brigit. (Incidentally, another form of the name Brigit is Bride, and it is

thus she bestows her special patronage on any woman about to be married or handfasted, the woman being called 'bride' in her honor.)

The Roman Catholic Church could not very easily call the Great Goddess of Ireland a demon, so they canonized her instead. Henceforth, she would be 'Saint' Brigit, Patron Saint of smithcraft, poetry and healing. They 'explained' this by telling the Irish peasants that Brigit was 'really' an early Christian missionary sent to the Emerald Isle, and that the miracles she performed there 'misled' the common people into believing that she was a goddess. For some reason, the Irish swallowed this. (There is no limit to what the Irish imagination can convince itself of. For example, they also came to believe that Brigit was the 'foster-mother' of Jesus, giving no thought to the implausibility of Jesus having spent his boyhood in Ireland!)

Brigit's holiday was directly marked by the kindling of sacred fires, since she symbolized the time of birth and healing, the time of the forge, and the time of poetic inspiration. Bonfires were lighted on the beacon tops, and chantrels celebrated their special holiday. The Roman Church was quick to confiscate this symbolism as well, using 'Candlemas' as the day to bless all the church candles that would be used for the coming liturgical year. (Catholics will be reminded that the following day, St. Blaise's Day, is remembered for using the newly blessed candles to bless the throats of parishioners, keeping them from colds, flu, sore throats, etc.)

The Catholic Church, never one to refrain from piling holiday upon holiday, also called it the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (It is surprising how many of the old Pagan holidays were converted to Maryan Feasts.) The symbol of the Purification may seem a little obscure to modern readers, but it has to do with the old custom of 'churching women'. It was believed that women were impure for six weeks after giving birth. And since Mary gave birth at the winter solstice, she wouldn't be purified until February 2nd. In Pagan symbolism, this might be re-translated as when the Great Mother once again becomes the Young Maiden Goddess.

Today, this holiday is chiefly connected to weather lore. Even our American folk-calendar keeps the tradition of 'Groundhog's Day', a day to predict the coming weather, telling us that if the Groundhog sees his shadow, there will be 'six more weeks' of bad weather (i.e., until the next old holiday, Lady Day). This custom is ancient. An old British rhyme tells us that 'If Candlemas Day be bright and clear, there'll be two winters in the year.' Actually, all of the cross-quarter days can be used as 'inverse' weather predictors, whereas the quarter-days are used as 'direct' weather predictors.

Like the other High Holidays or Great Sabbats of the Witches' year, Candlemas is sometimes celebrated on its alternate date, astrologically determined by the sun's reaching 15-degrees Aquarius, on Candlemas Old Style (in 1988, February 2nd, at 9:03 am CST). Another holiday that gets mixed up in this is Valentine's Day. Ozark folklorist Vance Randolph makes

this quite clear by noting that the old-timers used to celebrate Groundhog's Day on February 14th. This same displacement is evident in Eastern Orthodox Christianity as well. Their habit of celebrating the birth of Jesus on January 6th, with a similar post-dated shift in the six-week period that follows it, puts the Feast of the Purification of Mary on February 14th. It is amazing to think that the same confusion and lateral displacement of one of the old folk holidays can be seen from the Russian steppes to the Ozark hills, but such seems to be the case!

Incidentally, there is speculation among linguistic scholars that the very name of 'Valentine' has Pagan origins. It seems that it was customary for French peasants of the Middle Ages to pronounce a 'g' as a 'v'.

Consequently, the original term may have been the French 'galantime', which yields the English word 'gallant'. The word originally refers to a dashing young man known for his 'affaires d'amour', a true galant. The usual associations of V(G)alentine's Day make much more sense in this light than their vague connection to a legendary 'St. Valentine' can produce. Indeed, the Church has always found it rather difficult to explain this nebulous saint's connection to the secular pleasures of flirtation and courtly love.

For modern Witches, Candlemas O.S. may then be seen as the Pagan version of Valentine's Day, with a de-emphasis of 'hearts and flowers' and an appropriate re-emphasis of Pagan carnal frivolity. This also re-aligns the holiday with the ancient Roman Lupercalia, a fertility festival held at

this time, in which the priests of Pan ran through the streets of Rome whacking young women with goatskin thongs to make them fertile. The women screamed to enjoy the attention and often stripped in order to afford better targets.

One of the nicest folk-customs still practiced in many countries, and especially by Witches in the British Isles and parts of the U.S., is to place a lighted candle in each and every window of the house, beginning at sundown on Candlemas Eve (February 1st), allowing them to continue burning until sunrise. Make sure that such candles are well seated against tipping and guarded from nearby curtains, etc. What a cheery sight it is on this cold, bleak and dreary night to see house after house with candle-lit windows! And, of course, if you are your Coven's chandler, or if you just happen to like making candles, Candlemas Day is the day for doing it. Some Covens hold candle-making parties and try to make and bless all the candles they'll be using for the whole year on this day.

Other customs of the holiday include weaving 'Brigit's crosses' from straw or wheat to hang around the house for protection, performing rites of spiritual cleansing and purification, making 'Brigit's beds' to ensure fertility of mind and spirit (and body, if desired), and making Crowns of Light (i.e. of candles) for the High Priestess to wear for the Candlemas Circle, similar to those worn on St. Lucy's Day in Scandinavian countries. All in all, this Pagan

Festival of Lights, sacred to the young Maiden Goddess, is one of the most beautiful and poetic of the year.

Lady Day: The Vernal Equinox

Now comes the Vernal Equinox, and the season of Spring reaches its apex, halfway through its journey from Candlemas to Beltane. Once again, night and day stand in perfect balance, with the powers of light on the ascendancy. The god of light now wins a victory over his twin, the god of darkness. In the Mabinogion myth reconstruction which I have proposed, this is the day on which the restored Llew takes his vengeance on Gwynnwy by piercing him with the sunlight spear. For Llew was restored/reborn at the Winter Solstice and is now well/old enough to vanquish his rival/twin and mate with his lover/mother. And the great Mother Goddess, who has returned to her Virgin aspect at Candlemas, welcomes the young sun god's embraces and conceives a child. The child will be born nine months from now, at the next Winter Solstice, and so the cycle closes at last.

We think that the customs surrounding the celebration of the spring equinox were imported from Mediterranean lands, although there can be no doubt that the first inhabitants of the British Isles observed it, as evidence from megalithic sites shows. But it was certainly more popular to the south, where people celebrated the holiday as New Year's Day, and claimed it as the first day of the first sign of the Zodiac, Aries. However you look at it, it is certainly a time of new beginnings, as a simple glance at Nature will prove.

In the Roman Catholic Church, there are two holidays which get mixed up with the Vernal Equinox. The first, occurring on the fixed calendar day of March 25th in the old liturgical calendar, is called the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (or B.V.M., as she was typically abbreviated in Catholic Missals). 'Annunciation' means an announcement. This is the day that the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was 'in the family way'. Naturally, this had to be announced since Mary, being still a virgin, would have no other means of knowing it. (Quit scoffing, O ye of little faith!) Why did the Church pick the Vernal Equinox for the commemoration of this event? Because it was necessary to have Mary conceive the child Jesus a full nine months before his birth at the Winter Solstice (i.e., Christmas, celebrated on the fixed calendar date of December 25). Mary's pregnancy would take the natural nine months to complete, even if the conception was a bit unorthodox.

As mentioned before, the older Pagan equivalent of this scene focuses on the joyous process of natural conception when the young virgin Goddess (in this case, 'virgin' in the original sense of meaning 'unmarried') mates with the young solar God, who has just displaced his rival. This is probably not their first mating, however. In the mythical sense, the couple may have been lovers since Candlemas, when the young God reached puberty. But the young Goddess was recently a mother (at the Winter Solstice) and is probably still nursing her new child. Therefore, conception is naturally

delayed for six weeks or so and, despite earlier matings with the God, She does not conceive until (surprise!) the Vernal Equinox. This may also be their Hand-fasting, a sacred marriage between God and Goddess called a Hierogamy, the ultimate Great Rite. Probably the nicest study of this theme occurs in M. Esther Harding's book, 'Woman's Mysteries'. Probably the nicest description of it occurs in M.Z. Bradley's 'Mists of Avalon', in the scene where Morgana and Arthur assume the sacred roles. (Bradley follows the British custom of transferring the episode to Beltane, when the climate is more suited to its outdoor celebration.)

The other Christian holiday which gets mixed up in this is Easter. Easter, too, celebrates the victory of a god of light (Jesus) over darkness (death), so it makes sense to place it at this season. Ironically, the name 'Easter' was taken from the name of a Teutonic lunar Goddess, Eostre (from whence we also get the name of the female hormone, estrogen). Her chief symbols were the bunny (both for fertility and because her worshippers saw a hare in the full moon) and the egg (symbolic of the cosmic egg of creation), images which Christians have been hard-pressed to explain. Her holiday, the Eostara, was held on the Vernal Equinox Full Moon. Of course, the Church doesn't celebrate full moons, even if they do calculate by them, so they planted their Easter on the following Sunday. Thus, Easter is always the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after the Vernal Equinox. If you've ever wondered why Easter moved all around the calendar, now you

know. (By the way, the Catholic Church was so adamant about not incorporating Lunar Goddess symbolism that they added a further calculation: if Easter Sunday were to fall on the Full Moon itself, then Easter was postponed to the following Sunday instead.)

Incidentally, this raises another point: recently, some Pagan traditions began referring to the Vernal Equinox as Eostara. Historically, this is incorrect. Eostara is a lunar holiday, honoring a lunar Goddess, at the Vernal Full Moon. Hence, the name 'Eostara' is best reserved to the nearest Esbat, rather than the Sabbat itself. How this happened is difficult to say. However, it is notable that some of the same groups misappropriated the term 'Lady Day' for Beltane, which left no good folk name for the Equinox. Thus, Eostara was misappropriated for it, completing a chain-reaction of displacement. Needless to say, the old and accepted folk name for the Vernal Equinox is 'Lady Day'. Christians sometimes insist that the title is in honor of Mary and her Annunciation, but Pagans will smile knowingly.

Another mythological motif which must surely arrest our attention at this time of year is that of the descent of the God or Goddess into the Underworld. Perhaps we see this most clearly in the Christian tradition. Beginning with his death on the cross on Good Friday, it is said that Jesus 'descended into Hell' for the three days that his body lay entombed. But on the third day (that is, Easter Sunday), his body and soul rejoined, he

arose from the dead and ascended into heaven. By a strange 'coincidence', most ancient Pagan religions speak of the Goddess descending into the Underworld, also for a period of three days.

Why three days? If we remember that we are here dealing with the human aspect of the Goddess, the reason should be obvious. As the text of one Book of Shadows gives it, '...as the moon waxes and wanes, and walks three nights in darkness, so the Goddess once spent three nights in the Kingdom of Death.' In our modern world, alienated as it is from nature, we tend to mark the time of the New Moon (when no moon is visible) as a single date on a calendar. We tend to forget that the moon is also hidden from our view on the day before and the day after our calendar date. But this did not go unnoticed by our ancestors, who always speak of the Goddess's sojourn into the land of Death as lasting for three days. Is it any wonder then, that we celebrate the next Full Moon (the Eostara) as the return of the Goddess from abthornic regions?

Naturally, this is the season to celebrate the victory of life over death, as any nature-lover will affirm. And the Christian religion was not misguided by celebrating Christ's victory over death at this same season. Nor is Christ the only solar hero to journey into the underworld. King Arthur, for example, does the same thing when he sets sail in his magical ship, Prydwen, to bring back precious gifts (i.e. the gifts of life) from the Land of the Dead, as we are told in the 'Mabinogi'. Welsh triads allude to Gwydion and Amathen doing

much the same thing. In fact, this theme is so universal that mythologists refer to it by a common phrase, 'The Harrowing of Hell'.

However, one might conjecture that the descent into hell, or the land of the dead, was originally accomplished, not by a solar male deity, but by a lunar female deity. It is Nature Herself who, in Spring, returns from the Underworld with her gift of abundant life. Solar heroes may have laid claim to this theme much later. The very fact that we are dealing with a three-day period of absence should tell us we are dealing with a lunar, not solar, theme. (Although one must make exception for those occasional male lunar deities, such as the Assyrian god, Sin.) At any rate, one of the nicest modern renditions of the harrowing of hell appears in many Books of Shadows as 'The Descent of the Goddess'. Lady Pay may be especially appropriate for the celebration of this theme, whether by storytelling, reading, or dramatic re-enactment.

For modern Witches, Lady Pay is one of the Lesser Sabbats or Low Holidays of the year, one of the four quarter-days. And what date will Witches choose to celebrate? They may choose the traditional folk 'fixed' date of March 25th, starting on its Eve. Or they may choose the actual equinox point, when the Sun crosses the Equator and enters the astrological sign of Aries. This year (1988), that will occur at 3:29 am CST on March 20th.

Lammas: The First Harvest

Once upon a Lammas Night

When corn rigs are bonny,

Beneath the Moon's unclouded light,

I held awhile to time...

Although in the heat of a Mid-western summer it might be difficult to discern, the festival of Lammas (Aug 1st) marks the end of summer and the beginning of fall. The days now grow visibly shorter and by the time we've reached autumn's end (Oct 31st), we will have run the gamut of temperature from the heat of August to the cold and (sometimes) snow of November. And in the midst of it, a perfect Mid-western autumn.

The history of Lammas is as convoluted as all the rest of the old folk holidays. It is of course a cross-quarter day, one of the four High Holidays or Greater Sabbats of Witchcraft, occurring 1/4 of a year after Beltane. Its true astrological point is 15 degrees Leo, which occurs at 1:18 am CDT, Aug 6th this year (1988), but tradition has set August 1st as the day Lammas is typically celebrated. The celebration proper would begin on sundown of the previous evening, our July 31st, since the Celts reckon their days from sundown to sundown.

However, British Witches often refer to the astrological date of Aug 6th as Old Lammas, and folklorists call it Lammas O.S. ('Old Style'). This date has long been considered a 'power point' of the Zodiac, and is symbolized by

the Lion, one of the 'tetramorphi' figures found on the Tarot cards, the World and the Wheel of Fortune (the other three figures being the Bull, the Eagle, and the Spirit). Astrologers know these four figures as the symbols of the four 'fixed' signs of the Zodiac, and these naturally align with the four Great Sabbats of Witchcraft. Christians have adopted the same iconography to represent the four gospel-writers.

'Lammas' was the medieval Christian name for the holiday and it means 'loaf-mass', for this was the day on which loaves of bread were baked from the first grain harvest and laid on the church altars as offerings. It was a day representative of 'first fruits' and early harvest.

In Irish Gaelic, the feast was referred to as 'Lugnasadh', a feast to commemorate the funeral games of the Irish sun-god Lugh. However, there is some confusion on this point. Although at first glance, it may seem that we are celebrating the death of the Lugh, the god of light does not really die (mythically) until the autumnal equinox. And indeed, if we read the Irish myths closer, we discover that it is not Lugh's death that is being celebrated, but the funeral games which Lugh hosted to commemorate the death of his foster-mother, Tailtiu. That is why the Lugnasadh celebrations in Ireland are often called the 'Tailtean Games'.

The time went by with careless heed

Between the late and early,
With small persuasion she agreed
To see me through the barley...

One common feature of the Games were the 'Tailtèan marriages', a rather informal marriage that lasted for only 'a year and a day' or until next Lammias. At that time, the couple could decide to continue the arrangement if it pleased them, or to stand back to back and walk away from one another, thus bringing the Tailtèan marriage to a formal close. Such trial marriages (obviously related to the Wiccan 'Handfasting') were quite common even into the 1500's, although it was something one 'didn't bother the parish priest about'. Indeed, such ceremonies were usually solemnized by a poet, bard or shamanic (or, it may be guessed, by a priest or priestess of the Old Religion).

Lammastide was also the traditional time of year for craft festivals. The medieval guilds would create elaborate displays of their wares, decorating their shops and themselves in bright colors and ribbons, marching in parades, and performing strange, ceremonial plays and dances for the entranced onlookers. The atmosphere must have been quite similar to our modern-day Renaissance Festivals, such as the one celebrated in near-by Bonner Springs, Kansas, each fall.

A ceremonial highlight of such festivals was the 'Catherine wheel'. Although the Roman Church moved St. Catherine's feast day all around the calendar

with bewildering frequency, its most popular date was Lamma. (They also kept trying to expel this much-loved saint from the ranks of the blessed because she was mythical rather than historical, and because her worship gave rise to the heretical sect known as the Cathari.) At any rate, a large wagon wheel was taken to the top of a near-by hill, covered with tar, set aflame, and ceremoniously rolled down the hill. Some mythologists see in this ritual the remnants of a Pagan rite symbolizing the end of summer, the flaming disk representing the sun-god in his decline. And just as the sun king has now reached the autumn of his years, his rival or dark self has just reached puberty.

Many commentators have bewailed the fact that traditional Gnostic and Alexandrian Books of Shadows say very little about the holiday of Lamma, stating only that poles should be ridden and a circle dance performed. This seems strange, for Lamma is a holiday of rich mythic and cultural associations, providing endless resources for liturgical celebration.

 Corn rigs and barley rigs,

 Corn rigs are bonny!

 I'll not forget that happy night

 Among the rigs with Annie!

[Verse quotations by Robert Burns, as handed down through several Books of Shadows.]

Harvest Home

There were three men came out of the West,

Their fortunes for to try,

And these three men made a solemn vow,

John Barleycorn must die...

Despite the bad publicity generated by Thomas Tymon's novel, Harvest Home is the pleasantest of holidays. Admittedly, it does involve the concept of sacrifice, but one that is symbolic only. The sacrifice is that of the spirit of vegetation, John Barleycorn. Occurring 1/4 of the year after Midsummer, Harvest Home represents mid-autumn, autumn's height. It is also the Autumnal Equinox, one of the quarter days of the year, a Lesser Sabbat and a Low Holiday in modern Witchcraft. Technically, an equinox is an astronomical point and, due to the fact that the Earth wobbles on its axis slightly (rather like a top that's slowing down), the date may vary by a few days depending on the year. The autumnal equinox occurs when the sun crosses the equator on its apparent journey southward, and we experience a day and a night that are of equal duration. Up until Harvest Home, the hours of daylight have been greater than the hours from dusk to dawn. But from now on, the reverse holds true. Astrologers know this as the date on which the sun enters the sign of Libra, the Balance (an appropriate symbol of a balanced day and night). This year (1988) it will occur at 2:29 pm CDT on September 22nd.

However, since most European peasants were not accomplished at calculating the exact date of the Equinox, they celebrated the event on a fixed calendar date, September 25th, a holiday the Medieval Church Christianized under the name of 'Michaelmas', the feast of the Archangel Michael. (One wonders if, at some point, the R.C. Church contemplated assigning the four quarter days of the year to the four Archangels, just as they assigned the four cross-quarter days to the four gospel-writers. Further evidence for this may be seen in the fact that there was a brief flirtation with calling the Vernal Equinox 'Gabrielmas', ostensibly to commemorate the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary on Lady Day.) Again, it must be remembered that the Celts reckoned their days from sundown to sundown, so the September 25th festivities actually begin on the previous sundown (on September 24th).

Although our Pagan ancestors probably celebrated Harvest Home on September 25th, modern Witches and Pagans, with their desk-top computers for making time calculations, seem to prefer the actual equinox point, beginning the celebration on its eve (this year, sunset on September 21st).

Mythically, this is the day of the year when the god of light is defeated by his twin and alter-ego, the god of darkness. It is the time of the year when night conquers day. And as I have recently shown in my seasonal reconstruction of the Welsh myth of Blodeuwedd, the Autumnal Equinox is

the only day of the whole year when Llew (light) is vulnerable and it is possible to defeat him. Llew now stands on the balance (Libra/autumnal equinox), with one foot on the cauldron (Cancer/summer solstice) and his other foot on the goat (Capricorn/winter solstice). Thus he is betrayed by Blodeuwedd, the Virgin (Virgo) and transformed into an Eagle (Scorpio).

Two things are now likely to occur mythically, in rapid succession. Having defeated Llew, Gwynn (darkness) now takes over Llew's functions, both as lover to Blodeuwedd, the Goddess, and as King of our own world. Although Gwynn, the Horned King, now sits on Llew's throne and begins his rule immediately, his formal coronation will not be for another six weeks, occurring at Samhain (Halloween) on the beginning of Winter, when he becomes the Winter Lord, the Park King, Lord of Mismulc. Gwynn's other function has more immediate results, however. He mates with the virgin goddess, and Blodeuwedd conceives, and will give birth -- nine months later (at the Summer Solstice) -- to Gwynn's son, who is really another incarnation of himself, the Park Child.

Llew's sacrificial death at Harvest Home also identifies him with John Barleycorn, spirit of the fields. Thus, Llew represents not only the sun's power, but also the sun's life trapped and crystallized in the corn.

Often this corn spirit was believed to reside most especially in the last sheaf or shock harvested, which was dressed in fine clothes, or woven into a wicker-like man-shaped form. This effigy was then cut and carried from

the field, and usually burned, amidst much rejoicing. So one may see Blodwenedd and Gornwy in a new guise, not as conspirators who murder their king, but as kindly farmers who harvest the crop which they had planted and so lovingly cared for. And yet, anyone who knows the old ballad of John Barleycorn knows that we have not heard the last of him.

They let him stand till midsummer's day,
Till he looked both pale and wan,
And little Sir John's grown a long, long beard
And so become a man...

Incidentally, this annual mock sacrifice of a large wicker-work figure (representing the vegetation spirit) may have been the origin of the misconception that Druids made human sacrifices. This change was first made by Julius Caesar (who may not have had the most unbiased of motives), and has been re-stated many times since. However, as has often been pointed out, the only historians besides Caesar who make this accusation are those who have read Caesar. And in fact, upon reading Caesar's 'Gallic Wars' closely, one discovers that Caesar never claims to have actually witnessed such a sacrifice. Nor does he claim to have talked to anyone else who did. In fact, there is not one single eyewitness account of a human sacrifice performed by Druids in all of history!

Nor is there any archaeological evidence to support the charge. If, for example, human sacrifices had been performed at the same ritual sites

year after year, there would be physical traces. Yet there is not a survey. Nor is there any native tradition or history which lends support. In fact, insular tradition seems to point in the opposite direction. The Druid's reverence for life was so strict that they refused to lift a sword to defend themselves when massacred by Roman soldiers on the Isle of Mona. Irish Breton laws forbade a Druid to touch a weapon, and any soul rash enough to unsheath a sword in the presence of a Druid would be executed for such an outrage! Jesse Weston, in her brilliant study of the Four Hallows of British myth, 'From Ritual to Romance', points out that British folk tradition is, however, full of mock sacrifices. In the case of the wicker-man, such figures were referred to in very personified terms, dressed in clothes, addressed by name, etc. In such a religious ritual drama, everybody played along.

They've hired men with scythes so sharp,
To cut him off at the knee,
They've rolled him and tied him by the waist
Serving him most barbarously...

In the medieval miracle-play tradition of the 'Rise Up, Jock!' variety (performed by troupes of mummers at all the village fairs), a young harlequin-like king always underwent a mock sacrificial death. But invariably, the traditional cast of characters included a mysterious 'Pouton' who had learned many secrets while 'travelling in foreign lands'. The Pouton reaches

into his bag of tricks, plies some magical cure, and presto! the young king rises up hale and whole again to the cheers of the crowd. As Weston so sensibly points out, if the young king were actually killed, he couldn't very well rise up again, which is the whole point of the ritual drama! It is an enactment of the death and resurrection of the vegetation spirit. And what better time to perform it than at the end of the harvest season?

In the rhythm of the year, Harvest Home marks a time of rest after hard work. The crops are gathered in, and winter is still a month and a half away! Although the nights are getting cooler, the days are still warm, and there is something magical in the sunlight, for it seems silvery and indirect. As we pursue our gentle hobbies of making corn dollies (those tiny vegetation spirits) and wheat weaving, our attention is suddenly arrested by the sound of baying from the shires (the 'Hounds of Ammiri' passing?), as lines of geese cut silhouettes across a harvest moon. And we move closer to the hearth, the longer evening hours giving us time to catch up on our reading, munching on popcorn balls and caramel apples and sipping home-brewed mead or ale. What a wonderful time Harvest Home is! And how lucky we are to live in a part of the country where the season's changes are so dramatic and majestic!

And little Sir John in the nut-brown bowl --

And he's brandy in the glass.

And little Sin John in the nut-brown bowl

Proved the strongest man at last.

The Death of Llew, a Seasonal Interpretation

Not of father, nor of mother

Was my blood, was my body.

I was spellbound by Gwydion,

Prime enchanter of the Britons,

When he formed me from nine blossoms.

-- 'Hanes Blodeuwedd' (R. Graves, trans.)

In most Pagan cultures, the sun god is seen as split between two rival personalities: the god of light and his twin, his 'waind', his 'other self', the god of darkness. They are Gawain and the Green Knight, Gwyn and Gwythyr, Llew and Gornwy, Lugh and Balor, Balan and Balin, the Holly King and the Oak King, etc. Often they are depicted as fighting seasonal battles for the favor of their goddess/lover, such as Creiddylad or Blodeuwedd, who represents Nature.

The god of light is always born at the winter solstice, and his strength waxes with the lengthening days, until the moment of his greatest power, the summer solstice, the longest day. And, like a look in a mirror, his 'shadow self', the lord of darkness, is born at the summer solstice, and his strength waxes with the lengthening nights until the moment of his greatest power, the winter solstice, the longest night.

Indirect evidence supporting this mirror-birth pattern is strongest in the Christianized form of the Pagan myth. Many writers, from Robert Graves

to Stewart Farrar, have repeatedly pointed out that Jesus was identified with the Holly King, while John the Baptist was the Oak King. That is why, 'of all the trees that are in the wood, the Holly tree bears the crown.' If the birth of Jesus, the 'light of the world', is celebrated at mid-winter, Christian folk tradition insists that John the Oak King (the 'dark of the world?') was born (rather than died) at mid-summer.

It is at this point that I must diverge from the opinion of Robert Graves and other writers who have followed him. Graves believes that at midsummer, the Sun King is slain by his rival, the God of Darkness; just as the God of Darkness is, in turn, slain by the God of Light at midwinter. And yet, in Christian folk tradition (derived from the older Pagan strain), it is births, not deaths, that are associated with the solstices. For the feast of John the Baptist, this is all the more conspicuous, as it breaks the rules regarding all other saints.

John is the only saint in the entire Catholic hagiography whose feast day is a commemoration of his birth, rather than his death. A generation ago, Catholic nuns were fond of explaining that a saint is commemorated on the anniversary of his or her death because it was really a 'birth' into the Kingdom of Heaven. But John the Baptist, the sole exception, is emphatically commemorated on the anniversary of his birth into this world. Although this makes no sense, viewed from a Christian perspective, it makes

present poetic sense from the viewpoint of Pagan symbolism. (John's earlier Pagan associations are treated in my essay on Midsummer.)

So if births are associated with the solstices, when do the symbolic deaths occur? When does Gonomy slay Llew and when does Llew, in his turn, slay Gonomy? When does darkness conquer light or light conquer darkness? Obviously (to me, at least), it must be at the two equinoxes. At the autumnal equinox, the hours of light in the day are eclipsed by the hours of darkness. At the vernal equinox, the process is reversed. Also, the autumnal equinox, called 'Harvest Home', is already associated with sacrifice, principally that of the spirit of grain or vegetation. In this case, the god of light would be identical.

In Welsh mythology in particular, there is a startling vindication of the seasonal placement of the sun god's death, the significance of which occurred to me in a recent dream, and which I haven't seen elsewhere. Llew is the Welsh god of light, and his name means 'lion'. (The lion is often the symbol of a sun god.) He is betrayed by his 'virgin' wife Blodeuwedd, into standing with one foot on the rim of a cauldron and the other on the back of a goat. It is only in this way that Llew can be killed, and Blodeuwedd's lover, Gonomy, Llew's dark self, is hiding nearby with a spear at the ready. But as Llew is struck with it, he is not killed. He is instead transformed into an eagle.

Putting this in the form of a Bardic riddle, it would go something like this: Who can tell in what season the Lion (Llew), betrayed by the Virgin (Blodeuwedd), poised on the Balance, is transformed into an Eagle? My readers who are astrologers are probably already gasping in recognition. The sequence is astrological and in proper order: Leo (Lion), Virgo (Virgin), Libra (Balance), and Scorpio (for which the eagle is a well-known alternative symbol). Also, the remaining icons, cauldron and goat, could arguably symbolize Cancer and Capricorn (representing summer and winter), the signs beginning with the two solstice points. So Llew is balanced between cauldron and goat, between summer and winter, on the balance (Libra) point of the autumnal equinox, with one foot on the summer solstice and one foot on the winter solstice.

This, of course, is the answer to a related Bardic riddle. Repeatedly, the 'Mabinogion' tells us that Llew must be standing with one foot on the cauldron and one foot on the goat's back in order to be killed. But nowhere does it tell us why. Why is this particular situation the ONLY one in which Llew can be overcome? Because it represents the equinox point. And the autumnal equinox is the only time of the entire year when light (Llew) can be overcome by darkness (Goronwy).

It should now come as no surprise that, when it is time for Llew to kill Goronwy in his turn, Llew insists that Goronwy stands where he once stood while he (Llew) casts the spear. This is no mere vindictiveness on Llew's

part. For, although the 'Mabinogion' does not say so, it should 'by now' be obvious that this is the only time when Gornwy can be overcome. Light can overcome darkness only at the equinox -- this time, the vernal equinox. (Curiously, even the Christian tradition retains this association, albeit in a distorted form, by celebrating Jesus' death near the time of the vernal equinox.)

The Welsh myth concludes with Gwydion pursuing the faithless Blodeuwedd through the night sky, and a path of white flowers springs up in the wake of her passing, which we today know as the Milky Way. When Gwydion catches her, he transforms her into an owl, a fitting symbol of autumn, just as her earlier association with flowers (she was made from them) equates her with spring. Thus, while Lleu and Gornwy represent summer and winter, Blodeuwedd herself represents both spring and fall, as patron goddess of flowers and owls, respectively.

Although it is far more speculative than the preceding material, a final consideration would pursue this mirror-like life pattern of Lleu and Gornwy to its ultimate conclusion. Although Lleu is struck with the sunlight spear at the autumnal equinox, and so 'dies' as a human, it takes a while before Gwydion discovers him in his eagle form. How long? We may speculate 13 weeks, when the sun reaches the midpoint of the sign (or form) of the eagle, Scorpio -- on Halloween. And if this is true, it may be that Lleu, the sun god, finally 'dies' to the upper world on Halloween, and now passes through

the gates of death, where he is immediately crowned king of the underworld, the Lord of Mismulc! (In medieval tradition, the person proclaimed as 'Lord of Mismulc' reigned from Halloween to Old Christmas --- or, before the calendar changes, until the winter solstice.)

Meanwhile, Gornwy (with Bloduwedd at his side) is crowned king in the upper world, and occupies Llew's old throne, beginning on Halloween. Thus, by winter solstice, Gornwy has reached his position of greatest strength in our world, at the same moment that Llew, now sitting on Gornwy's old throne, reaches his position of greatest strength in the underworld. However, at the moment of the winter solstice, Llew is born again, as a babe, (and as his own son!) into our world. And as Llew later reaches manhood and dispatches Gornwy at the vernal equinox, Gornwy will then ascend the underworld throne at Beltane, but will be reborn into our world at midsummer, as a babe, later to defeat Llew all over again. And so the cycle closes at last, resembling nothing so much as an intricately woven, never-ending bit of Celtic knotwork.

So Midsummer (to me, at least) is a celebration of the sun god at his zenith, a crowned king on his throne. He is at the height of his power and still 1/4 of a year away from his ritual death at the hands of his rival. However, at the very moment of his greatest strength, his dark twin, the seed of his destruction, is born --- just as the days begin to shorten. The spear and the cauldron have often been used as symbols for this holiday

and it should now be easy to see why. Sun gods are virtually always associated with spears (even Jesus is pierced by one), and the midsummer carolion of Carwen is a symbol of the Goddess in her fullness. If we have learned anything from this story from the fourth branch of the 'Mabinogion', it is about the power of myth -- how it may still instruct and guide us, many centuries after it has passed from oral to written tradition. And in studying it, we have barely scratched the surface.

Spring Equinox Ceremony

Preparations:

A wheel symbol stands on the altar; it may be anything that feels suitable, a cut-out disc painted yellow or gold and decorated with spring flowers, a circular mirror, around brass tray. The High Priest's robe, if any, and accessories should be symbolic of the Sun; any metal he wears should be gold, gilt, brass or bronze. The altar, if indoors, should be decorated with spring flowers particularly the yellow ones such as daffodils, primroses, gorse or forsythia. One banquet should be ready for handing to the Spring Queen and a chaplet of flowers for her wearing. The Spring Queen is one of the younger women in the Coven.

The cauldron is placed in the center of the circle, with an unlit candle in it. If outside, and conditions permit, a bonfire is made ready to light. A taper is placed ready on the altar for the Maiden to carry fire to the High Priest.

A phallic wand is on the altar.

Half as many cords as there are people present are ready on the altar, tied together at their center point in a single knot. If there is an odd number of people, add one before dividing by two.

As part of the feasting and offering to the Gods, you can use hard-boiled eggs with painted shells. These symbolize the World Egg, laid by the Goddess and hatched by the heat of the Sun of the God.

The High Priest moves to stands in the East, and the High Priestess in the West, facing each other over the unit bonfire. The High Priestess carries the phallic wand in her right hand. The rest of the Coven distribute themselves around the rest of the perimeter of the Circle.

The High Priestess says:

"We kindle this fire today
In presence of the Holy Ones,
Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,
Without fear of aught beneath the Sun
But the High Gods.
There we invoke, O Light of Life,
Be Thou a bright flame before us,
Be Thou a guiding star above us,
Be Thou a smooth path beneath us;
Kindle Thou within our hearts
A flame of love for our neighbors,
To our foes, to our friends, to our kindred all,
To all men on the broad earth.
O merciful Son of Crannánán,

From the lowliest thing that liveth
To the Name which is highest of all."

The High Priestess holds the phallic wand on high and walks slowly around the bonfire or cauldron to stand in front of the High Priest. She says:

"O Sun be Thou ready to conquer the Dark!"

The High Priestess presents the phallic wand the High Priest and then steps to one side.

The High Priest holds up the wand in salute and replaces it on the altar.

The Maiden lights the taper from one of the altar candles and presents it to the High Priest. The Maiden then steps to one side.

The High Priest carries the taper to the bonfire and lights it. He gives the taper back to the Maiden who blows it out and replaces it on the altar. She then picks up the cords and gives them to the High Priest.

The High Priestess arranges everyone around the fire, man facing woman as far as possible. The High Priest hands out the ends of the cords in accordance with her instructions, retaining one end of the final cord himself and handing the other end of it to the High Priestess. If there is an odd number of people, with more men than women, he holds on to two cord ends himself, or if more women than men, the High Priestess does the same.

Either way, both of them must be linked with two members of the opposite sex.

When everyone is holding a cord, they all pull the cords taut, with the central knot above the fire. They then start circling deasil in the Wheel dance, building up speed, always keeping the cords taut and the knot over the fire. Any chant can be used that sounds good.

Then the Coven all sit in a circle round the fire. The High Priest gathers up the cords, being careful not to let them get burned and replaces them on the altar.

The High Priest names one of the women to be the Spring Queen and stands her in front of the altar. He crowns her with the chaplet of flowers and gives her the Five Fold Kiss.

The High Priest steps back and calls forward each man in turn to give the Spring Queen the Five Fold Kiss. When the last man has done so, the High Priest presents the Spring Queen with her bouquet.

Then, starting with the Spring Queen, everyone jumps over the fire, singly or in couples, not forgetting to wish.

Smudging: How to do it -- how not to do it

I came across a very interesting article from "Shaman's Drum" which was reprinted for Vision Quest Bookstore. I will attempt to convey the gist of it, along with my views, as a student of the Ways of the Teacher, about it. Smudging is a way of using the smoke from burning herbs as a way to cleanse the body, an object, or a given area of negative influences. I myself use smudging to "cleanse" crystals before using them in jewelry projects I may do, and for protecting my home from some recent "bad vibe"-producing events. (landlord troubles!) I imagine that the skillful use of the proper herbs could help in warding and banishing ceremonies as well, if used properly and with reverence. The three most used plant material for smudging are sage of all types, cedar and sweetgrass.

Sage

There are two major genera and several varieties of each genus of Sage that are used for smudging. Salvia, or the herb sage used for cooking, comes in two major varieties: *S. officinalis*, commonly known as Garden Sage, and *S. apiana*, commonly known as White Sage. Salvia varieties have long been acknowledged as healing herbs, reflected in the fact that its genus name comes from the Latin root word *salvare*, which is the verb "to heal" or "to save." Artemisia is the genus commonly considered "Sagebrush", and is more common in the wilds out here in California. There are two major varieties to the Artemisia genus: *A. californica* or Common Sagebrush, and *A. vulgaris* or

Mugwort. There are many other varieties of both *Salvia* and *Artemisia*, and all are effective in smudging. Sage is burned in smudging ceremonies to drive out evil spirits, negative thoughts and feelings, and to keep Gann (negative entities) away from areas where ceremonies take place. In the Plains Sweatlodge, the floor of the structure is strewn with sage leaves for the participants to rub on their bodies during the sweat. Sage is also used in keeping sacred objects like pipes or Peyote wands safe from negative influence. In the Sioux nation, the Sacred Pipe is kept in a bundle with sage boughs. I would think special crystals could be so protected this way as well.

Cedar

True cedar is of the *Thuja* and *Libocedrus* genus. Some Junipers (*Juniperus* genus) are also called "cedar", thus complicating things some. Some Juniper varieties are cleansing herbs, especially *J. monosperma*, or Present White Cedar. But for smudging, the best is Western Red Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) and California Incense Cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*). Cedar is burnt while praying to the Great Spirit (Uten, the Source -- also known to Plains nations as Wakan Tanka) in meditation, and also to bless a house before moving in as is the tradition in the Northwest and Western Canada. It works both as a purifier and as a way to attract good energy in your direction. It is usually available in herb stores in chipped form, which must

be sprinkled over a charcoal in a brazier. I like a piece of charcoaled mesquite for this purpose, rather than the commercial charcoal cake.

Sweetgrass

Very important to the Sioux and Cherokee nations, its botanical name is *Hierochloa odorata*. In these tribes, the sweetgrass is braided like hair braids. It could be burnt by lighting the end of it, or (more economically) by shaving little bits of it onto charcoal in a brazier. Again, use charcoaled Mesquite (I believe it comes packaged for barbecue use under the brand name "Red Arrow") to burn it, not pressed charcoal tablets. Sweetgrass is burnt after smudging with sage, to welcome in good influences after the bad had been driven out. Sweetgrass is very rare today, and traditional Plains people have been attempting to protect the last of it. Myself, I believe that Cedar, which is not endangered, can safely be used this way. Also Piñon pine needles (used more frequently by the Southwest Teneh, like the Navajo and Apache, as well as the Pueblo people and the Zuni) and Copal (used by the Yaqui and in ancient times by the Aztecs and the Maya) have similar effect. The three mentioned here are readily available either through gathering yourself or, in the case of copal resin, from any good herb shop.

Using Smudging

Burn clippings of the herb in a brazier... not a shell as some "new age" shamanic circles do... it is an insult to White Painted Woman (The

Goddess) to do this, especially with the abalone shell which is especially sacred to Her. If the herb is bundled in a "wand", you can also light the end of the wand that isn't woody and use that. I like the latter way. Direct the smoke with your hands or with a Peyote (feather) wand over the person or thing you wish to smudge. If you can see auras, look for discolored places in the aura and direct the healing smoke towards those places on the patient's body. For cleansing a house, first offer cedar smoke to the four directions outside the house. Then take a sage bunch and go throughout the inside of the house, making sure the smoke penetrates every nook and cranny of the house. It might help also, if you have a power animal, to visualize your animal doing these things, to also dance your animal, and if you have a power song, to sing that too. Then finally, run through the house with a white candle that is well protected, to "light up" the house. Careful not to burn it down when you do it!!!

Final Thoughts

Smudging should be done with care, with reverence, and in an attitude of LOVE. Show your respect and honor to the plants that Usen' has given us for our healing, and they will return the favor by keeping us well and free from disease and negative energy. Aloe Vera plants, though not to be burnt, are good for the cleansing angle as well. Keep one or more potted Aloe Veras in the house (modern varieties are too tender to plant in anything but full shade outside) in organic (wood or ceramic, never plastic or

metal pots. To honor the plant when you transplant it, sprinkle the roots with corn meal and smudge it with cedar once it is transplanted. The spirit of Aloe Vera is a good protective spirit, and if you burn yourself, can also be used to heal your skin. Be sure to ask the plant's permission before cutting part of the leaf off for the healing juice. If you don't, the protective power of the plant will cease, and you will be left with but an inert houseplant... and perhaps some bad karma to boot.

Hii-dicho, it is finished... ENJOY!

An Introduction to Traditional Wicca

Often Traditional Wiccans are asked to describe our religion and beliefs to interested people, who may or may not have confused us with other Pagan religions, with inversions of Christian/Islamic religions like Satanism, or with purely magical traditions with no religious base. There is a lot of flexibility in the ways that we describe ourselves, and one characteristic of Wicca is a large degree of personal liberty to practice as we please. Still, there is an outline that can be described in general terms. Many traditions will depart from one particular or another, but groups departing from all or most of these features are probably non-Wiccan Traditions attempting to stretch or distort the Wiccan name to cover what they want to do.

Mysteries and Initiation

Wicca is an Initiatory religion descended from the Ancient Mystery Religions. A mystery religion is not like Catholicism where a Priest is the contact point between the worshiper and the Deity, nor like Protestantism where a sacred Book provides the contact and guidelines for being with the divine. Rather a Mystery Religion is a religion of personal experience and responsibility, in which each worshiper is encouraged, taught and expected to develop an ongoing and positive direct relationship with the Gods. The religion is called a "Mystery" because such experiences are very hard to communicate in words, and are usually distorted in the telling. You have to have been there in person to appreciate what is meant. Near and far—

Eastern religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and Shinto are probably Mystery traditions, but Wicca is very western in cultural flavor and quite different than eastern religions in many ways.

A Blend of Pagan Roots

Most Wiccan Traditions, K.T.M. included, have particular roots in the British Mystery Traditions. This includes traditions of the Picts who lived before the rise of Celtic consciousness, the early Celts, and some selected aspects of Celtic Paganism. American Wicca is directly descended from British Wicca, brought in the late 1950's by English and American Initiates of Gardnerian, Alexandrian and Celtic Wicca. These traditions are a little like the denominations in Christianity, but hopefully far more harmonious.

While British Traditions are very strong in Wicca, on the Craft as it is sometimes called, other Western Mystery traditions feature prominently, including the ancient Greek Mysteries of Eleusis, Italian Mysteries of Rome, Etruria and the general countryside, Mysteries of Egypt and Persia before Islam, and various Babylonian, Assyrian and other mid-eastern Mysteries that flourished before the political rise of the advocates of "one god".

What's In a Name?

Wicca, Witchcraft, and "The Craft" are used interchangeably at times by many kinds of people. It is fair to say that all Wiccans are Witches, and

many of us believe we are the only people entitled to the name. It is important to know that many people call themselves witches who are not in the least Wiccan, and that Masons also refer to themselves as "Craft", with good historical precedent. Carefully question people on the particular things they do and believe, as part of their religion rather than relying on labels. Any real Wiccan would welcome such honest inquiry.

Traditions and Flavor

There are specific Wiccan beliefs and traditions, including worship of an equal and mated Goddess and God who take many forms and have many Names. Groups who worship only a Goddess or only a God are not traditional Wicca however they may protest, although they may be perfectly good Pagans of another sort. The Wiccan Goddess and God are linked to nature, ordinary love and children -- Wicca is very life affirming in flavor.

Because we have and love our own Gods, Wiccans have nothing to do with other people's deities or devils, like the Christian God or Satan, the Muslim Allah or the Jewish Jehovah (reputedly not his real name). Christians often deny this fact because they think that their particular god is the only God, and everybody else in the whole world must be worshipping their devil. How arrogant. They're wrong on both counts.

Traditional Wicca is a religion of personal responsibility and growth. Initiates take on a particular obligation to personal development throughout their

lives, and work hard to achieve what we call our "True Will", which is the best possibility that we can conceive for ourselves. Finding your Will isn't easy, and requires a lot of honesty, courage and hard work. It is also very rewarding.

Wicca is generally a cheerful religion, and has many holidays and festivals. In fact, most of the more pleasant holidays now on our calendar are descended from the roots Wicca draws on, including Christmas, May Day, Easter and Summer Vacation. Wicca is definitely not always serious. Dancing, feasting and general merriment are a central part of the celebrations.

Wiccan Ethics

Wiccans have ethics which are different in nature than most "one-god" religions, which hand out a list of "do's and don'ts". We have a single, extremely powerful ethical principle which Initiates are responsible for applying in specific situations according to their best judgment. That principle is called the Wiccan Rede (Old-English for rule) and reads:

"An (it) it harm none, do as ye Will"

Based on the earlier mention of "True Will", you will understand that the Rede is far more complex than it sounds, and is quite different than saying "Do whatever you want as long as nobody is hurt". Finding out your Will is

difficult sometimes, and figuring out what is harmful, rather than just painful or unpleasant is not much easier.

Initiation into Wicca

People become Wiccans only by Initiation, which is a process of contacting and forming a good relationship with the Gods and Goddesses of Wicca.

Initiation is preceded by at least a year and a day of preparation and study, and must be performed by a qualified Wiccan Priestess and Priest. The central event of Initiation is between you and your Gods, but the Priestess is necessary to make the Initiation a Wiccan one, to pass some of her power onto you as a new-made Priestess or Priest and to connect you to the Tradition you're joining.

Women hold the central place in Wicca. A Traditional Coven is always headed by a High Priestess, a Third Degree female Witch with at least three years and three days of specific training. A Priest is optional, but the Priestess is essential. Similarly, a Priest may not Initiate without a Priestess, but a Priestess alone is sufficient. Women are primary in Wicca for many reasons, one of which is that the Goddess is central to our religion.

One Religion at a Time

People often ask "Can I become a Wiccan and still remain a Christian, Muslim, practicing Jew, etc." The answer is no. The "one god" religions reject

other paths besides their own, including each other's. "One-god" religions also do not exalt the Female as does Wicca, and mixing two such different traditions would water them both down. Besides, you'd have to ask how serious a person who practiced two religions was about either one. Being Jewish is an exception, since it is a race and culture as well as a religion. There are many Wiccan Jews, but they practice Wicca, not Judaism.

Magick and Science

People interested in Wicca are usually curious about the magick that Wiccans can do. While magick (spelled with a "k" to distinguish from stage conjuring) is not a religion in itself, it is related to our religious beliefs. Wiccans believe that people have many more abilities than are generally realized, and that it is a good idea to develop them. Our magick is a way of using natural forces to change consciousness and material conditions as an expression of our "True Wills". Part of becoming a Wiccan is training in our methods of psychic and magical development.

Because we believe that everything a person does returns to them magnified, a Wiccan will not work a magick for harm, since they would pay too high a price. But a helpful magick is good for both the given and recipient! Wicca is entirely compatible with the scientific method, and we believe all the Gods and forces we work with to be quite natural, not supernatural at all. We do not, however, hold with the kind of scientific dogma or pseudo

religion that sees everything as dead matter and neglects its own method by trumpeting "facts" without honest examination of evidence.

Priestesses at Large?

Long ago the spiritual (and sometimes physical) ancestors of Wiccans were Priestesses and Priests to the Pagan culture as well as devotees of their Mystery. Now that a Pagan culture is rising again, some ask if today's Wiccans could resume that role. This seems unlikely.

Today's Pagan culture is very diverse and more interested in exploring and creating new forms than in building on existing traditions. A public role would either dilute our traditions or force them on an unwilling audience. The neo-Pagan community generally prefers "media figures" and rapid membership and growth. This is not compatible with our slow methods of training and Initiation, the insistence that livelihood come from work outside the Craft, or our needs for privacy. Our religion is not accepted in the American workplace or political system, and may never be. The most powerful Priestesses are often unknown to all but their Covenants. While all Wiccans are Pagans, all Pagans are not Wiccan, and it is best that it remain so.

Principles of Wiccan Beliefs

20. We practice rites to attune ourselves with the natural rhythm of life forces marked by the phases of the Moon and the seasonal Quarters and Cross Quarter.
21. We recognize that our intelligence gives us a unique responsibility toward our environment. We seek to live in harmony with Nature, in ecological balance, offering fulfillment to life and consciousness within an evolutionary context.
22. We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than that apparent to the average person. Because it is far greater than ordinary, it is sometimes called supernatural, but we see it as lying within that which is naturally potential to all.
23. We conceive of the Creative Power in the universe as manifesting through polarity -- as masculine and feminine -- and that this same Creative Power lies in all people, and functions through the interaction of the masculine and feminine. We value neither above the other, knowing each to be supportive to the other. We value sex as pleasure, as the symbol and embodiment of life, and as one of the sources of energies used in magical practice and religious worship.
24. We recognize both outer worlds and inner, or psychological, worlds sometimes known as the Spiritual World, the Collective Unconscious.

Inner Planes, etc. -- and we see in the interaction of these two dimensions the basis for paranormal phenomena and magical exercises. We neglect neither dimension for the other, seeing both as necessary for our fulfillment.

25. We do not recognize any authoritarian hierarchy, but do honor those who teach, respect those who share their greater knowledge and wisdom, and acknowledge those who have courageously given of themselves in leadership.

26. We see religion, magic and wisdom in living as being united in the way one views the world and lives within it -- a world view and philosophy of life which we identify as Witchcraft -- the Wiccan Way.

27. Calling oneself "Witch" does not make a Witch -- but neither does heredity itself, nor the collecting of titles, degrees and initiations. A Witch seeks to control the forces within her/himself that make life possible in order to live wisely and well without harm to others and in harmony with Nature.

28. We believe in the affirmation and fulfillment of life in a continuation of evolution and development of consciousness giving meaning to the Universe we know and our personal role within it.

29. Our only animosity towards Christianity, or towards any other religion or philosophy of life, is to the extent that its institutions have

claimed to be "the only way" and have sought to deny freedom to others and to suppress other ways of religious practice and belief.

20. As American Witches, we are not threatened by debates on the history of the Craft, the origins of various terms, the legitimacy of various aspects of different traditions. We are concerned with our present and our future.

21. We do not accept the concept of absolute evil, nor do we worship any entity known as "Satan" or "the Devil", as defined by the Christian traditions. We do not seek power through the suffering of others, nor accept that personal benefit can be derived only by denial to another.

22. We believe that we should seek within Nature that which is contributory to our health and wellbeing.

The Wiccan Way

Recognizing that there is more than one path to spiritual enlightenment and that Wicca is but one of many, and that Wicca holds within itself the belief that there is more than one type of steps set to the spiral dance, find here listed common denominators of the Craft.

That there is above all the Goddess in her three-fold aspect and many are her names. With all her names we call her Maiden, Mother and Crone.

That there is the God, consort and son, given of strength and most willing of sacrifice.

That and it harm none, do what ye will shall be the law.

That each of her children are bound by the three-fold law and that whatever we create, be it joy or sorrow, laughter or pain, is brought back to us three-fold.

That as she is the mother of all living things and we are all her children, we seek to live in harmony not only with each other, but with the planet earth that is our womb and home.

That life upon the earth is not a burden to be born, but a joy to be learned and shared with others.

That death is not an ending of existence, but a step in the on-going process of life.

That there is no sacrifice of blood, for She is the mother of all living things, and from her all things proceed and unto her all things must return.

That each and everyone of the children who follow this path has no need of another between themselves and the Goddess, but may find Her within themselves.

That there shall not by intent be a desecration of another's symbols or beliefs, for we are all seeking harmony within the One.

That each person's faith is private unto themselves and that another's belief is not to be set out and made public.

That the Wiccan way is not to seek converts, but that the way be made open to those who for reasons of their own seek and find the Craft.

And as it is willed, so mote it be.

The Charge of the Goddess

Whenever ye have need of any thing, once in the month, and better it be when the moon is full, then shall ye assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit of She, who is Queen of all witches. There shall ye assemble, ye who are fain to learn all sorcery, yet have not won its deepest secrets: to these will She teach things that are yet unknown. And ye shall be free from slavery; and as a sign that ye be really free, ye shall be naked in your rites; and ye shall dance, sing, feast, make music and love, all in Her praise. For Hers is the ecstasy of the spirit, and Hers also is joy on earth; for Her law is love unto all beings. Keep pure your highest ideal; strive even towards it; let naught stop you or turn you aside. For Hers is the secret door which opens upon the land of youth and Hers is the cup of wine of life, and the cauldron of Ceridwen, which is the Holy Grail of immortality. She is the gracious goddess, who gives the gift of joy unto the heart of man. Upon earth, She gave the knowledge of the spirit eternal; and beyond death, She gives peace and freedom, and reunion with those who have gone before. Nor does She demand sacrifice, for behold, She is the mother of all living, and Her love is poured out upon the earth.

She who is the beauty of the green earth, and the white moon among the stars, and the mystery of the waters, and the desire of the heart of man, calls unto thy soul. Arise, and come unto Her. For She is the soul of nature, who gives life to the universe, from Her all things proceed, and

unto Her all things must return; and before Her face, beloved of gods and men, let thine innermost divine self be entolded in the rapture of the infinite. Let Her worship be within the heart that rejoiceth; for behold, all acts of love and pleasure are Her rituals. And therefore let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence within you. And thou who thinkest to seek Her, know thy seeking and yearning shall avail thee not unless thou knowest the mystery; that it that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee, then thou wilt never find it without thee. For behold, She has been with thee from the beginning; and She is that which is attained at the end of desire.

Satanism vs. Wicca

Since your main worry seems to be public relations, here's how I would make the distinction between Wicca and Satanism, in a way that is fair to both sides and does not throw Satanists to the dogs:

Wicca and Satanism are quite distinct. Wiccans worship pre-Christian deities (or a modern-day composite of pre-Christian deities) and do not worship the Christian anti-God. Some Satanists also worship a pre-Christian deity, but regard the Christian anti-God as a manifestation of their deity, which Wiccans do not. Wicca and Satanism are very different in their aims and tone. Wicca emphasizes harmony and balance, whereas Satanism emphasizes spiritual self-liberation via iconoclasm and catharsis.

I should mention, though, there's one possible problem with that last sentence. Some feminist Wiccans might take offense at it, since it implies the more radical forms of feminist Wicca are really more like Satanism than like Wicca. Which in my opinion they are. If you've read some of Mary Paly's books, you'll know what I mean.

I myself identify as a feminist Goddess-oriented neo-Pagan, as well as a Satanist. Indeed, feminist Goddess religion is still my primary religious identification. (Satanism is how I relate to "male" energy.) I don't and never did call myself a feminist "Wiccan".

By the way, while I accept today's use of the word Wicca (with a capital W) to refer to a specific European-based religion with a very specific worldview, I do not accept the attempt by Wiccans to copyright the words "witch" and "witchcraft". These words are generic terms, not the property of any one religion. They refer to occult practices found in many religions around the world. A Satanist has as much right to the word "witch" as anyone else. (It so happens that I don't call myself a "witch", but for a different reason: I think many "witches" are making exaggerated claims to occult power, and I don't want to give the appearance of making such an exaggerated claim.)

Women vs. Men

"Oh folks, Loki and I have been chatting, and we're ready to raise a nucleus that might go on for months."

Chirginish and I relish the challenge... with Coyote looking over our shoulders and chuckling...

"Here's the question: Are women superior to men, and if so, why? I think that women are superior to men in the modern world because evolution is lagging society. Most of the evolution of the human race (about 60 million yrs) took place in hunter/gatherer tribes, where aggressive behavior on the part of the male hunters was a survival trait, and relating/caring behavior was a survival trait for females. Now, in the 20 thousand or so years since we have become agrarian, the need for male hunter aggressiveness has gone the way of the Dodo, while the need for relating/caring behavior has become primary. Where does this leave us?

"Well, as I see it, women are almost ideally suited to the overpopulated, communication-intensive environment that we call modern society. Men, on the other hand, are like people with no arms playing handball. It's not that we're bad folk, it's just that we were designed by evolution for an environment that hasn't existed for 20 thousand years, which is a real drop in the bucket in terms of evolution. Evolution isn't going to be giving us any help for at least a few million years; maybe never since we are constantly

screwing up the gene pool with our wars that leave the genetically defective to breed and send the genetically preferable off to evolutionary dead ends. So all we men can do is try to better ourselves and ask for patience on the part of women, who must feel like the entire male sex has completely missed the boat."

Well, you've got a nice point, but it assumes something that I believe 'taint necessarily so. Is male aggressiveness part of nature or nurture? The jury seems to be coming back from a long period of deliberation, and it looks like the verdict is nurture.

This very nicely dovetails with my own theory of what thelemites refer to as the "procession of the aeons". In Crowley's notorious *Liberalism and the Law*, we are said to be passing from an aeon of belief in suffering male gods and patriarchy to an aeon of belief in the value of Self and of partnership between the sexes. Crowley called the old aeon the "Aeon of Osiris" and the new the "Aeon of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child." The enthroned Child is not masculine or feminine, but androgynous/gynandrous. The aeon before the Osirian was that of Isis, an aeon of Great Mother Goddesses and matriarchy.

My chronology is a little different than that which Crowley attributed to these three epochs of human history so far. Crowley declared that the Aeon of Horus began with the Spring Equinox of +1901 Common, just before the writing of the *Book of the Law*. I maintain that the change is still taking

place, and had its roots in the +1700s Common. The writings of the philosopher Locke were some of the first to make a very important quantum jump, and provided ideological impetus for the vital changes that have and are taking place.

What Locke asserted was that government did not rest on Divine Right, but on the consent of the governed. Human beings were not born to different castes, some fated to serve while others were fated to rule by the grace of the gods. Human beings were born equal, and had certain rights as a birthright: Life, Liberty, the right to pursue Happiness, and the right to security of private property.

This assertion shows up in *Liberty II* as these statements:

"Every Man and Every Woman is a Star."

"Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be The Whole Of The Law." "Love Is The Law. Love Under Will."

"Thou hast no right but to do thy Will."

In a little less arcane language, these statements run thusly:

Every Individual matters.

Every Individual has the right to live, be free and pursue Happiness (harmony with one's life's purpose, or True Will) as they Will.

These rights stop at the boundary of the Wills of others. Live your life as you see fit, but mind your own business and above all, harm nobody. This includes yourself in a very conditional way. You do have the right to self-

destruction, but if you truly believe that you matter, why would you want to?

These assertions are usually encountered firstly in a Locke-inspired document that has passed into the history of this country, the Declaration of Independence. If there is any one document that is a trigger point for the New Aeon, it's that one. The American Revolution was the first time monarchy was cast aside in favor of democracy of a representative sort. Democracy was tried before, but never quite this way. And despite several course corrections that needed to be made, (the abolishment of Slavery, the giving of Women, Blacks and Americans the right to vote) and some that still need to be made (the granting of total equality for all races and sexes, a shift to a more direct method of participation, ie Cyber-democracy) the democratic experiment in the United States is the most enduring of all.

Before the 1700s, government was imposed from above, not thought of as flowing from the consent of the governed. Individuals were not accorded rights as a birthright, but were granted rights by the king, usually on a class-by-class basis. Human beings were dealt with as masses and classes, on a collective basis.

Coincidental with these developments was a surfacing of hermetic thought in a more widespread way than even before in history. The Rosicrucian and Freemason movements brought hermeticism to a wide audience. Within the ranks of Freemasonry were both common and noble, and often commoners

would be lodgemasters in lodges frequented by those of noble birth.

Hermetic orders embodied not by birth, but by level of knowledge and initiation and (hopefully) by level of spiritual attainment.

Now, this was true in theory, but unfortunately in practice things weren't so swift. It was only until the mid-1800s and groups like the original Golden Dawn that women had the possibility of initiation. Even now, in Masonic lodges that have lost their occult focus and are now little more than men's clubs, men are ritually strip-searched to assure the initiator that the candidate is indeed male and not a disguised female.

The baggage of the old days of sexism and classism remain in a lot of hermetic orders even today. Crowley himself had serious problems accepting women as equals: he had a rather low opinion of them and was quite cruel to them in numerous cases. But very explicit in the message of the New Aeon is that people are to be dealt with, not by sex or race or social strata but by their inborn, inalienable rights as individuals... as Stars, to use a thelemic term.

The Neo-pagan movement was a definite evolutionary step in defining a New Aeon mode of spirituality. Unlike the traditional hermetic order, Wicca and other forms of Neo-paganism do not have a multiplicity of ranks and a chain of command. Some have three degrees, some two, some only one, that of initiate. Initiation is not a bestowal of rank, but more a purpose-oriented process. As magical orders continue to evolve, they will either need

to emulate more and more the informality and non-hierarchical non-structure of Neo-paganism or choke on their bloated hierarchies. It is funny when one considers that there is much evidence to suggest that Neo-paganism evolved from the Astrum Argentum and the OTO, and that much of Gardner's groundbreaking work in reconstructing the old pre-Osirian Pagan religion was helped along with the research help of Ulrike Al himself.

Perhaps, as the knightly orders of the past were meant as guardians of the Christian Church, there will become a symbiotic connection between Neo-paganism and Magical orders, especially among those whose non-structure mimics that of the coven. Arguably this symbiosis exists now, and hell, I'm living proof of this.

So what the devil does this have to do with the sexes? You'll see as I wrap this up. Oh... remember I mentioned that before the Osirian epoch and the patriarchy, which seems to have come in with the rise of the big cities and the transformation from a hunter/gatherer society to an agrarian one (I think you have placed the transformation a little too far into the past) there was the Isian epoch and the matriarchy? Well, before patriarchal philosophy displaced matriarchalism, women pretty much ran things. They didn't hunt because to place women, who were the living image of the Goddess and the ex-nihilo creatrices of the next generation, in bodily jeopardy was literally blasphemy. Women were the intermediaries for men to the Goddess, who was unapproachable otherwise. The men had their hunting

cults, but they were as insignificant in reality as the Victorian-era anthropologists misread the ancient religion of the Goddess as merely an inferior "fertility cult."

When the transition came to the cities and to patriarchy sometime around -10,000 to -7,500 Common, the long-suppressed males took by force what the Goddesses of the Isian era denied them by their divine decrees... power. Male warrior deities replaced female mother deities. The priestesses of the old religions were destroyed. (The Book of Joshua in the Old Testament is a vivid account of one triumph of Osiris over Isis.) And the new order began. But the old matrilineal religions survived for several thousands of years after the turn of the aeon, and it is painfully obvious that the old patriarchal ways will haunt us for thousands of years into the future, even as new ways take hold and new philosophies become more accepted. But it really is nurture rather than nature that makes men aggressive and women passive. Men can learn to be nurturing and loving, and women can learn to be assertive and empowered. In order that we can truly enter this new aeon where all are leaders and all are Stars, we each have to cultivate the "other side" of our Selves. No, women are not superior to men, nor is it the other way around. Every Individual matters. Everyone has the potential to be a King, in the thelemic sense of the word. We need to learn to treat all with dignity, be they material successes or abject material failures. We need to treat even those still enslaved by the old

ideas lives with as much dignity as those who have declared their secession from them and their embracing of the New Law.

The evolution is really and truly in our own hands.

Beauty and balance, Will and Love,
Michelle.

The coven that I've been working with in Permen begins its cup blessing by a dialogue between the Priest and the Priestess. Both have a hand each on the athame and the chalice:

Priest: "Be it known that a man is not greater than a woman.

Priestess: "Nor yet is a woman greater than a man"

Priest: "For what one lacks"

Priestess: "The other can provide"

Priest: "As the Athame is to the male"

Priestess: "So is the cup to the female."

Both: And when conjoined together, they become one in truth, for there is no greater magic in all the world than that of love.

What Is P.A.W.N.?

The Peruvian Area Wiccan Network is a group of pagans and friends from a wide variety of Craft traditions. P.A.W.N. sponsors parties, group rituals, a student/teacher network and other activities as inspired or impelled.

Why do I want to join P.A.W.N.?

- o You want to be part of an active, growing community of Wiccans who can work together to make some changes in their world;
- o You want to meet people and make new friends who share your basic values—people you can be yourself with, no need to keep your cover;
- o You want an ongoing opportunity to exchange views and information with people from groups or traditions other than your own;
- o You want to be in on the creation of a Peruvian pagan extended family which will make all the above possible;
- o You like hugs, and you enjoy being warmly welcomed.

Do I have to "Go Public" to be a member?

No. Only the Board Chair and Secretary are expected to be "public," and the identities of all other members are fiercely protected.

How do I join?

Dues are \$12 per cover, \$5 per solitary, payable twice yearly in May and November. These cover the cost of mailings and the setup costs for parties and rituals, as well as other costs authorized by the Board and/or Steering Committee.

Do I have to join P.A.W.N. to participate?

No. All parties are open to pagans and friends. To find out about them and other P.A.W.N. functions, write us at the P.O. Box listed below (postage is appreciated) or call Bob Key on his answering machine. Another way to find out more about P.A.W.N. is to show up at one of our Steering Committee meetings. They are held at 6:30 pm, the second Sunday of each month, at the Glendale Community Center (999 S. Claremont).

Thank you for your interest in P.A.W.N.!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS COMMONLY USED IN WICCA

AKASHA- the spiritual ether (or aether); the omnipresent fifth occult element which embraces the other four- earth, air, fire, and water; and from which they stem. This is the realm of "pattern" or causality, from which the realm the normally thought of "five senses manifests. Some define it is the "other" of the "two worlds" that the witch or magician walks between.

ARADIA- Daughter of the Goddess Diana, and a name for the Goddess used by Italian Witches or Stragga, commonly used in many Wiccan traditions today.

ASPECTING- Any advanced magical activity in which a practitioner

manifests a particular aspect of the Goddess or God, in thought,

feelings, behavior, appearance, etc.: Often as a direct result of a

"Drawing Down". Often a minor variation of this phenomena occurs with

the selection of a "Magical Name", or Craft Name.

ASPECTS- Forms, facets, or personas of Deity: for example, Brigid.

Iseult, Eos, and Kore are all aspects of the Maiden and the Maiden

is an aspect of the Goddess.

ATHAME- black handled, double edged dagger. Principally used

to cast and dissolve the circle, for which purposes it is

interchangeable with the magic sword. A tool of the

"Element" of Fire in the Georgian Tradition and some others.

BELTANE - May Eve festival. One of the ancient Celtic "Fire Festivals." on this night, the cattle were driven between two bonfires to protect them from disease. Couples wishing for fertility would "jump the fires" on Beltane night. Also the traditional Sabbath where the rule of the "Wheel of the Year" is returned to the Goddess. This Festival also marks the transition point of the threefold Goddess energies from those of Maiden to Mother.

BOOK OF SHADOWS - Traditionally hand copied book of rituals.

recipes, training techniques, guidelines, and other materials deemed important to a Witch or a coven. Each tradition has its own standard version of the Book and each Witch's book will be different as he or she adds to it with time from many different sources. Only another Witch can see

your book of shadows. Also, traditionally, it may never leave your hands or possession until death, when it should be destroyed, or (in some traditions) returned to the coven to be disposed of.

BURNING TIMES- a term used by some Witches for the period of persecution in the Middle Ages and later. It is in fact a misnomer in some places, as Witches were only burned in Scotland, and on the continent of Europe. In England and the U.S., they were hanged.

CANTILEMAS- Festival held on Feb. 1. One of the 4 Celtic "Fire Festivals. Commemorates the changing of the Goddess from the Crone to the Maiden. Celebrates the first signs of Spring. Also called "Imbolc" (the old Celtic name). This is the seasonal change where the first signs of spring and the

return of the sun are noted, i.e. the first sprouting of leaves, the sprouting of the Crocus flowers etc. In other words, it is the festival commemorating the successful passing of winter and the beginning of the agricultural year. This Festival also marks the transition point of the threefold Goddess energies from those of Crone to Maiden.

CARDINAL POINTS— North, South, East, and West, marked in the

Georgian Tradition by candles of green, red, yellow, and blue, respectively. The Circle is drawn to connect these four points.

CHALICE— one of the tools of the Witch. Placed on the altar

to represent the element of Water.

CHARGE OF THE GODDESS - The Traditional words of the Goddess

to her followers, or "hidden children". Normally declaimed by the HPS at every women Circle.

CIRCLE - the area in which the magical worship and spells takes place. Can also be used to designate a particular group of Witches or Pagans such as "Silver Moon Circle".

CONE OF POWER - power raised in the circle by the Witches assembled, and sent out into the world to work magic, is usually visualized as being retained and built in the form of a "cone" prior to release.

COVEN - an organized group of Witches, led by a High priestess and/or a High Priest who meet regularly for worship and fellowship. The traditional membership is 12.

but in fact most covens number considerably less. 3 is the minimum in the Georgian Tradition. In Middle English,

"Covin" a group of confederates. In Old French "Covine" a band or group with a single purpose; Latin "Com" - together,

"Venire" - to come or move.

COVENSTEAD - regular meeting place for a coven. Usually the

home of the High Priestess or High Priest.

COWAN - a non-Witch. Formerly used in a very derogatory manner. Still used in Masonic Ritual to indicate the non-initiate and/or pretender to "real craft". Not often used today among most Witches.

COYOTE ENERGY - trickster energies. Named for the American

Indian Trickster, Coyote, who tricks man into learning what he needs to learn. Applies to one who constantly jokes and clownes. Also applies to the concept of "Holy Fool" in many traditions.

CROSS QUARTER PAYS- The modern name for the Celtic Fire Festivals of Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane, and Lannmas.

ZEOSIL- clockwise, or sunwise. Traditional direction for working "building" magic.

DRAWING DOWN THE MOON- Ritual invocation of the spirit of the Goddess into the body of the High Priestess by the High Priest.

DIVINATION- magical method of exploration or inquiry into

a situation via such methods as Tarot cards, runes, I-Ching, etc.

ELEMENTS - Earth, air, fire, and water, plus spirit, which includes them all. These are regarded as realms or categories of nature (both material and non-material) and are not to be confused with the physicists table of elements, which the modern witch, of course, accepts.

ESBAT - weekly or biweekly meeting of a coven. Traditionally held either on the full moon or the new moon.

FAMILIARS - Either a Witch's pet animal which has been trained to be a magical helper, or an artificially created "elemental" which performs the same functions as the animal friend.

FIVEFOLD KISS, FIVEFOLD SALUTE- The

Witches' ritual salute with kisses: (1) on each foot, (2) on each knee, (3) above the pubic hair, (4) on each breast, and (5) on the lips- really 8 kisses in all. It is only used within the Circle, but the words that go with it are the origin of "Blessed Be."

GARDNERIANS-

Tradition of Witchcraft descended from the teachings of Gerald Gardner.

GNOMES- an "entity" or "elemental" that dwells in the plane of Earth or is associated with the EARTH element.

GREAT RITE- The rite which is the main feature of the third

degree initiation, and which is also laid down for certain

festivals. It is sexual in nature, but may be 'actual'

(and private to the couples concerned) or symbolic, as the participants wish.

HALLOW'S - name used by some traditions for Samhain or Halloween

HANDFASTING - Wiccan equivalent of a wedding. It can be made

legal if the Priestess and/or Priest are registered as clergy with the local authorities, or it may only be considered binding within the coven.

HIGH PRIEST/ESS - Technically speaking,

a Witch who has

received the 2nd. degree initiation. More usually, the male and female leaders of a coven.

IMBOLL- Celtic name for Candlemas.

INVOCATION- The ritual "calling-in" of an entity (or energies) higher than human, either for communication with the caller through a medium or by visible manifestation or else to enter into a human body as in the Praying Down the Moon. In some traditions, a Prayer.

LAMMAS- August 1st. Witch Festival.

The Old Celtic name for

this festival is Lughmassadh. It is the Festival of the First Fruits, and is the first of the 3 harvests. This festival also marks the change of the Threotold Goddess energies from that of Mother to Crone.

MAIDEN- An appointment held by one of the women of the coven. She is virtually the assistant High Priestess. This

term is also the descriptive term used to describe the first of the aspects of the Threhold Goddess Energies (Maiden, Mother, and Crone). It is traditionally associated with the Waxing Moon, and the period from Imbolc (Candlemas) to Beltane (May eve) where the energies are those of initiating, beginning, and creation.

OLD RELIGION- another name for the Craft.

PAGANING- Presentation of an infant to the Circle and to the Gods.

PENTACLE- a disc shaped talisman in particular, the metal disc which represents the earth element among the witch's working tools.

PENTAGRAM- The five-pointed star. With a single point

uppremost, it represents the human being. Inverted, with two points uppremost, it can have Satanist associations; but not necessarily. Some traditions of Wicca use the inverted pentagram to signify an initiate of the second degree.

QUARTERS- The North, East, South, and West parts of a magical circle or other ritual area. (See also "Wakultowers")

REPE- rule or law.

SABBAT- one of the eight festivals or high holy days of Wicca.

SALAMANDER- an entity that dwells in the realm of Fire.

SAMHAIN- The festival of remembrance for the dead.

held on the eve of Nov. 1st. It is the last of the three harvests. This festival also marks the transition of rulership of the "Wheel of the Year" from that of the Goddess to that of the God.

SCRYING - divination, usually using such methods as crystal gazing, or divination via incense smoke, or water as opposed to tarot or other manipulative means.

SPELL - a prayer, or verbal direction of magical energies toward the accomplishment of some goal.

SUMMONER - The male officer of the coven who corresponds to the Maiden. He is the assistant High Priest.

SYLPH - an "entity" or "elemental" that dwells in the plane of Air or is associated with the AIR Element.

TRADITIONS- any of the various "sects" of Wicca such as Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Georgian, Seax, etc.

WATER- an "entity" or "elemental" that dwells in the plane of Water or is associated with the WATER Element.

WAND- A rod or staff that is prepared so that it may be used

for magical or psychic purposes, usually to project some form of power.

WARLOCK- a term coined in the *Burning Times*. It was used to

denote a traitor to the Craft, or one who had betrayed the followers of the Old Religion. It's origin is Scottish.

Because of the negative connotations, it is not used by most

Wiccans today.

WATCH TOWERS- Originally from the Enochian branch of Ceremonial Magick, now incorporated into many "Traditions" of Wicca, these are the four elemental "directions" or "quarters" (corresponding to the appropriate points on the compass) called to protect the Circle during its establishment. Each of them have a correspondence between the compass point, an element, and (varying amongst different traditions) color associated with them.

WICCA- the name most modern day Witches use for the Craft. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *Wicca*, meaning to bend or to shape. This is the root word from which we get *wicker*.

WIPPERSTICKS- counter-clockwise.

Used for "tearing down"

OR BANISHING magic.

WHITE HANDLED KNIFE - the working knife of a

Witch. It is used to carve candles, and for fashioning the
other tools.

Traditionally, it can only be used in a circle.