TODAY'S WITCH

NOVEMBER 2023

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SAMHAIN

The information covered in this Magazine is comprised of various sources from the Pagan community. We endeavor to cover topics from all traditions, and to be inclusive. The information provided is to be considered factual based of the research of the various authors represented therein. If there is any contradictory information, please feel free to contact the author of the article. We hope that everyone can enjoy the magazine and also learn from it. If there is a topic you wish to see also contact us and we'll be happy to try to include it in a future issue.

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Atalanta Moonfire—Vice President

David Larson—Sales and Marketing

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Emily Thornton—Chief Managing Editor

Genine Turnbull—Webmaster/Design Editor

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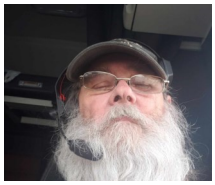
Meet the Staff

Edward Sott (CEO)

Edward Sott is a Theologian and Historian and run a Non-profit organization. And he's a military Veteran. He was since childhood inspired to write novels and plays. He currently resides in Pennsylvania and has traveled throughout the world. He is the founder and CEO of Covered Bridge Press LLC, and of "Today's Witch " Magazine. His goal is to educate the public and bring traditionalism back to the craft and its practices. He is an Alexandrian Wiccan High Priest and Elder.



David Larsen (Sales and Marketing Dir.)

David Larsen is an over the Road Commodities Relocation Engineer, (AKA truck driver) He is also a history buff and a word smith. He currently resides in Florida and wherever the road and his dog Joey might take him. He is also world traveled from his military experience and driving. David is Co-Author with Edward Sott of Two Novels A Time for Redemption and A time for Retribution he is also A Vice President of Covered Bridge Press, LLC and a member of the Board of Directors of "Today's Witch" magazine. He is an open-minded Christian and Friend of the Pagan Community. He understands the value of spiritualism.

Earl Williams (Hum. Res. Director)

My name is Rev. Earl Williams.

I have been in the pagan community for 20 years, holding a position as an ordained minister for 17 of those years. I am currently the Human Resources manager for Covered Bridge Press. I am happy and honored to also be a part of the new publication, "Today's Witch" magazine, due to be released mid-October of 2023.

Emily Thornton (Managing Editor)

My name is Emily Thornton (Emma Gardner) and I have my Masters in Journalism. I love editing work and working with others. I have written numerous articles along with having my own column with local newspapers for over 10 years. Even though I grew up in a fairly religious household, I have always felt a love of nature and the metaphysical. I have an affinity for green magic and I love reading tarot for people around me. I even opened my own little side business called Celtic Readings, Oils and Sundries. I love stories and providing perspective to people at a crossroads. I work with Brigid mainly, but love the Celtic pantheon of deities.

Atalanta Moonfire (Vice President)

Atalanta Moonfire is an eclectic witch who is also an author, diviner, teacher, and lover of all types of spirituality. Born in Manassas, Virginia, she grew up moving frequently which gave her the ability to be flexible and adaptable to change as well as diverse life experiences. She studied and worked as a paralegal for 15 years, eventually becoming a presiding judge's assistant in Floyd County, AL. At 54 years young, she has been pagan since the age of 14, practicing since she was 18, and specializing in divination at age 25. Atalanta is a Reiki master, Ordained Minister, graduate of Harvard ED Online Oracles & Prophecies, and High Priestess of Sacred Moon coven. Always looking to expand her knowledge, she continues to study and practice Hecatean Witchcraft and Hoodoo. She is currently touring with the Oddities & Curiosities Expo promoting her new book, "Throwing the Bones Divination for the Modern Practitioner". She is also Vice President of Covered Bridge Press, LLC and Co-Founder of "Today's Witch" magazine. Her goal in life is to expand her spiritual education and help others who share her desire of understanding this magnificent universe in which we live.

Genine Tunbull (Webmstr, Graph. Des.)

Genine Turnbull is a fascinating person who is an Herbalist, Empowerment Coach and a Webmaster. She is also the Web Editor of Today's Witch Magazine and Covered Bridge Press LLC. She is a spiritualist who follows her own path, which she is happy to share with others. She believes in personal growth and encourages people to learn and grow every day. She is a motivator and a force of encouragement for every person she meets. Her work is important and has inspired many.

The Goddess is with me always; she provides me with wisdom, strength, and guidance when needed most.

An Interview with Edward Sott CEO of Covered Bridge Press

Pops: Ed I hear you're taking on a very large undertaking right now can you tell us a little bit about it?

Edward: Well actually Pops we have several projects in the works, which one would you like to talk about first.

Pops: Well, I'm interested in the travel guide, but I also thought you were doing a magazine have you given up the magazine or are you doing both?

Edward: We are actually doing a monthly magazine and the travel guide.

Pops: Wow that is an amazing undertaking doing both a magazine and a travel guide. Can you give us a little about the magazine.

Edward: Sure can, The magazine is called Today's Witch, it was a concept that I came up with a few years back when I decided that I wanted to write my book on paganism and realized that it would take up about 7 volumes.

Pops: Sounds interesting Today's Witch sounds like you're trying to bring us into the modern world. Kind of a 21st century type thing.

Edward: In a sense yes I am, I actually want to disseminate information of traditionalism and allow the newer generation of witches to understand the core values that are placed in the traditional teachings.

Pops: Sounds like you're ready to bring Wicca and Paganism out of hiding and allow for a greater understanding of what our values are.?

Edward: Yep.

Pops: Ed I'm curious much like me you have done a considerable amount of travelling across the country, how do you find like minded people and places to find items that go with our craft?

Edward: Well back in the old days, it was very difficult,

Pops: How So?

Edward: All we had was the yellow pages and road atlas, We didn't have the advantages of the internet. Now we have Google and other search engines that can afford us the opportunity to find things faster. However, this system of modern communication is flawed. It's a hit and miss deal with hundreds of thousands of listings coming up in the searches.

So, I decided to return to a bit of simplicity. And create a portable guide that will allow people to find things without having to navigate the internet.

Pops: So how did you come up with the travelling guide?

Edward: Well back in mid-April a truck driving friend of mine and I were discussing this very topic. And he informed me that they have a guide which lists all the trucks stops and rest areas throughout the country. And thus, the seed was planted, and we decided to make a similar guide.

Pops: So, you took from your friend the idea, and decided to run with it, that's awesome. It must be quite an undertaking. But that's an awesome thing to do for our community.

Edward: It is a labor of love and it's not been as difficult as one may imagine. It took a lot of time and creative thinking do figure out the logistics behind it. And after doing a lot of 16 hour to 20 hour days of research I have managed to procure 4100 stores with which I'm working with.

Pops: 4,100 stores are you kidding me, that's amazing, I didn't realize there were that many, and you managed to do this in one shot.

Edward: It took me a period of several weeks but yes, I discovered that there are many stores throughout the country that cater to our particular needs.

Pops: What's the hardest thing about this undertaking for you?

Edward: The most important and difficult thing I've found was getting in contact with the stores because of dealing with their hours, contacting their owners/ managers and getting their permissions to list them when having to deal with different time zones. I even have stores in Alaska and Hawaii, and have intentions of going into an international book with it within the next few years.

Pops: You must have one heck of a staff to support you with this endeavor?

Edward: Indeed, it is my honor privilege to have the unwavering support of a fine staff of dedicated and committed personnel that are behind me in this endeavor and it's with my extreme gratitude that I honor them for it.

Pops: Kudos to your staff. Ed, I'm sure your crew is dedicated and committed and probably ready to commit you or be committed if you ever come up with another idea like this. (Laughing)

Edward: Well, there's been numerous threats already made on both accounts. And oh, btw they just found out about the international idea they didn't know about it until this interview.

Pops: I take it you're not afraid of them. And I wish you nothing but the best in your endeavor and thank you and your incredible staff for affording us this absolutely wonderful guide to assist us, as well as your very informative magazine.

Samhain Correspondences

Other Names:	Halloween, Hallowmas, All Hallows Eve, Day of the Dead, Feast of Spirits, Third Harvest, Samonios, All Saint's Eve, Martinmas, Celtic New Year, Samhuinn, Celtic Winter, Samana, Festival of Pomona, Vigil of Saman, Hallowe'en, Vigil of Todos, Santos.
Symbols:	Jack-O-Lantern, Balefire, Besom, Masks, The Cauldron, Waning Moon.
Colors:	Black, Orange
Deities:	All Crone Goddesses; The Dying/Dead God
Activities:	Divination, Past Life Recall, Spirit Con tact, Drying Winter Herbs, Meditation
Taboos:	Travel After Dark, Eating Grapes or Berries
Plants:	Apple, Mugwort, Gourds, Sage, All spice, Catnip
Meanings:	Wisdom of the Crone; Death of the God; Reflection on Our Place in the Wheel of the Year; Honoring the Dead; End of Summer; New Year (Celtic); Celebrating Reincarnation.
Attunement Teas:	Apple Cider, Angelica, Catnip, Indian Hyppo, Sage, Valerian
Ritual Oils:	Frankincense, Basil, Yarrow, Lilac, Ylang-Ylang, Camphor, Clove
Mythical Creatures:	Phooka, Goblin, Medusa, Beansidhe, Fylgiar, Perryton, Erlkonig, Harpies
Key Action(s)	Return, Change

Gods and Goddesses

All Crone Goddesses: Al-Ilat; Babd; Bebhionn; Brunhilde; Carlin; Cerridwen; Devanyani; Edda; Eris; Frau Holde; Hakea; Hel; Inanna; Kali; Kele-De; Macha; Mari; Marzana; Nicnevin; Psyche; Remati; Zorya Vechernaya

All Underworld Goddess: Baba Yaga; Bast; Bronach; Cailleach/ Cailleac; Cassandra; Crobh Dearg; Dolya; Elli; Fortuna; Frigg/Frey; Heca te; Husbishag; Ishtar; Kalma; Lilith;

All Underworld Goddess: (cont.):

Mara; Mari-Ama; The Morrigu/Morrigan; Pamona; The Queen of Elphame; Rhiannon

All Death Gods:

All Underworld Gods; Arawn; Coyote Brother; Eite-Ade; Hades; The Great Horned God; Loki; Nefertum; Pluto; Samana; Woden

All Aged Gods:

Am-Heh; Corn Father; Dis; Ghede; Heimdall; Kronos/ Cronus; Madhera; Odin; Rangi; Sekhet; Xocatl

Blood Moon Ritual October 25, 2023

Ritual

Processional:

Opening Chant:

All: We Are a Circle. (*Repeated until all have entered the circle and taken up their individual places.)

Casting the Circle:

The HP will proceed from the North quarter in a clockwise direction while stating this aloud until he returns to each quarter. He will hold the point of the Athame toward the ground visualizing a beam of energy being sent out of the blade.

HP: I cast this circle to be a place that's not a place, in a time that's not a time, and in a space that's not a space. A place, where our magick workings are to be given life and birth. And where the heavens and earth shall meet in a sacred marriage. As above so shall it be now below. So Mote it Be!

ALL: So Mote it Be!

The HP then takes his place next to the HPS at the center of the altar facing outward toward the edge of the circle.

HPS: All hail and welcome those who enter this sacred space. May the light of the Goddess shine upon us all as we gather in celebration of her honor. So Mote it Be!

All: So Mote it Be!

HP: A call, A call to the quarters all

All: A call, A call to the quarters all.

All members of the circle are now to face the North Quarter raising arms to shoulder height, palms down, as the North Quarter is summoned.

Summoner lights his/her candle raises it in the air and states the following.

North Quarter: I call upon the guardians of the watchtowers of the North, Spirits of the Earth, lend to us your guidance, your nurturing, your loving grace. By the Earth that is her body, I call thee forth now. Enter into this our sacred circle and join in our rite. So Mote it Be!

All: So Mote it Be!

All members of the circle are now to face the East Quarter raising arms in air above the head fingers together, palms forward, as the East Quarter is summoned.

Summoner lights his/her candle, raises it in the air and states the following:

East Quarter: I call upon the guardians of the watchtowers of the East, Spirits of the Air, lend us your learning, your understanding, your knowledge. By the Air that is her breath, I call thee forth now. Enter into this our sacred circle and join us in our rite. So Mote it Be!

All: So Mote it Be!

All members of the circle are now to face the South Quarter raising arms above the head, fingers outstretched, palms forward, as the South Quarter is summoned.

Summoner lights his/her candle, raises it in the air and states the following:

South Quarter: I call upon the guardians of the watchtowers of the South, Spirits of the Fire, lend us your passion, your will, your desire, your drive. By the Fire that is her Spirit, I call thee forth now. Enter into this our sacred circle and join us in our rite. So Mote it Be!

All: So Mote it Be!

All members of the circle are now to face the West Quarter, raising arms at shoulder height, palms cupped like a bowl, as the West Quarter is summoned.

West Quarter: I call upon the guardians of the watchtowers of the West, Spirits of the Water, Lend us your dreams, your intuition, your love, and your healing. By the Water that is Her womb, I call thee forth now. Enter into this our sacred circle and join us in our rite. So Mote it Be!

All: So Mote it Be!

At this point all now face center males with arms crossed against their chest and females with legs spread shoulder length apart and arms out stretched in pentacle position.

HP: Let us now all raise our arms and welcome in the elements in unison.

All: The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water, Return, Return, Return, Return. (chant x 3)

After the chant is complete all lower hands and the HP then faces the HPS places the fivefold salute upon her and Draws the moon down upon her.

HP: Our Lady, Great Mother, who was of old known by many and various names: Aphrodite, Brigid, Cerridwen, Diana, Gaia, Isis, and many others. Mother of us all, bringer of life and love, bearer of all fruitfulness. I invoke you and call upon you to descend into the body of this your High Priestess. Touch with her hands, kiss with her lips, speak with her voice to these, your loving and faithful followers.

HP then kisses his Athame, bows before the HPS in honor of her.

All: Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Inana *(chant x3)*

HPS: Listen to the words of the Great Mother who was, of old, also called among men Artemis, Astarte, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Cerridwen, Diana, Arianrhod, Bride, and by many other names. At mine altar, the youths of Lacedemon in Sparta made due sacrifice. Whenever ye have a need of anything, 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 Me, who am Queen of all the Witcheries. There ye shall assemble, ye who are feign to learn all sorcery, who have not as yet won its deepest secrets. To these will I teach that which is yet unknown. And ye shall be free from slavery and as a sign that ye shall be really free, shall ye bear your spirits unto me. And ye shall dance, sing, feast, and make music and merriment, all in my presence. For mine is the ecstacy of the spirit and mine is also joy on the earth. For my law is Love unto all beings. Keep pure your highest ideals, strive ever towards it. Let none stop you or turn your aside. For mine is the secret that opens up the door of youth and mine is the cup of the Wine of Life and the Cauldron of Cerridwen, which is the Holy Grail of Immortality. I am the Gracious Goddess who gives the gifts of joy unto the heart of men. Upon earth I give knowledge of the Spirit Eternal, and beyond death I give peace and freedom and reunion with those who have gone before. Nor do I demand ought in sacrifice, for behold I am the Mother of All Things, and my love is poured out upon the earth.

Here ye the words of the Star Goddess. She is the dust of whose feet are the Hosts of Heaven. Whose body encircleth the universe.

I am the beauty of the Green Earth, and the White Moon amongst the stars and the mystery of the Waters, and the desire of the heart of man. I call unto thy soul, "Arise and come unto me," for I am the Soul of Nature who giveth life to the universe. From me all things proceed and unto me all things must return. Beloved of the gods and man, thine inmost divine self shall be enfolded in the raptures of the Infinite. Let my worship be in the heart that rejoiceth; for behold, all acts of love and pleasure are mine 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 me, know that thy seeking and yearning avail ye not unless you know the mystery, that if what thou seekest thou findest not within t hee, thou wilt never find it without thee. For behold – I have been with thee from the beginning and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.

Blood Moon Ritual October 25, 2023 (continued).

HP: All hail the words of the Great Mother, All hail the glory or her presence, All hail the wisdom of her words.

ALL: We all hail and welcome thee!

At this point each member of the circle are to be handed a piece of paper and a pen.

HPS: Write upon this sacred scroll your desire and place it within my cauldron and also place it in the cauldron of your heart. Let your burning passions and yearnings for what you seek raise into the heavens from this cauldron as the fires of your desires unite and burn their will into the heavens to return to ash in the earth.

The papers are then placed into the cauldron and the HP will light the fire of the cauldron.

All are now to join hands and chant the following.

All: We all come from the Goddess (*chant x3)*

After the cone of power is raised and the magick is worked toward our desires the Cake and Ale will be consecrated and served.

The HP then takes up the libation plate and consecrates the cake with the following:

HP: I consecrate this sacred cake by the power of the Lord and Lady to sustain us all. Let their love and grace sustain us as we share in their feast.

The plate is then sent around the circle starting in the North Quarter and proceeding deocil (clockwise) until all have taken a bite of the cake each greeting the next as they pass it forward stating the following:

All: May you never hunger. (*not to be said in unison rather to each other as passing it around)*

The libation plate is then passed to the HP and HPS where they in turn do likewise.

The HPS then takes up the chalice and consecrates the wine with the following:

HPS: I consecrate this sacred wine by the power of the Lord and Lady to provide us all with the life giving waters of their love and grace as we share in their feast.

The Chalice is then sent around the circle starting in the North Quarter and proceeding deocil (clockwise) until all have partaken of a sip of wine each greeting the next as they pass it forward stating the following:

All: May you never thirst *(not to be said in unison, rather to each other as passing it around).*

The libation plate is then passed to the HP and HPS where they in turn do likewise.

HPS: May the gods bless this food as they bless our daily lives. Let us remember that without the gods we would have nought. Enjoy these symbols of all that we delight in. I urge you all, however, to remember to share what you have with those who have naught.

The HP and HPS then raise their Athames and Chalice in salute to the Lord and lady

HP: Thank you Lady, for this time we have spent in your presence. We came together in love and friendship; so let us now go our separate ways. We now depart our rite, performed in love and joy, in your honor and will remember your wise counsel as you depart that we may worship you, in all things we do, think, say and see. Depart now Great Mother with our thanks and love eternal. Hail and Farewell.

HPS: Great Mother goddess, creatrix of us all we thank your for this time we have spent in your presence. As we entered into this circle in honor of you we now also leave your divine presence in the same honor. Mother guide and bless us as we continue on our earthly journey, ever reminded of your grace and mystery. Hail and Farewell.

All: All hail and farewell Great Mother, your words we shall never forget and we shall honor your forever.

At this point the HP and HPS raise the proper stance salute to them and all males stand as before as do all females.

After this is complete each member will now face the West Quarter as the summoner again raises his candle each taking the same stance as before.

Summoner: Guardians of the Watchtowers of the West, spirits of the Water, as we have once called thee forth to lend us your energy we in gratitude for your gifts now ask you to depart from us. We will carry your lesson in our heart. Go now in Peace and Go in Power. So Mote it Be!

All: So Mote it Be!

Repeat this and stances according to each direction replacing the element and direction in a widdershins (counterclockwise direction) until the final quarter is dismissed.

HP now takes position at the North Quarter and proceeds widdershin around the circle stating the following with Athame pointed at ground.

HP: The circle that I once cast to act as a sacred place that was not a place, in a time that was not a time, and a space that was not a space. As a place to work our magicks, and worship in honor of our Lady, I now call back upon me to return us to our lives with remembrance of these workings. I now bring the heavens back upon the heavens and the earth back under our feet. As now Below shall it be Above.

So Mote it Be!

All: So mote it be!

At this point the circle is now open and we can return to our celebratory feast after the rite.

All: "The Circle is Open" chant (*Chant x3)*

All can prepare to feast and have fun and socialize.

Merry Meet, Merry Part until we Merry Meet again.

Heather

This genus consists of a single species of evergreen shrublet that is closely related to *Erica*. There are over 300 variants of *C. vulgaris*, grown for their year-round interest. Flowering heather dries well, retaining its color for years, and white heather is considered lucky. *Calluna* come from the Greek *kalluno*, "to sweep", as it was used in brooms. It was also gathered for fuel (the common name "ling" is from the Anglo-Saxon *lig*, "fire"), and used in thatch. Heather is widely used as a medicinal plant in northern and upland Europe. Heather honey is an important product in these areas and also has reputed therapeutic properties. It has a pungent flavor, clear, dark amber color, and thixotropic texture, which makes it difficult to extract, but it is excellent for cut honeycomb.

Dense, evergreen shrublet, with numerous, tortuous, rooting branches, and very small, stalkless leaves. Loose racemes, 3-15cm (1¼-6in) long, of small, pink-purple, bell-shaped flowers appear from late summer.

Common Name: Heather

Other Names: Ling

Botanical Name: Calluna vulgaris

Genus: Calluna

Family: Ericaceae

Native Location: N and W Europe to Siberia, N Africa, the Azores.

Cultivation: Acid soil in an open, sunny position. Tolerates wet conditions in winter. Trim after flowering to maintain shape.

Propagation: By semi-ripe cuttings in summer; by layering in spring.

Harvest: Flowering shoots are cut in summer and dried for infusions.

Height: 10-60cm (4-24in)

Width: 45-75cm (18-30in)

Variations: **Alba Plena**. Has double white flowers. Height: 30-45cm (12-18in) Width: 30-45cm (12-18in)

Beoley Gold. Has yellow foliage and white flowers. Height: 40cm (16in) Width: 60cm (24in)

Darkness. Has deep rose-purple flowers and dark green foliage. Height: 25cm (10in) Width: 35cm (14in)

Multicolor. Is dwarf, with pink flowers and copper foliage, tinted orange, bronze, and yellow, and red all year. Height: 10 cm (4in) Width: 25cm (14in)

Silver Queen. Has silver-gray foliage, lilac-pink flowers, and a spreading habit. Height: 40cm (16 in).

Hardiness: Z4-7

Parts Used: Flowering tips

Properties: An astringent, diuretic, mildly sedative herb that induces perspiration and has antiseptic effects, especially on the urinary tract.

Medicinal Uses: Internally for coughs and colds, diarrhea, kidney and urinary tract infections, arthritis, rheumatism, and nervous exhaustion. Used in homeopathy for arthritis, rheumatism, and insomnia

Culinary Uses: Dried flower heads are blended with other Scottish herbs such as bramble, bilberry, wild thyme, and wild straw berry leaves, to make “Moorland tea.” Heather honey is an ingredient of liqueurs, such as Drambuie and Irish Mist, and of Atholl Brose, a Scottish desert made from oatmeal, raspberries, cream, and Scotch whiskey.

Bibliography: Encyclopedia of Herbs by *Deni Bown* Copyright 1995, 2001 Dorling Kindersley Limited. Pp 150-151.

Excerpt taken from http://www.prcupcc.org/herbs/herbsh/heather.htm”

Mycology

Aborted Entoloma

Entoloma arbortivum

Common Name: Aborted Entoloma

Botanical Name: Entoloma arbortivum

Order: Agaricales

Family: Entolomataceae

Description: Gray-brown cap with pinkish gills and whitish stalk; found with whitish, bumpy, roundish to irregular masses.

Cap: 2-4" (5-10cm) wide. Convex with inrolled margin, becoming flat or knobbed; fibrous to scaly, somewhat zoned; grayish to gray-brown. Odor somewhat cucumberlike

Stalk: 1-4" (2.5-10cm) long, 1/4-5/8" (0.5-1.5 cm) thick. Enlarged at base; solid, somewhat scruffy; white to grayish, with white threads at base.

Aborted Form: 1-4" (2.5-10cm) wide. 1-2" (2.5-5cm) high. Roundish to elongated, fused clusters of tissue; firm to spongy; whitish and bumpy outside, whitish inside, with marbled, reddish-pink veins.

Spores: 8-10 x 4.5-6µ. Elliptical, angular, 6-sided. Spore print cinnamon to salmon-pink.

Edibility: Good with caution.

Season: August—December

Habitat: Several to abundant, on the ground or in leaf litter, or on or about stumps and rotten wood.

Range: E. North America west to Texas

Look-Alikes: None, if gilled mushroom is found with adjacent aborted forms; other wise it can be mistaken for other species of *Entoloma*.

Comments: Formerly known as *Clitopilus abortivus* Both the gilled and aborted forms can be found alone. When firm, both are edible and choice, but it is ill-advised to eat the gilled form because of the risk of collecting a poisonous species of *Entoloma.*

Bibliography:

National Audobon Society Field Guide to Mushrooms. Gary H. Lincoff, Copyright © 1981 Chanticleer Press Inc. pp. 641-42

OPAL

By

Edward Sott

Used to awaken psychic perception and mystical awareness, opal strengthens memory and aids in dreaming. It encourages flashes of insight and helps the wearer to achieve their higher potential. It offers creativity and inspiration. There are those who consider opal an "unlucky" stone. This may be because of the fact that opal can stimulate change to occur in your life - if you are not prepared for this, it may be better to chose another stone. If you are prepared for a change, opal can help to catalyze this, causing opportunities for growth to spring up around you.

Energy:	Projective, Receptive
Chakra:	Brow, Spleen, Sacral
Planet:	All Planets, Moon
Zodiac:	Cancer
Element:	All Elements
Deity:	Cupid
Associated Herb:	Bay
Powers:	Astral Projection, psychism, beauty, luck, money, power.

Magical Uses:

- Use for any or all magickal needs
- Used to create invisibility
- Use to promote the ability to astral project
- Wear during astral projection to protect yourself
- Use to help recall Past-Lives
- Wear to aid in developing your psychic powers
- Wear to bring external your inner beauty and tranquility
- Use in money drawing spells and rituals
- Black Opals are used for enhancing and directing cones of power during rituals
- Carry this stone for luck

Divinatory Meaning: Death or endings. If the crystal loses Its brilliance, an unfaithful lover.

Black, Brown or Gray Opal:

Magical Properties: These three forms of opal resonate with the Sacral chakra and the reproductive organs. They are particularly useful for releasing sexual tension that arises from emotional causes, and for processing and integrating newly released emotions.

Blue Opal:

Magical Properties: This form of opal is an emotional soother that realigns to spiritual purpose. It resonates with the Throat Chakra and can enhance communication, especially of that which has been suppressed due to lack of confidence. It is useful when past-life experiences of injuries are affecting the present life, as these can be healed through the etheric blueprint.

Boulder Matrix Opal

Magical Properties: This form of opal can be used when doing mediations in order to aid you in connecting with your animal guides and totems.

Cherry Opal

Magical Properties: This form of opal aids in cleansing and activating the Base and Sacral Chakras. It promotes a feeling of being centered. At the spiritual level, this stone activates clairvoyance and clairsentience. It is particularly helpful for healing headaches that arise from a blocked and unopened Third Eye. It promotes tissue regeneration and heals blood disorders, muscle tension, and spinal disorders, and ameliorates menopausal symptoms.

Chrysopal (Blue-Green)

Magical Properties: This form of Opal opens to new impressions and encourages openness to others. It helps you to observe the world with new eyes. A mood enhancing stone, it alleviates emotional burdens, often through crying, and liberates feelings. It detoxifies and regenerates the liver and relieves feelings of constriction from the heart and chest.

Fire Opal (Orange-Red)

Magical Properties: This form of Opal is an enhancer of personal power, awakening the inner fire, and a protector against danger. It is a symbol of hope, excellent for business, and an energy amplifier. Used in situations of injustice or mistreatment, it supports through the resultant emotional turmoil. It magnifies thoughts and feelings, returning them threefold, and can relieve deep seated feeling s of grief, even that stemming from other lives.

Green Opal

Magical Properties: This form of opal is a cleansing and rejuvenating stone that promotes emotional recovery and aids relationships. With the ability to filter information and reorient the mind, it gives meaning to everyday life and brings about a spiritual perspective.

Water Opal (Hyalite)

Magical Properties: This form of opal is wonderful for scrying. It's watery depths stimulate connection with the spiritual realms. A mood stabilizer, it connects the Base Chakra with the Crown, enhancing meditative experience. Hyalite helps those making the transition out of the body. It teaches that the body is a temporary vehicle for the soul.

Hades
By Jill Ann Cooper

Mainstream religions have twisted and demonized the names of certain gods who reign with authority holding tasks and duties which enabled our existence to run smoothly. There are many figures that date back before mainstream religions began demonizing their existence. The god Hades was denigrated by many religions. However, he deserves to be rediscovered for his past history and venerated for his choices.

When the world began, myths described huge beings, the Titans, ruling the world. Cronus, or Kronos, was the youngest and the leader of the first generation of Titans. Cronus was the god of time and was seen as an all devouring force. Cronus ruled the world after castrating his father Uranus.
Cronus discovered a prophecy, when he overtook the world from his father he would then be overthrown by his own son. He was so overcome with fear that one of his children would overtake him, he swallowed each one as they were born. Rhea hid their youngest child Zeus away on the island of Crete (Krete). She tricked Cronus by wrapping a stone in a swaddling blanket and handed it to him for him to swallow.

Zeus grew up and decided to free his siblings and fellow gods. He led the Olympians on a 10-year war against the Titans. The Olympians won and imprisoned the Titans in the lowest level of the underworld Tartarus. After the war had concluded, Zeus, Hades and Poseidon drew lots to decide which realm they would rule. Zeus drew the largest lot of the heavens. Poseidon drew the second greatest, the sea. Hades drew the smallest lot, the underworld.

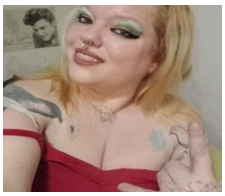
Because Hades had become ruler of the underworld he retained all the stipulations and duties. Death has always been seen as a shameful, scary situation and as such, Hades was connected to the Christian views of Satan. These similarities are misguided because of the nature of each being. Hades was given specified duties as the ruler of the underworld. Zeus and Poseidon had their own duties to their ruling areas. One important task that Hades was given was to be sure that the beings in Tartarus stayed in Tartarus. Any being that escaped would destroy the world. The Underworld has many levels and there are lesser rulers that live in these levels and take care of their duties.

In many Greek stories, Hades gives opportunities and can even be considered kind. For example, Orpheus, the God of Music, wanted to marry Eurydice, who was a wood nymph. They were only married for a short time before she was bitten by a snake and died, moving to her second stage of existence…the underworld. Orpheus was distraught and decided to plea with Hades to release her. Hades' bent his protocols to help Orpheus gain a second chance with Eurydice. Orpheus playing his sad and sorrowful music while traveling to the Underworld. Hades could not ignore it, many stories saying that the Underworld stood still. Hades explained to Orpheus that he would be able to take his wife Eurydice out of the Underworld. The stipulation was Orpheus had to promise not to look back to make sure that Eurydice was following behind him. If he could trust that she was with him and keep moving until he got out of the after world he would free her. He was giving him one chance, and one chance only. If he looked behind him…Eurydice was to stay in the Underworld forever.

Orpheus made his way back home, with the promise that his wife was behind him. He began to worry, because he heard nothing. As he neared the light of day, he gave into temptation and looked behind him to see if Eurydice was there. Once Orpheus looked back, Eurydice was brought back into the Underworld, away from his grasp. As much as he tried, Hades would not grant him a second chance. Orpheus swore to never love again and would sing love songs in the meadow.

Orpheus' story may sound sad but it is a prime example of a caring and loving heart Hades has. The world of the Greek tales is based around rules and protocols. Hades followed the rules as much as he could, but when Orpheus moved him with his mournful song, Hades cared to give him one chance with his own conditions.

Learn more about the Greek pantheon by looking at different reputable websites like History.com, Britannica.com, or the Homeric epics by Homer (Iliad, Odyssey).



The Nine Muses

In Greek mythology, the Muses (Greek, Mousai: perhaps from the Proto-Indo-European root *men- "think") are a sisterhood of goddesses or spirits, their number set at nine by Classical times, who embody the arts and inspire the creation process with their graces through remembered and improvised song and stage, writing, traditional music, and dance. They were water nymphs, associated with the springs of Helicon and with Pieris, from which they are sometimes called the Pierides. The Olympian system set Apollo as their leader, Apollon Mousaget es. Not only are the Muses explicitly used in modern English to refer to an inspiration, as when one cites his/her own artistic muse, but they are also implicit in the words "amuse" or "musing upon". According to Hesiod's Theogony (seventh century BC), they are the daughters of Zeus, king of the gods, and Mnemosyne, goddess of memory. For Alcman and Mimnermus, they were even more primordial, springing from Uranus and Gaia. Pausanias records a tradition of two generations of Muses; the first being daughters of Uranus and Gaia, the second of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Another, rarer genealogy is that they are daughters of Harmonia (the daughter of Aphrodite and Ares) which contradicts the myth in which they were dancing at the wedding of Harmonia and Cadmus.

Compare the Roman inspiring nymphs of springs, the Camenae, and also the apsarasa in the culture of classical India.

The Nine Muses

Muse:	Calliope, the firstborn of the Muses
Meaning:	Fair-voiced
Arena:	Poetry, epics
Symbols and Affinities:	Writing implements, wind
Tarot:	The Hermit
Anathemas:	Discordant sounds

Muse:	Cleio, some myths call her the mother of Sirens
Meaning:	The proclaimer
Arena:	History
Symbols and Affinities:	Scrolls, pens, memory, bards
Tarot:	Justice
Anathemas:	Lies, blemishes, injustice

Muse:	Euterpe
Meaning:	Giver of pleasure
Arena:	Music
Symbols and Affinities:	The flute
Tarot:	The Magician, the Fool
Anathemas:	Refusal to enjoy the gifts of life

Muse:	Melpomene
Meaning:	Singer
Arena:	Music
Symbols and Affinities:	The sad mask of the twin harlequins representing tragedy and comedy in
Tarot:	The Chariot, The
Anathemas:	Frivolity--she prefers those in deep

Muse:	Polyhymnia
Meaning:	She of many hymns
Arena:	Tragedy
Symbols and Affinities:	Halos, all sacred books, reborn deities, sacred music
Tarot:	The High Priestess
Anathemas:	Those who use her gifts without honoring their sacred source

Muse:	Terpsichore
Meaning:	The whirler
Arena:	Dance, lyric
Symbols and Affinities:	The lyre
Tarot:	The Tower, Death or Change
Anathemas:	Those who do not help themselves

Muse:	Thaleia
Meaning:	The flourisher
Arena:	Comedy
Symbols and Affinities:	The laughing mask of the twin harlequins representing comedy in the theater
Tarot:	The Chariot, The Sun, The World
Anathemas:	Sadness--she cannot abide those who refuse to enjoy

Muse:	Urania
Meaning:	Heavenly one
Arena:	Astronomy
Symbols and Affinities:	The globe and maps of heavens
Tarot:	The Wheel of Fortune
Anathemas:	Those who do not seek the answers that lie before them

Creation Stories.

By

Edward Sott

In this article I will be discussion the creation stories of many different religions. I will be using a methodology of comparison and contrast; discussing the similarities and differences; and demonstrating their origins .Mankind has questioned for millenniums, Where he came from? What created the earth? What created him? With the rise of religion and the understanding and comprehension of creation due to observation, he began to recognize a Divine Creative Force. As we have discussed in my previous chapter on Animism and Religion. So now mankind started to seek answers to his own creation.

The earliest beliefs were in the first humans, or ancestors of man. The first man and woman were equal to the creation in regards to the fact they were the progenitors of man. However, when asked to define whom the first man and woman were many would only answer the question with a direct ancestor that they recalled. So, there was really no definitive answer in that regards. Furthermore, mankind could not determine when the actual creation occurred only that it did and thus many myths or stories were developed around the concepts as for the creation of the world.

There are six basic types of creation myths which we will be discussing individually and also demonstrating via various different cultures and religious beliefs throughout the world. These six basic types are:--

Creation from Chaos.
Earth-Diver
Emergence
Ex Nihilo (out of nothing)
World Parent
Divine Twins.

I will define each of these first then I will cite examples of each type based on the regional locations thereof. Each of these myths will be presented in a brief synopsis and then compared with one another so that one may see the psycho-sociological development of the human mind in relation to its belief in creation. One will discover how humanity, upon observation of his surrounding, and his own innate knowledge granted him by nature, came to the conclusions on the development of creation, and attempts therefore to define his or her own value within.

Many of these creation stories come from oral tradition and some have been written and transcribed in various media, So there may be variances even within the own regional sections as to the foundational mythos thereof. But we will demonstrate that there are commonalities which will be evident from region to region.

First for the definitions of the six types:--

Creation from Chaos—In creation from chaos myths, initially there is nothing but a formless, shapeless, expanse. In Chaos creation myths the word "chaos" actually means "disorder". The formless expanse, which is sometimes called the void or abyss, contains the materials necessary for the creation of the world. "Chaos" is the opposite of "Cosmos", or order. And it is prevalent in most chaos creation stories that the world at some point will be once again engulfed into the abyss.

Earth-Diver—The earth-diver is a common character in various traditional creation myths. In these myths the Supreme Creator often send some animal to descend into the primal waters in order to bring up some bits of sand or mud in order to form habitable land. This myth is common in many tribal societies mostly of the America's however it can be found in Eastern European, and African traditions.

Emergence—This is a version that is a feminine rather than masculine version of creations myths. It stems from the birthing aspects observed by humanity, (i.e., the ascent from the womb) of the pregnant woman. Thus, emergence myths basically tell of human's have emerged from the womb of the Earth mother and are born unto her.

Ex-Nihilo (out of nothing)—This creation myth is defined as the creator manifesting the world out of nothing. Unlike chaos however this nothing can be basically pure thought, words, dreams, or bodily secretions such as breath. This myth is common to many of the monotheistic beliefs.

World Parent—There are two types of world parent creations myths, one is represented describing the primeval state as an eternal union of two parents, the creation taking place when the two parents are pulled apart from one another. The parents being Earth (female) and Sky (male). The second form of world parent is that creation springs forth from the dismembered parts of the body of the primeval being. Often in these stories the parts of the being are sacrificed in order to become the earth, sky, animal and plant life, and other worldly features. This form of the creation story is primarily animistic.

Divine Twins—This form of creation myth is one of Proto-Indo-European origin and it is said in these myths that creation was created by a set of twins normally either heroic in nature or often in conflict with one another. These twins would be the foundation of creation.

Moon Correspondences

Blood Moon

Type:	Planet (in astrological terms)
Sigil:	Crescent Moon
Basic Energy:	Emotions
Rules:	Woman; cycles; birth; generation; in spiration; poetry; emotions; travel, especially by water; the sea and tides; fertility; rain; intuition; psychic ability; secrets; dreams.
Full Moon:	The Mother, growth, fulfillment, Sexuality, maturation, nurturing, love
Magickal Purposes:	Childbearing, dreams, healing, memory, theft, virginity.
Day:	Monday
Element:	Water
Metal:	Silver
Color:	Red, Green, Violet
Signs of the Zodiac:	Cancer
Detriment:	Capricorn
Exaltation:	Taurus
Fall:	Scorpio
Tone:	Ti
Letter:	S
Number:	3 or 9
Jewel:	Moonstone, Pearl, Quartz, Rock Crystal, Aquamarine, Beryl, Chalcedony, Mother of Pearl, Sapphire, Selenite
Cabbalistic Sphere:	9 Yesod—Foundation
Angel:	Gabriel
Incense:	Eucalyptus, Ginseng; Jasmine, Lemon Balm, Myrrh, Myrtle, Poppy, Sandalwood, Coconut, Camphor, Rose
Oil:	Myrrh
Animal:	Hare, Elephant, Cat
Tree:	Willow
Plants:	Adder's Tongue, Aloe, Banana, Bladderwrack, Cabbage, Calamus, Camellia, Chamomile, Chickweed, Club Moss, Cucumber, Gardenia, Grape, Honesty, Irish Moss, Jasmine, Job's Tears, Leafy Vegetables, Lemon Balm, Lettuce, Lily, Loosestrife, Lotus, Mallow, Meadow Rue, Melons, Moonwort, Mushrooms, Myrtle, Opium Poppy, Poppy, Potato, Pumpkin, Purslane, Sea Holly, Seaweed, Turnip, Watercress, Wild Rose, Willow, Wintergreen, Hazel, Almond.
Goddesses:	Artemis, Brizo, Cerridwen, Diana, Hathor, Isis, Hecate, Levanah, Lunah, Mari, Nimue, Parsiphae, Phoebe, Selene, Anna
Gods:	Atlas, Khonsu, Sin

This full moon, I reflect with gratitude on the blessings of my life!

Progression from Animism to Religion

By

Edward Sott

IN THIS article I will endeavor to show the progression of the development of Religion and how it determinably came about. In prior lessons which I used to give to my students I would take them on a little journey into pre-history. A journey which showed the progressive development of the minds of ancient man. Within this chapter of this my first novel I will do likewise. I will endeavor to demonstrate how man developed his ideas; how he learned from adaptation to his environment; how eventually he came to believe that there was indeed a power greater than he could comprehend; and finally, how he thus began to come to worship this power.

So let us therefore take a walk backwards into time, a little trip back into the era of the prehistoric man. Let us take a look into his life, his thinking, and his relationship with his surroundings. We shall do this following a logical course of both scientific and philosophic analysis. So, in order to actually achieve this goal, we have to take a multitude of things into account. We have to look at the natural geology of the land in which he inhabited; we have to look at the natural events surrounding him; we have to look at things from the perspective of his limited understanding; and we thus, have to ascertain an approximate idea of what his method and pattern of thinking might have been. Being that we did not reside in his historic era, we will have to do this with speculation backed by observation of our own thinking in the modern perspective and timeline in which we live. Thus, making a comparative analysis, and applying our own awareness and response and reactivity to our environment as a guideline.

But before we begin our journey let us define first the terms animism and religion, so that we may have a greater understanding of the progressive development thereof.

What is animism? "Animism is the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence. Potentially, animism perceives all things—animals, plants, rocks, rivers, weather systems, human handiwork, and perhaps even words—as animated."[1] (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/animism) This mindset was believed to be commonly prevalent in ancient man. Ancient man could only define his beliefs, strictly upon his own observation of the things around him. He had no knowledge of causality and effect of natural phenomena, as we do today. The ability to conceptualize that any natural occurrence has a reasonable explanation was beyond his level of comprehension. Thus, he conceived that in all things, there was a spirit or soul, that drove these things into action or occurrence. This was his understanding. This understanding still exists in some indigenous peoples in modern times. For our purposes however, I will only briefly touch upon the definition, and not go into great length in into the study of ethnology in order to expound on my general synopsis within this chapter. I will however invite the reader to further study on his/her own into the subject in hopes that it will afford more validity into my own postulations set forth within.

As I stated earlier in this chapter, we are going to approach this matter from a scientific as well as philosophic viewpoint. So let us take a brief scientific look at ancient man by first observing what the geological conditions were during this time period. The first hominids existed during the Pliocene Era. The climate during that time was actually sub-tropical to tropical. There were massive geological changes, that created this climate, insects, animals, birds, and trees as well as rivers and valleys, and mountains, all were present. This is where early man lived. Early man was primarily a hunter/gatherer, his very survival was dependent on the flora and fauna of the region in which he resided. Many events such as volcanic activity, floods, monsoons, &c. occurred regular through the course of his existence. Each of these events of course were beyond his psychological comprehension. He had no knowledge of cause and effect and he attributed within all things that there was a spirit in each observation. Early man could not grasp a method of communicating with these spirits, thus he was constantly aware of their presence but unaware of how to appease them. So, utilizing his innate natural instinct he learned to adapt to his environment. Much on par with the natural order of things, he also became part of the cause and effect within nature's predominant, and infinite balance.

As early man started to further evolve, so did his capability of formulating assumptions via observation. Soon one among him became more acutely aware of his surroundings and determined that these spirits of nature were in communication with mankind, and he could thus communicate with them as well. This is the foundation of the beginnings of religion. I must at this point digress, for without a definition of religion I cannot possibly and correctly correlate my synopsis. So let us here define religion as, it is separated from animism. Although some people actually associate religion with Animism and call Animism a form of religion, there are actual points of differentiation between the two as will become evident merely from the definition.

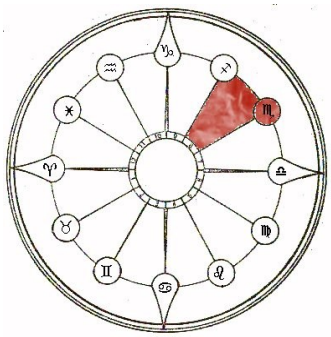
"Religion is the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or Gods".[2] (Oxford Languages). Within religion and what distinguishes it from that of animism is the aspect of the term worship. Religion is oft defined with a set of particular practices, rites, rituals, doctrines, &c. Where animism is just a general believe that extends over all things.

So, this early man who became aware that there was bound to be a way to communicate with these spirits, we call him the Shaman. This awareness soon gives way to a pattern, of profound practices, and rituals as well as an extended belief that the spirits of nature are no longer unreachable that we can actually relate to them as we also are a part of them. I personally call the Shaman, the Great P.T. Barnum of the time. The shaman recognized that he could influence those of a lesser mind by convincing them that he had the ability of communion with the Natural Spirits and soon those spirits started to become as God(s).

Astrology

By

Edward Sott



8Th House ~ Legacies ~

The Eighth House is the House of Death and Spirituality. Ruling the mystical forces surrounding birth , death, sex, spirituality, and the afterlife, this House also governs inheritances and taxes. This house may even give you some insight into the circumstances leading to your own death. The Natural Ruler (or corresponding zodiac sign) of the Eighth House is Scorpio.

Sign:	Scorpio
Dates:	October 24—November 21
Ruler:	Pluto
Element:	Water
Quality:	Fixed
Gender:	Feminine
Body Parts:	Sexual Organs
Key Word:	"I Desire"
Colors:	Deep Red, Maroon, Dark Brown, Black
Tarot:	Death, Strength
Archangel:	Cassiel

Birth Stones:	Kunzite, Spinel, Tourmaline Quartz
Babylonian Name:	Girtab
	Meaning: Scorpion
Sumerian Month:	Arah Shamna
	Meaning; The Scorpion

Gems: Acanthite, Actinolite, Alexandrite, Almandine, Anatase, Anhydrite, Apache Tear, Aquamarine, Argentite, Astrophyllite, Azeztulite, Azurite, Azurite-Malachite-Chrysocolla, Baculites, Beryl, Betafite, Black Coral, Black Opal, Blood Red Carnelian, Blue/Green Obsidian, Boji Stone, Botryoidal Black Agate, Botswana Agate, Boulder Opal, Chalcosiderite, Charoite, Chevron Amethyst, Chocolate Marbles, Chrysolite, Dioptase, Domeykite, Duftite, Embolite, Emerald, Enhydro, Flame Agate, Flint, Garnet, Green Tourmaline, Gyrolite, Heterosite, Herkimer Diamond, Hiddenite, Kainosite, Kornerupine, Kunzite, Labradorite, Lake Superior Agate, Larsenite, Leaverite, Linarite, Ludlamite, Lurelite, Malachite, Manganese, Margarite, Melanite, Meteorite, Millerite, Moldavite, Molybdenum, Montana Agate, Moonstone, Multi-colored Topaz, Natrolite, Nepheline, Obsidian, Ocho, Octahedrite, Olivine, Opal, Orange Tourmaline, Parisite, Peridot, Pinakiolite, Plume Agate, Priday Plume Agate, Purple Sage Agate, Quartz, Ralstonite, Ramsdellite, Rauenthalite, Red Spinel, Reddingite, Rhodochrosite, Rhonite, Rubellite, Rubellite and Lepidolite, Rubellite Tourmaline, Ruby, Rutilated Topaz, Samarskite, Sard, Sardonyx, Seamanite, Snakeskin Agate, Spectrolite, Spodumene, Stibnite, Strombolite, Thalenite, Thunder Egg, Topaz, Tremolite, Turquoise, Unakite, Variscite, Wardite, Xanthoconite, Zeolite.

Attributes: Passionate, Secretive, Sexual, Penetrating, Resentful, Mystical, Unfathomable, Relentless, Investigative, Blunt, Honest, Trustworthy, Conscientious, Industrious, Calculating Vindictive, Vengeful.

Meanings :

Birth, Death, Regeneration, Sexual Instincts, Occultism, Legacies, Other's Property, Investigations, Afterlife

Traditionalism for the New Age

By Edward Sott

I've often been confounded by the aspects of modern paganism. More and more I see the dissolution of the core values that originated Modern Pagan practices. In which I include not only wicca but many other "Traditions".

Let's first take a look at what a Tradition is. A tradition is a set of values and practices that are handed down from generation to generation in order for each to live in a defined cultural norm.

Paganism stems initially from tribal hunter/gatherer cultures wherein each member of the "Tribe" had a defined roll. This was to insure that it flourished through various seasons and conditions that nature placed upon it.

As our societies grew and evolved these traditional values and practices seem to have disappeared. A methodology of do your own thing, especially in Modern Paganism has come into play. A lack of maintaining culture values has replaced tradition. Now it's a case of fast-tracking, instant gratification, and reward seeking.

Original practices have become less spiritual and more guided by materialism, and furthermore have developed into dogmatism, separatism, and a reduction in unification and understanding of the practices.

When I came into the craft community, I came in with the understanding that this was not something that you just do, it is something that is lived. It's a spiritual journey which is going to be strife with challenges. Things that will reach you on the soul level.

But I've watched it devolve into something far less. No longer is it about living a spiritual life. It's now about what can I personally gain on the material plane of existence. It has become even further a method of self-gratification, recognition, and is entirely driven by the ego. When you place the ego in front of spirituality you lose touch with what spirituality is.

But what is spirituality? Becomes the question of the day. Spirituality to me is the development and evolution of the soul. It is the enhancement of the knowledge of the full aspects of one's existence. The growth of the physical, emotional, and soul body.

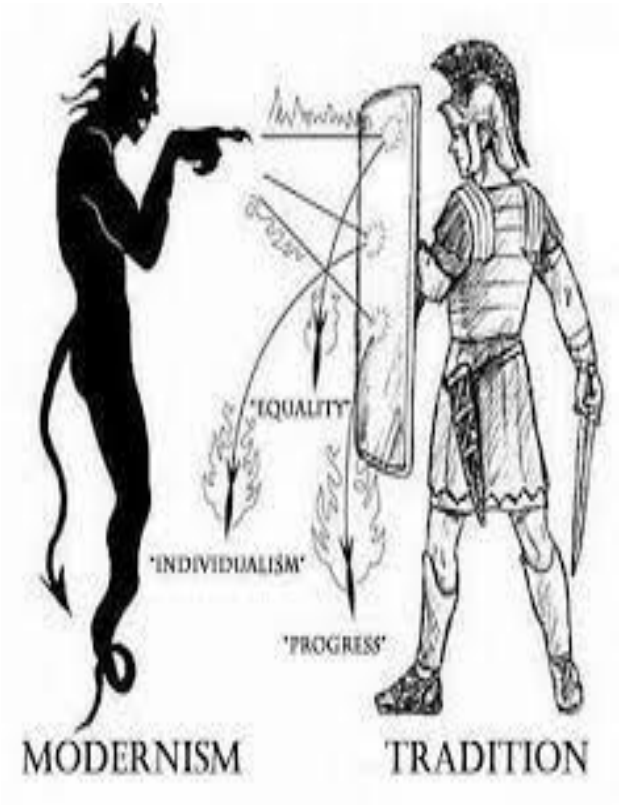
Have we lost track, of the core values that were once taught us that support our individual societies? And how do we return back to those things that we were once taught?

The first thing is we have to be open to re-learning those things that we have lost. We have to be willing to operate with cohesion and understanding and acceptance. We have to remember above all else this is not something that we do it's something that we live only then can we return to the proper ways of this SPIRITUAL path.

We have to get back to standardizing our values, the teachings have to be restructured and reorganized. We have to get back to celebrating our lives here on this planet and celebrating the gifts that nature has given us. We need to honor her in our practices and we especially need to recognize our roles in our communities as well as in nature herself.

We are not the be all and do all of existence we are but bit actors in this play called life. And until we grasp that concept we will continue to devolve even further. We need to return to the core values, and the old practices. We need to honor the cycles of the seasons. We need to recognize the values of how to accept the Earth and all within it as equals without, jealousy, and prejudice but with unconditional love and understanding.

Then and only then have you grasped the concept of spirituality.

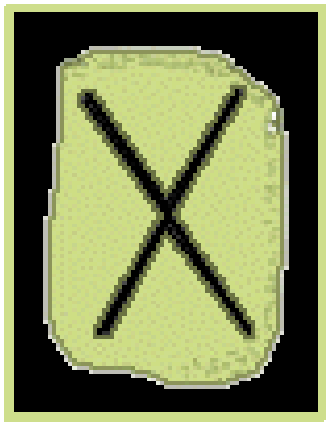


The Runes

By

Edward Sott

Gebo (gay-bow)



Sound: "G"

Depiction: The crossing of two forces

Runic Position: 1st *Aett,* 7th Rune

Original Meaning: The exchange and resulting interac tion between the human and the Di vine.

Key Words: Connection, gift, exchange, interac tion, balance.

Tree: Ash/Elm

Herb: Heartsease

Gemstone: Sapphire, aquamarine, fluorite, azur ite, lapiz lazuli, sodalite, rose quartz, amethyst, jade, kunzite.

Color: Blue

Runic Half-Month: September 28—October 13

Hours of the Day: 6:30pm– 7:30pm

Other Names: Germanic: *Geuua (Gebo),* Norse: *Gipt,Geof,* Anglo Saxon: *Geofu (Gyfu),* Icelandic: *Gjof,* Norwegian: *Giof.*

God/Goddess: Odin/Gefn

Power Animals: Raven, wolf, hound, eagle, boar, cat, falcon, lobster, oyster, chimpanzee, firefly, eel, bull, cock, iguana, stag.

Element: Air

Numerological Value: "7"

Magickal Qualities:

- ◊ Magical Initiation
- ◊ Love Magick
- ◊ Sacred Sexual Expression
- ◊ Mystical union of God/ dess
- ◊ Increase harmony in rela- tionships
- ◊ Reconcile polarities
- ◊ Harmoniously connects Runic energy streams
- ◊ Accesses Divine Wisdom

Astrology: Pisces

Tarot: The Lovers

Galdr Song: Gebo, gebo, gebo
Gu, ga, gi, ge, go
Gub, gab, gib, geb, gob
Og, eg, ig, ag, ug
G a a a a f f f f f f f f

Ogham-Bethlusian: Gort (*pr. Gort)*

Quatrain: Within the sweet enclosure take your rest
Unless you come to grapple with the best
Grateful and giving steadfast to the end
To many a poor mouth shall its riches lend

New and amazing things are finding their way to me by the grace of the Universe.

Five Basic Rites of Passage of Life

By

Edward Sott

Wiccaning - Rite of passage for a newborn; corresponds with the Seekers Rites.

A wiccaning is the first rite of passage. It is the awakening of the child within and the time when the individual leaves the womb of the Goddess and first reenters the world. During this time faith is revealed and questions of who we are and what our purpose is are slowly beginning to be revealed to us. This is the first stage in the evolution of the spirit.

Puberty - Rite of passage for an adolescent; corresponds with the Initiates Rites.

The puberty rite is the second rite of passage. It is the time when we start to assert our independence because we are recognizing our capability of choice and we know our chosen path. This rite of passage, like the God and Goddess, is when we feel them as a part of us. We are approaching our time of fertility and we are physically beginning to mature as well as emotionally. For a man, this is when his voice begins to deepen and he starts to recognize his sexual potency. Hormones rage and he begins showing interest in the feminine aspects of humanity. For a woman, this is the time when she begins her first menstrual cycle, her body is changing and she starts to recognize the potency of her Goddess within and the power she has over man.

Maiden/Warrior - Rite of passage for those who are 13 to 21 yrs of age; corresponds with 1st Degree Rites.

The maiden/warrior rite of passage is the third rite. Now is the time when one has reached the age of pre-adulthood. It is the time when we start learning to take on responsibilities for our coven, tribe and family.

For the Maiden, she has come of age where the call towards motherhood is drawing near. She learns the aspects of nurturing and rearing, yet is still in her youth. She is recognizing that in order to secure a future for a generation to come she must begin to choose a mate. This is a time for her to begin the dance with the God, yet to also take responsibility for her emotions. She learns now from the crones and mothers how to attend to the needs of her family. She is still inclined to experiment as she learns about her own independence.

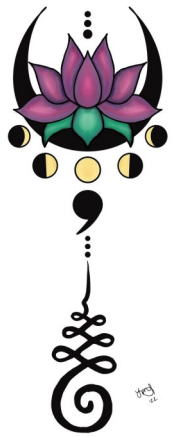
For the warrior, he has come of the age for his first hunt. He is nearing the time when his energies are at their peak. Testosterone and the power of the God are surging in his blood. He has to learn to channel the aggression he is now holding into something constructive. Sexually he is at his peak, but he also has to learn to use this sexual energy to find his mate. The warrior not only has to provide food for his family, but also has to learn to humble himself in order to become a father. It is a time for gaining responsibility and wisdom.

Mother/Fathers rite - Rites of parenthood; corresponds with 2nd Degree rites.

The mothers/fathers rites of passage is the forth rite. The warrior and the Maiden, like the God and the Goddess, have united and become a family unit. A child is born from this union and it is now time to take on the responsibility of child rearing and development. Both parents have a job to do and they are both responsible for making sure the child or children are provided for and taught how to live within the social unit. The have to provide love, nurturing, caring and discipline as the child too, grows into adulthood.

Crone/Sage rites - Elders Rites; corresponds to 3rd Degree Rites.

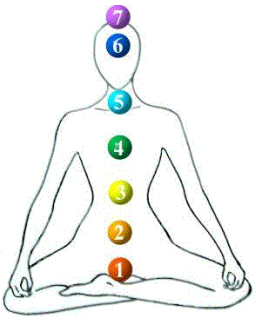
The Crone/Sage rites of passage is the fifth rite. The mother and father have raised the new generation and now is the time to take their places as elders within the community. They now have a great responsibility to their community as a whole. They are responsible for sharing the wisdom, providing counsel, and teaching the ways of the path to the generations to follow.



Understanding the Chakras

By

Edward Sott



Chakras (UK: /ˈtʃʌkrəz/, US: /ˈtʃɑːkrəz/ *CHUK-rəz, CHAH-krəz*; Sanskrit: चक्र, romanized: *cakra*, lit. 'wheel, circle'; Pali: cakka) are various focal points used in a variety of ancient meditation practices, collectively denominated as Tantra, or the esoteric or inner traditions of Hinduism.

The concept of the chakra has its roots in the earlier traditions of Hinduism. They are both meditative and also considered to be physical manifestations of the human body. Several Vedic and Ayurvedic healing practices utilize various techniques to control the flow of energy through these centers to enhance the balance of ones Auric Energy. Some techniques include Kundalini Yoga, breathing exercises, visualization, mudras, bandhas, kriyas, and mantras.

The Modern Western Chakra System arose from multiple sources, with their origin beginning in the 1880's with H.P. Blavatsky and other theosophists. They incorporated a wide range of correspondences with other systems such as: alchemy, astrology, gemstones, homeopathy, qabalah, and Tarot.

In the correspondence table below we're going to look at each individual chakra and combine both eastern and western philosophies, and beliefs. I n this article were going to begin with the Root or Base Chakra. Also known as the Muladhara Chakra.

THE MULADHARA

Or

ROOT CHAKRA

Color: Red

Sanskrit: Muladhara

Association: Root of the collective unconscious, vitality, stability, survival

Body Areas: Bones, teeth, nails, rectum, colon, prostate gland, blood and blood cells, adrenal glands, spine, kidneys, legs, autoimmune system.

Location: At the base of the spine, more specifically be tween the anus and the genitals, around the perineum area.

Emotional: pow Renews enthusiasm, strength to carry on, er to do something you dread. Courage, sup port, and willpower. Removes sluggishness.

Affirmation: I Am, I Trust, I Survive.

Number: 1

Energy/Emotion: Trust Security

Petals: Four

Energetics:

- Manas (the mind)
- Buddhi (our intellect)
- Chitta (levels of consciousness)
- Ahamkara (the ego)

Purusartha:

- Dharma (amoral and virtuous Life)
- Artha (attaining al life purpose and meaning)
- Kama (enjoying sensual and emotional pleasure)
- Moksha (A life in pursuit of spiritual freedom)

Chanting Sound: Lam

Note: C

Tone: E

Element: Earth

Planet: Saturn

Metal: Lead

Stones: There are many associated stones with this chakra basi cally any red, brown or black stone will resonate well with this chakra.

Essential Oils; Angelica Root, Aniseed, Balsam, Birch, Black Pepper, Blue Cypress, Buddha Wood, Cedar wood, Cinnamon, Clove, Bud, Frankincense, Galbanum, Gingers, Grapefruit, Juniper Berry, Lemongrass, Mandarin, Myrtle, Oakmoss, Opopanax, Oregano, Palo Santo, Patchouli, Rosewood, Sandalwood, Spikenard, Turmeric, Wintergreen

Candle Magick by Ismael Diaz

My name is Ismael Diaz. I am a 3rd Generation male grey witch. I practice the culmination of many different paths. My favorite practice is that of Candle Magick. When I do candle magic, I make sure my mind and intentions are clear. Each individual situation will determine what color candle you will need.

Mixing and matching candles is often used. For example, if you want to help a friend for blessings and positivity mix or buy a candle white and blue. For all the white and blue mix, the blue candle is for communication, creativity, and mental health. White is for angelic/divine connection, truth, and purity. So, when you mix candles make sure you know your candles and their color.

The first step to proper candle magic is to clear your mind. Find something out of your norm to do such as listening to music, taking a walk, etc. It is very important to be aware of your intention. This will determine what you give and get. So be careful.

Another example is black and yellow. They are a good combination not just for protection but can be used for other purposes. So don't' be afraid to experiment.

When done take the remaining ashes and combine them with salt in your mortar, to make black salt.

One more example Black and silver candles together are not just for protection, you can combine them together to create a candle spell to prevent nightmares. Silver representing dreams, and black represents protection. So don't be afraid to mix or use them by themselves.

Below Is a Chart of Common colors for Candles and their general meanings. So, experiment with them. Always remember to include your intention when blessing your candles.

White:	Goddess, Ancient Mother, purity, spirituality, devotional magick, general prayers, illumination, cycle of life, goodwill, initiation, feminine, mystery, freedom, love, health, to symbolize a person, place or thing.
Black:	Return energy to sender, divination, protection, Dark Goddess, time, chaos, beginning of creation, North, winter, rebirth, vision, wisdom, Number 8, infinity, destroy bad habits, rest.
Blue-Black:	Wounded pride, broken bones to heal, angelic protection
Violet:	Intelligence, call ancient ones, create sigils, government, truth, justice, humility, planet Jupiter, religious devotion, forgiveness.

Lavender:	Peace, serenity, dreaming magicks, spirit invocation, clarity
Blue:	Truth, intelligence, wisdom, loyalty, fidelity, peace, meditation, feminine mysteries, water, Great Mother, Queen of Heaven, infinity, poetry, faith, planet Venus, defeat enemy, protect hearth and home, protect children.
Green:	Healing, Green Man, God or Goddess of vegetation and forest, youth, hope, happiness, new beginnings, improve the weather, financial gains, agricultural magick, abundance, prosperity, immortality, spring, planet Venus, and planet Mercury.
Yellow:	Healing, energy of the sun, prosperity, self-esteem, intellect, intuition, goodness, humility, beauty, light, fire, life, truth, attraction, The God.
Orange:	Opportunities, overcoming challenges, breaking blocks, material gain, sealing spells, happiness, luxury, remove abandonment.
Red:	Action, passion, deep affection, courage, fire, masculine principle, festivity, strength, faith, life, renewal, joy, summer, leadership, expansion, planet Mars.
Pink:	Friendship and harmony Fast money, Moon magick, Charge of the Goddess, The Goddess, reality, connection to spirit, astral travel, freedom, destroy illusions, restore balance, endurance, star magick, meditation, peace, personal illumination.
Gray:	Stabilize a disturbed personality, slow down a reckless person or situation, glamour.
Brown/Bronze:	Soothe emotional upsets, security, support, friendship, nature magick.

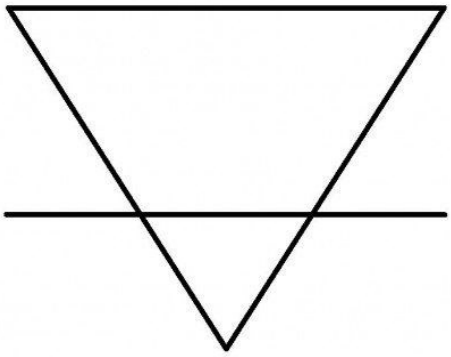
Ignite the fire within and illuminate the path to your dreams.

Earth Correspondences

By Edward Sott

Direction:	North
Rules:	The body, growth, nature, sustenance, material gain, money creativity, birth, death, silence, chasms, caves, caverns, groves, fields, rocks, standing stones, mountains, crystals, jewels, metal, bones, structures.
Time:	Midnight
Season:	Winter
Colors:	Black, brown, green, white
Zodiac Signs:	Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn
Tools:	Pentacle, Consecrated Salt
Spirits:	Gnomes, ruled by their king Ghob
Angel:	Gabriel
Name of the North Wind:	Boreas, Ophion, Euros
Sense:	Touch
Stones:	Agate (green), Agate (moss), Alum, Apache Tear, Apatite, Aventurine, Boji Stone, Calcite (green), Calcite (orange), Carnelian, Cat's Eye, Chryso prase, Coal, Diamond, Emerald, Fluorite, Granite, Iron Pyrite, Jade, Jasper (brown), Jasper (green), Jet, Kunzite, Malachite, Morion Crystal, Olivine, Onyx (Honey) Peridot, Petri fied Wood, Rock Crystal, Rutilated Quartz, Rhodinite, Ruby, Salt, Stalag mite/Stalactite, Staurolite, Sugilite, Tiger's Eye, Tourmaline (black), Tour maline (green), Turquoise, Unakite.
Incense:	Storax, Benzoin, Patchouli, Musk
Plants:	Alfalfa, Barley, Comfrey, Corn, Cotton, Cypress, Fern, Fumitory, Grains, Hon eysuckle, Ivy, Magnolia, Mugwort, Oats, Oleander, Patchouli, Peas, Pota to, Primrose, Quince, Red Poppy, Rhu barb, Rice, Rye, Sagebrush, Sorrel, Tulip, Vervain, Vetivert, Wheat,
Tree:	Oak
Animals:	Cow or Bull, Bison, Snakes (earth dwelling), Stag, Earthworms.
Goddesses:	Anu, Ceres, Cerridwen, Demeter, Fau na, Frigga, Gaea, Hecate, Mah, Neph thys, Ostara, Persephone, Prithivi, Rhea, Rhiannon
Gods:	Adonis, Anubis, Athos, Arawn, Cer nunnos, Dagda, Dionysis, Greenman, Hades, Herne, Janus, Marduk, Osiris, Pan, Pluto, Tammuz
Tarot:	Pentacles, Pages, Empress, Heiro phant, Wheel of Fortune, The Devil, The World
Planets:	Venus, Mercury, Saturn
Hemisphere:	North
Gender:	Feminine
Charge:	Negative (-)
Energy:	Passive

Days of the Week:	Thursday, Saturday
Sabbats:	Samhain, Yule
Time of Life:	Old Age
Witches' Pyramid:	To Be Silent (Tascere)
Body Part:	Physical Self, Bones
Bodily Functions:	Eating, defecation, digestion.
Instruments:	Drums, Percussion
Occupations:	Armed forces, banking and finance, carpentry, construction, child care, cooking and food services, clerical and administrative work, dancing, garden ing, house keeping/home making, hunting, janitors, jewelers, mechanics, stone masons, wood workers.
Metals:	Lead
Runes:	Uruz, Gifu, Beork, Ing, Othal, Jera
Mythical Creatures:	Big foot, Chupacabra, Giants, Jacka lope, Unicorn, Werewolves, Wraiths



Compiled from Http://www.prcupcc.org/

The Wiccan Rede
By Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente

Bide ye Wiccan laws ye must
In perfect love and perfect trust
Live ye must and Let to Live
Fairly take and fairly give.

Tread the circle thrice about
It keep unwelcome spirits out
To bind ye spell well every time
Let the spell be spake in rhyme

Light of eye and soft of touch
Speak ye little, listen much
Honor the old ones in deed and name
Let love and light be our guides again

Deocil go by the waxing moon
Sing and dance ye Wiccan Rune
Widdershins go when the moon doth wane
And the werewolf howls by the dread wolfsbane

When ye ladies moon is new
Kiss ye hand to her times two
When ye moon rides at her peak
Then ye heart's desire seek

Heed the North wind's mighty gale
Lock the door and trim the sail
When the wind blows from the East
Expect the new and Set the feast

When the wind comes from the South
Love will kiss thee on the mouth
When the West wind blows over thee
Departed Souls will restless be

Nine woods 'neath the cauldron go
Burn them fast and burn them slow
Birch into the fire goes
To represent what the Lady knows

Oak in the forest towers with might
In the fire it brings the God's insight
Rowan is a tree of power
Causing life and magick to flower

Willows at the waterside stand
Ready to help us to the Summerland
Hawthorn is burned to purify
And to draw the faerie to thine eye

Hazel the tree of wisdom and learning
Adds its strength to the bright fire burning
White are the flowers of the Apple tree
That brings us fruits of fertility

Grapes grow on the vine
Giving us both joy and wine
Fir does mark the evergreen
To represent immortality seen

Elder is the ladies tree
Harm it not or cursed you'll be
Four times the Major Sabbats mark
Both in the light and in the dark

As the old year starts to wane
The new begins—it's now Samhain
When the time for Imbolc shows
Watch for flowers through the snows

When the wheel begins to turn
Soon ye Beltane fires will burn
As the wheel turns to Lammas night
Power is brought to magick rite

Four times the Minor Sabbats fall
Use the sun to mark them all
When the wheel has turned to Yule
Light the log the Horned One rules

In the spring when night equals day
'Tis time for Ostara to come our way
When the sun has reached its height
'Tis time for oak and holly to fight

Harvesting comes to one and all
When the Autumn Equinox does fall
Heed the flower bush and tree
By the Lady blessed you'll be

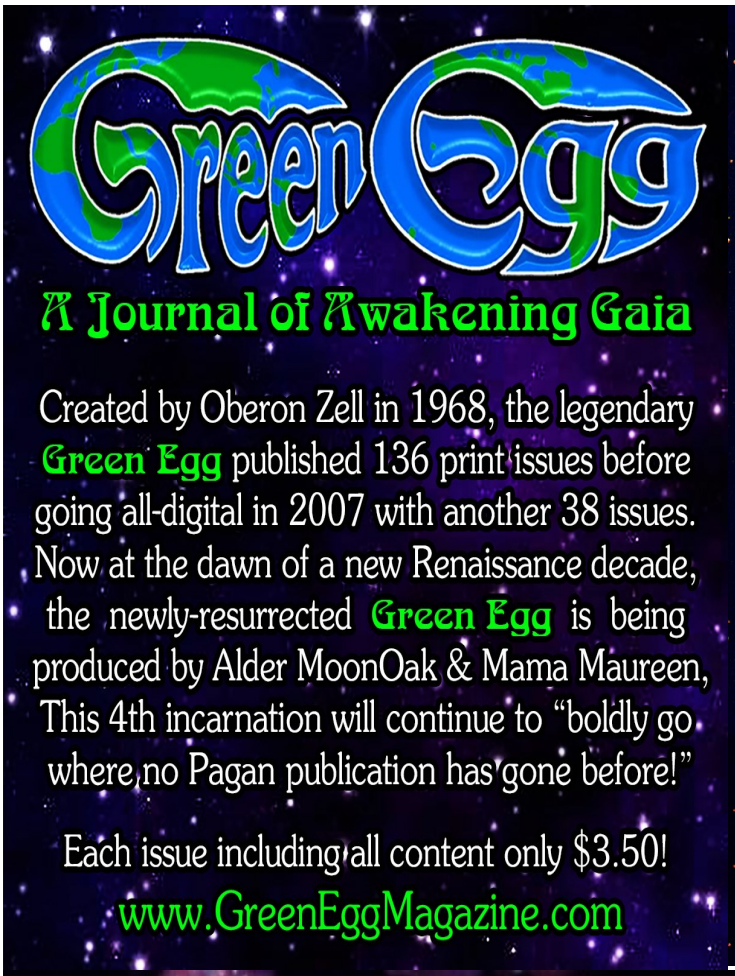
Where the rippling waters go
Cast a stone, the truth you'll know
When ye have and hold a need
Harken not to other's greed

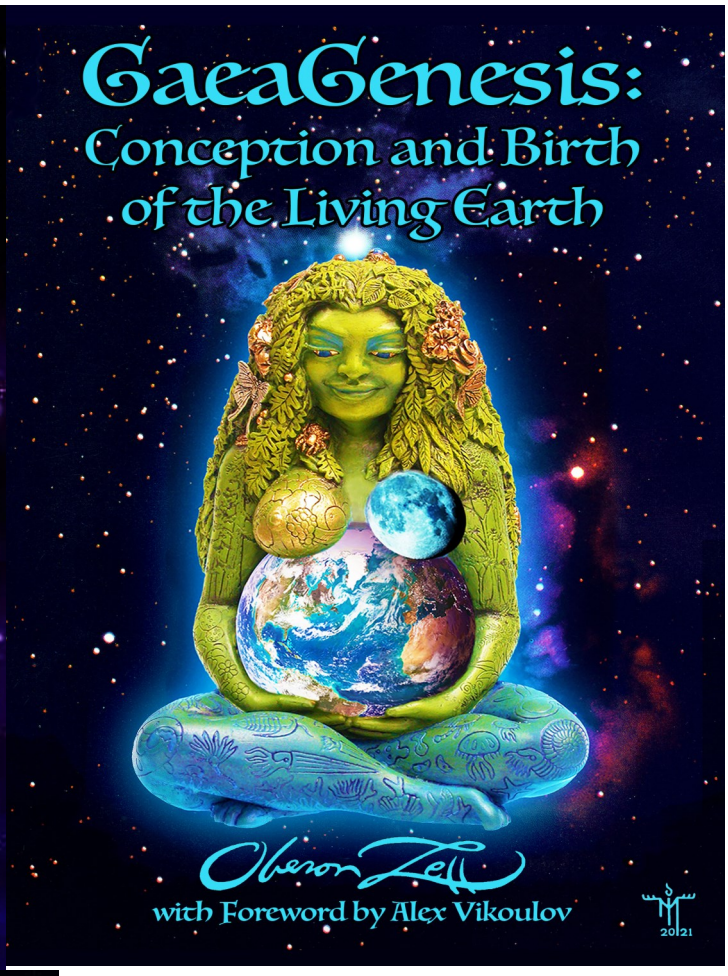
With a fool no season spend
Nor be counted as his friend
Merry Meet and Merry Part
Bright the cheeks and warm the heart

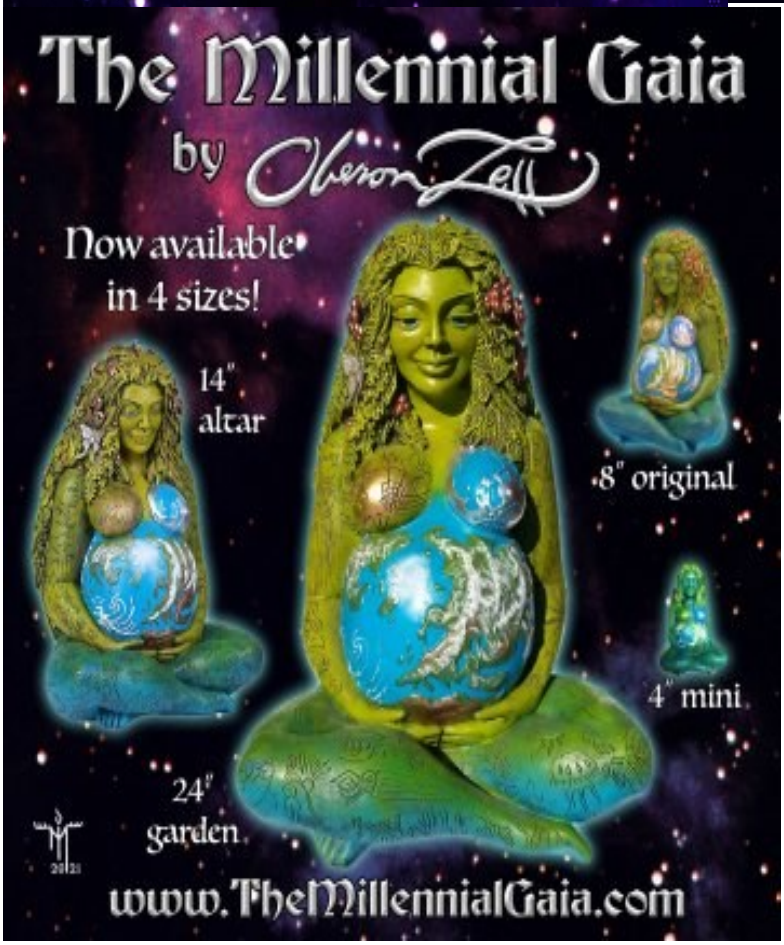
When misfortune is enow
Wear the star upon thy brow
True in Love ye must e'er be
Lest thy love be false to thee.

Mind ye threefold law ye should
Three times bad and three times good
What ye send forth comes back to ye
So ever mind the rule of three

These eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfil
An harm ye none, do what ye will
Follow this with mind and heart
And Merry Ye Meet and Merry Ye Part.







Science and Spirit

"Oberon Zell was the first person to conceive and publish the biological and metaphysical foundations of what has become known as the 'Gaia Theory'— the unified body and emergent soul of the living Earth. Oberon's profound reconciliation of science, mythology and spirituality inspired and infused worldwide neo -Pagan, panentheistic movement. His visionary sculpture of the 'Millennial Gaia' is a three-dimensional revelation, an artistic masterpiece that fuses evolutionary biology with sculptural elegance. For over 50 years Oberon has been writing and lecturing on Gaian consciousness, and it is high time that he put it all together into a book!"

~ Ralph Metzner, Ph.D. (Professor Emeritus, California Institute of Integral Studies & Founder-President, The Green Earth Foundation)

In the early 1970s, noted philosopher and mystic Oberon Zell was the first to propose and publish the radical idea that the biosphere of Earth is a single vast living organism. His initial article on the subject electrified the emerging modern movement of Earth-based spirituality.

The excitement was the result of a simple yet profound idea. Imagine for a moment that Earth is alive. Not just teeming with living things, but a living, vital organism. This is more than imagination or mere metaphor. Gaea-Genesis is the first work to fully integrate the mythological, spiritual, biological, and social history of what has become known as the Gaea Thesis. It expands upon this history by exploring the profound implications of this paradigm, which is as significant to our understanding of the world and our place in it as Galileo's helio-centric theory of the solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution.

GaeaGenesis culminates five decades of work developing Zell's thesis, building on his own original ideas as well as those of renowned scientists, philosophers and spiritualists who preceded and followed him. Foundationally, GaeaGenesis builds upon the author's original paper: "TheaGenesis: The Birth of the Goddess," which appeared in *Green Egg* magazine in June of 1971.

The present book takes the idea beyond the metaphorical realm postulated by James Love-lock in his "Gaia Hypothesis" and posits that the entire evolution of life on Earth is the literal embryology of a single vast living being — one replicating continuum of DNA and protoplasm. This distinction has significant implications for the subject of this book: the proposition that Mother Earth is a living, sentient being with a "soul" that humans can perceive if they are aware enough to sense it. In essence, the living beings that populate the Earth are cells within a greater macro-organism.

www.BlackMoonPublishing.com

"By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them" (Matthew 7:20)

By Oberon Zell, Ravenheart
Sept. 30, 2001

> "Religion should unite all hearts and cause wars and disputes to vanish from the face of the earth, give birth to spirituality, and bring life and light to each heart. If religion becomes a cause of dislike, hatred, and division, it were better to be without it, and to withdraw from such a religion would be a truly religious act. For it is clear that the purpose of a remedy is to cure; but if the remedy should only aggravate the complaint it had better be left alone. Any religion which is not the cause of love and unity is no religion." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)

I feel that current events necessitate a societal re-evaluation of issues of religious freedom and tolerance.

Virtually all the current wars and conflicts in the world are essentially "holy wars;" conflicts based not so much on the traditional political goals of territorial conquest, but rather on ideological grounds -- competition between religions for dominion over the souls of the people. Indeed, several of this country's most prominent televangelists --such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell -- have directly stated that there is a war going on here today for "the Soul of America."

The world "Court of Public Opinion" has declared to be unacceptable such strongly-held belief systems as Nazism and other attitudes which mandate human slavery, torture, genocide, etc. But there is a great and understandable reluctance to condemn such belief systems if they are held to be matters of "Religion" as opposed to "secular" institutions. One could wonder whether Nazism would be more tolerated even today had it been promoted under the guise of "religion," and incorporated with a 501(c)(3), etc. For Hitler himself said that:

> "Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord." (Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*)

We might wish to dismiss as "extremist" such statements as the following, from a letter left behind by an 18-year-old Islamic Palestinian suicide bomber:

> "Whoever believes that God's religion will be victorious without jihad, without blood, without body parts is under an illusion and doesn't know the nature of this religion." (reported by Reuters in *Newsday*)

But the following statements are attributed to Jesus, the "Prince of Peace:"

> "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am come not to send peace, but a sword.
>
> For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother,
>
> And the daughter-in-law against her mother in law.
>
> And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matthew 10:34-36)

> "And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and father child.
>
> And children shall rise up against parents, and shall put them to death." (Matthew 10:21)

Indeed. In this present crisis, couched as it is in apparent religious polarizations, it is important to keep in mind, as Don Lattin, *San Francisco Chronicle* Religion Writer, says, "that no religion has a monopoly on twisting spiritual truth... Terror fueled by religious fanaticism can infect all cultures, corrupt all faiths." ("Televangelist, Convicted Bomber War Against the Secular," *SF Chronicle,* 9/23/01)

Karen Armstrong, leading religion scholar and author of "The Battle for God," agrees: "Everyone has belligerent passages in their scripture, and what fundamentalists have done is to stress those ferocious passages." (Ibid.)

During my first visit to Australia, in 1985, I was interviewed on local television in Sydney. After explaining about Neo-Paganism, I was asked if I felt antipathy towards Christianity. I replied that my only argument with anyone of any other faith was solely insofar as they believed that their religion required them to persecute others not of their faith. I said that Paganism, being polytheistic rather than monotheistic, had a built-in "Diversity Clause" which made room for everyone -- requiring only that folks be willing to get along with each other.

And I said that the modern world of international communications, trading, travels and migrations -- which brings every religion and culture into contact with every other -- can no longer afford to indulge the rabid myopia of monotheistic fundamentalism, with its attendant holy wars, crusades, missionaryism and inquisitions. As Thomas Paine said, "The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries that have afflicted the human race have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion;" and "No falsehood is so fatal as that which is made an article of faith."

> "A Rwandan who survived a massacre of thousands at a convent testified in a Brussels court that the convent's Mother Superior and another nun assisted militiamen in the killings, locking convent doors and supplying gasoline for the killing inferno. This trial is the first outside Rwanda to hear a case concerning the genocide in which 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates were killed. The nuns were charged and convicted of crimes against humanity." (*Long Island Secular Humanist Inquirer,* Vol. IV, No.7; July 2001)

This all came home to me over twenty years ago, with the infamous "Jonestown Massacre" in Guyana, in which cult leader Jim Jones murdered nearly a thousand of his own followers rather than allow a few defectors to leave the cult. But neither at that time nor upon the occasion of subsequent murderous or "suicide cult" investigations has there seemed to be any general questioning of the foundational premise of such groups -- which they share with the largest monotheistic "Great Religions" -- that each of them believes themselves to be "The One True Right and Only Way." Indeed, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." (Sam J. Ervin, Jr., "Protecting the Constitution" Michie, 1984)

Frankly, it's pretty hard to see much ideological difference between the extremist position of Osama bin Laden and his Taliban, and that of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, who seized advantage of the tragic terrorist attack in New York on Sept. 11 to further their own little home-blown holy war by blaming the attack on: "the Pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People For the American Way -- all of them who have tried to secularize America..." (Falwell speaking on "The 700 Club," Sept.13, 2001)

> "[Pat] Robertson and [Mahmud] Abouhalima [convicted in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center] are not saying exactly the same thing, but it's close enough to be shocking. If there is a 'holy war' in the world today, it is not between Islam and Christianity, nor Afganistan and the United States. It is between secularism and religious fundamentalism in all its forms." (Don Lattin, *SF Chronicle,* 9/23/01)

Perhaps it is finally time to ask some hard questions about religious tolerance, diversity, and what kind of world we want to live in. Do we want a world in which everyone must be of the same faith, as fundamentalists of all stripes continue to advocate? Do we want a perpetual escalation of tit-for-tat, an eye for an eye, crusades and jihads? Or do we want a world in which every thread and strand of our respective heritages and traditions can be woven into an infinitely rich and varied tapestry? Personally, I choose the latter. I believe that "holy war" should be considered an oxymoron.

> "The American ideal is not that we all agree with each other, or even like each other, every minute of the day. It is rather that we will respect each other's rights, especially the right to be different, and that, at the end of the day, we will understand that we are one people, one country, and one community, and that our well-being is inextricably bound up with the well-being of each and every one of our fellow citizens." (Arthur J. Kropp, former U.S. Surgeon General)

So I have put together a little interview questionnaire concerning various matters of religious belief. These questions are designed to be asked verbally, one at a time and in this sequence, by journalists, sociologists, etc. of prominent religious leaders and spokespeople – including Pagans. I would very much like to see what answers would be given, and I would also very much like to see a comparative analysis printed and widely circulated, showing the responses from each of various religious leaders side-by-side...

For, as Jesus himself said:

> "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
>
> You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
>
> Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit.
>
> A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
> Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
>
> Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them." (Matthew 7:15-20)

10 Questions for Religious Leaders

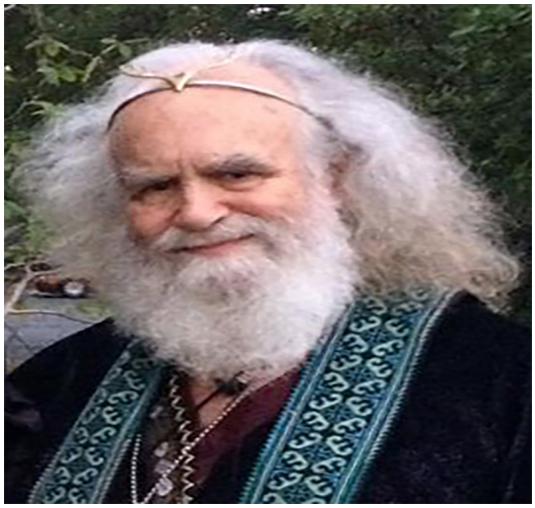
By Oberon Zell-Ravenheart

What is the single most important Precept of your faith?
What is the "Path to Salvation" as defined by your religion?
How do you define "Evil," and what kinds of actions do you consider to be evil?
Do you believe that your faith is the only True Religion, and that all other religions are false?
What do you believe to be the proper position of your religion in the world today, and its relationship to other faiths and peoples?
Do you feel that the tenets and laws of your religion should be the laws of the land, and enforced upon all citizens and residents, whether or not they follow your religion?
Do you feel an obligation to attempt to convert non-believers to your faith?
Do you feel that "Holy War" should be declared against people and faiths other than your own?
What is your position regarding "Universal Human Rights" – especially those of women?
Do you believe that it is humanity's responsibility as stewards of the Earth to live in harmony with Nature and preserve it as a legacy for our children?

Interview with Oberon Zell

By Edward Sott and Earl Williams

Featuring Oberon Zell



Earl:

Afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our meeting with Oberon and with ED being in charge this afternoon. And of course myself included. And we want to just welcome people when they get a chance to come and view the episode that we're gonna be recording with Oberon, so we can kind of get caught up from last time, see how we had some audio and technical issues that were beyond our control, just to the fact that magic in technology just doesn't mix at times.

ED

Okay. Well, first of all, let's start from the beginning here. Oberon, I know you have a long, long history in the craft. I mean, having been one of the founders of the CAW dd, founder of the CAW as well as several other things, can you tell us a little bit about that?

OBERON

Well my founding of C A W was really the earliest thing. I didn't do it single-handedly though, of course, it really takes a couple of people. And my first water brother, my very dear friend Lance Christie, and I met at the very beginning of our freshman year in college, which was September of 1961. And we totally recognized each other as the first time we had ever found someone of our own species, whatever that might be, having been weird kids growing up. And we totally got together. We were both science fiction fans among many other things. And Robert Heinlein's books had been part of our life growing up all the way through high school in the fifties. And high school in the fifties was just like in all the movies and TV shows. So, you know, if you really want to know what that was like, just see the movie Pleasantville.

And that was it. In any case. "Stranger and Strange Land" was Heinlein's offering that October, in the science fiction book club selection of the month. And we read it and totally felt that was, that was everything that we had been talking about, all the ideas and concepts and perspectives that made us so different from the people around us. And we really related. And after both of us read it in considerable conversation, we shared water on April 7th, 1962 and pledged to dedicate our lives to actually manifesting the kind of values that Heinlein had promoted in the book. Of course, it was a science fiction story, and we didn't have actual martians and unlimited funds and stuff, so it wasn't like we were replicating the storyline. But it was an inspiration, it was an inspiration to get us started. It asked the kind of questions that we had been trying to ask.

It wasn't a book about answers, as Heinlein himself said in many conversations that we had over the years, but it was a book of questions and he questioned everything, and we thought that was pretty good, and we kept on questioning. I'd also had a background since childhood in classical mythology. My earliest reading was a children's version of the Greek myths. And so I was deeply steeped in that. And cultural stuff and folklore and all of that was all a part of my studies. My degree in college was in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and pre-med. So I was really deeply involved in all of that stuff. So we decided at some point to follow Heinlein's advice, which was he made a point saying quote, religion is a null area in the law, and if you can establish yourself as a church, you can pretty much do anything you want, you know, short of actual crimes, which we weren't really trying to do, but they, there's an enormous amount of latitude according to the First Amendment to the Constitution.

So we did, you know, when we founded the Church of All Worlds out of that, and we founded our first water brotherhood, we called it ATL, which is an Aztec word, meaning water, but it also has the esoteric meaning of the ancient lost homeland of our ancestors. And that conjured up ideas of Atlantis and all that stuff. We were really into that kinda stuff. And, at some point it went from being kind of an underground water brotherhood of people that we would meet and share water with. We would find other students that we related to, and we would offer, we would, it turned them on to the book. You know, if they came back and said, wow, this is really great stuff, we would say, well share water, never thirst. I see. So our little community grew to about a hundred people by the time we graduated in 1965.

And we decided to go public. And when we did, which was in September of 67, after considerable discussion, whether we should keep this underground secret or we should come out and make a public splash of it, there was a lot of debate that we had in those years on that subject. So we decided to do both, actually. We continued a secret underground society, which still exists, although it's no longer secret. Eventually it also became public, and it's called the Association for the Tree of Life ATL and you can look that up. And they're doing all kinds of good stuff, more dealing with environmental issues and, and climate stuff and sustainable systems and all kinds of stuff like that, that Lance was very much involved in. And so that continued going on. And, the public Church of All Worlds was to be out there with this new religious paradigm. And so when we did that and we went public, somebody asked a fatal question. Well, in those years there were a whole bunch of funny religions popping up. I mean, there was the Krishna Consciousness and there was the Moonies, and there was the Scientologists and the Dianetics, and just all kinds of different things. And here we were right in the middle of all that mid sixties.

EARL

Now with you relocating out to Asheville has Byron had a chance to come visit yet?

OBERON

Not yet, but we don't really have much of a place yet. Well, let me finish this little part. I was about to say, somebody asked the question, what kind of a religion is this? Are you some kind of a Christian cult or one of these Eastern things? Or what are you? And I said, the fateful words. I said, well, I guess you could say we're pagans. And nobody had ever said that before. Nobody had ever claimed to be Pagans. Pagans were always somebody else. You know, those, those pagans No, nobody ever said us Pagans. And doing that was a transformative moment because after that we incorporated the church, became public, started publishing Green Egg Magazine and all kinds of good stuff. And we started reaching out to other groups. We would hear about, you know, some people into Greek or Egyptian or Norse or Druids or stuff like that.

And we'd reach out to them, send them Green Egg and say, Hey, you guys, you guys sound like Pagans. We're pagans. Let's all be Pagans together. And everybody said, yeah, sure. That's a great thing. So that became an overall umbrella to encompass all of the separate groups, sort of like, well, what Benjamin Franklin did by coining the term Americans to include all the different groups of people who had previously thought of themselves as independent and separate entities, you know, the, the, the Baptists and the Catholics and the Virginians and the New Yorkers and all that. But he brought them all together into one concept of Americans. And I brought them all together in one concept of Pagans. And that's the way it began. Well, so you're asking her now about living situation. So you go ahead. I just gave enough of a run.

ED

Well, I'd say what a wonderful way Paganism grew into our American society, you were a big part of that. And that was much appreciated. Of course, even to this day, it's very much appreciated. What do you feel about neo paganism now, though? How, how it's changed with our traditional values that were once in, in various different Pagan cultures. Neo paganism has come into play and has changed quite a bit of our traditions and values. How do you feel about that? And what, what are your, what are your like, your opinions on that and what, where we should be going and how we are proceeding? You know, that's what I'm, I'm curious about.

OBERON

Well, paganism, of course, almost by definition is looking to the past and drawing upon the heritage and the lore and the myths and legends of the past. Neo Paganism has tried to bring those values and those things into, into the modern world, into our times. Not just be statically stuck in the past, but be relevant today. And that's been a good part of it. Most of the neopagan groups do draw very heavily on specific cultural and past traditions, you know, inspired by Greek or Egyptian or whatever, witchcraft and so on. And, and they're, they're wonderful and that they preserve that. But pretty much all of them are also trying to bring this into a contemporary world. We are no longer living the rural agricultural or hunter-gatherer life of our ancestors, you know, so we've tried to carry the evolution forward as if there had never been the interruption of a thousand years of Christianity and dark ages and inquisitions and all that. Just where would it all be going if it had continued to evolve? Here we are, the Church of All Worlds has kind of been unique in this field because we also look to the future. So we draw as much of our mythology from science fiction as from the ancient legends and lore, but we're still rooted in the present. We like to say that our roots are deep in the earth and in the past, and our branches reach to the stars and the heavens above. But our presence is still right here.

So how do I feel? So, I think that the movement has grown and shifted a lot over the generations. I've, in the 60 years I've been doing this, which is pretty much longer than anybody. I've seen a lot of changes, but mostly they've been generational. Each new generation that is born into the community and grows up in it has a whole different insight. In my generation, nobody had been born into and grown up in the Pagan families and Pagan traditions. We were the first, and my son, Brian, I believe, was probably the very first child to be raised in a pagan religion in Pagan family, in Pagan group. Because at that time, the other groups that were around didn't include their kids. You know, they would go off at night and hire a babysitter, and then go off to their meetings.

But we always included the kids with ours, cuz we saw it as a community, as a family oriented community thing, which it's become much more, we've moved away from the secret society, esoteric mystical...

ED

of the 1800s

OBERON

Yeah, exactly. The 1800s into a full community embracing families and kids and everybody in, in the modern world. I think that's very important. And I, and the generations that have grown up within it are amazing. The kids are, our kids are fantastic. They, they've grown up, they've taken their part, they've taken their role, they've found their place, you know, and God, we got great kids.

EARL

Yep. And I know that the term Neo means new and it does, but to me there is nothing new about Paganism. I mean, it's been around for ages and it has, the one thing I've, and I think I'm alone with this sentiment that to me personally, the term Neo, just when you, it sends a negative connotation. And that's the way that I've looked at it. And I guess I'm alone in this cause I get kickback from it all the time. And, but it is like, there's really nothing new about it. And the reason why I feel it sends out a negative connotation is people get that confused with neo-Nazis and it's like, NO, and I want nothing that we want nothing to do with that. And that's the reason why, to me personally, the term Neo just sends a negative connotation for us, pagans.

OBERON

You know, these days we don't really use it much. We just say pagan. At the time that we first coined that terminology in the late sixties there was concern that we were trying to claim to be the direct continuity of the other peoples and traditions. And we wanted to respect that because Pagan encompasses all indigenous peoples. It encompasses not just European, but Native American, African Polynesian, you know? Right. You know, Australian, all these different places and traditions you know, India and such like that are all pagan. But most of them have a continuity with their past that in the western world has been severed by Christianity and of course in the Middle East by Islam. But so we felt it by saying, well, you guys are the old pagans and we really respect and appreciate that we're not claiming to be the old pagans we are... I wanna honor and respect those traditions, but these are new groups that are being founded by new people for the modern world. And so we felt that that distinction provided respect for the old pagans. Isaac Ovitz actually used several terms. He talked about paleo pagans being the old original ones, and then the meso pagans like the Caribbean diasporic folks like the, the voodoo people and the

Which are not the original ancient African thing, but they've been brought into a more recent world. And then the neo pagans, which are the, those of us who are just emerging in the 20th century. But like I said, nobody really uses that anymore. Neopagan is only a kind of a technical term to make that distinction. So I really wouldn't worry about it too much. You know, we all just call ourselves pagans.

ED

Well, I refer to paganism too, and paganism in general, because I'm still a traditionalist in my values of being Alexandria and Wiccan. Okay, there you go. And but

OBERON

That's also new. That's a neo Yeah. Neo wiccan. Because it's not the original old village witchcraft in the old days.

ED

It came from, of course, Alexander's breakup from him from the Gardernarian tradition and his forward movement into more modernization of the traditions itself.

OBERON

Exactly.

ED

And I've noticed that there's a lot of dissent towards religious groups and stuff like that because of the fact that every 15 years or so, we have an influx of more people seeking more answers or seeking more of what's going on with them. You know, they're starting to question things as a book by one of my favorite authors pointed out The Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield. I don't know if you've ever read that.

OBERON

I have, I

ED

Have. He pointed out that there's an, and it's a valid fact. I mean, with his insights, they were all valid. But he pointed out that every 15 to 20 years or so, people start questioning, where are we going? Why are we here? And religion was eventually evolved to try to answer those questions. I know that. But spirituality is starting to become a more advanced part of religion. People are starting to realize that they have an interconnectedness with the higher power, whatever choice, the higher power is that they don't have to rely on man to connect them, another fellow man to connect them. That's where I think the separation between religion and spirituality comes into play. Because if religion, religion says, you know, that you have to rely on a priest or, or a bishop or any other number of deacons or anything else to connect with the higher power's, not the common man. That

OBERON

Yeah. That's not really what religion says. That's what the churches say. That's what

Distinction. I don't wanna lose religion. We need that, you know, the spirituality is vertical that connects us with spirit, you know, and the way the whole new age movement is all about, it's all vertical people, you know, are all connected to their guru and their teacher and the spirit, but they're not connected to each other. And religion is all over the horizon. Connect

ED

Interconnectedness,

OBERON

Right. Where we connect with each other. And I really think we have to have that, the essence of wisdom, in my opinion. And that is the motto of the gray school to wizardry, to quote Cicero from 2000 years ago, Omni of event, Omnia, intera, connecta in English. That's, everything is alive and everything is interconnected. And I think this is the core of the wisdom of the ages. And we can't lose that. And we really can't. And that's what religion should be about, the interconnectedness, you know, not just our own connection individually with spirit, you know, through whatever, through the priest or the guru or whatever,

ED

You know, our whole tribal connection, if you will.

OBERON

Exactly. Exactly. These tribal family values are what paganism really has to bring into the world. And, and the balance of nature, which you touched on. It's more than just that we bring in the balance of God and goddess of male and female, you know, of all the different, you know, races and species of humans and animals and creatures. We're all children of the same mother. We're all children of the, we're all part of the same Holy family. You know, we can't talk about the other because there is no other. Right. You know, and, and I think this is where Paganism has a great deal to offer the world. And the connection with nature is embedded in the seasonal cycle of the Wheel of the year. And Paganism is very unique for that. All the other religions celebrate their holidays as the birthdays or death days of saints or events that happened.

They're all about that seasonal, not seasonal, but a historical cycle. But the pagan tradition is about the turning of the year, the solstice, the equinoxes, the quarters, cross quarters in between them. This is vital. This connects us to the world. And every pagan culture in the world, every tribal people, every tribal culture celebrates those as the primal celebrations of the year, whatever it is. Whether it's Native American or African or European or Norse, wherever it is. The seasonal cycle of this, of the festivals, I think is a crucial part of it. But we really have a great deal of offering the world, you know?

ED

Yeah. Well, I agree with you. I agree a hundred percent with you OBERON on that. We have nine minutes left, by the way, unfortunately, because we're gonna lose the meeting in nine minutes. So, all right. I want to cover one more aspect of that if we, if we can.

The aspect of we're talking about spirituality. We're talking about tribal cultural values and tribes, and that now when it comes to religions, you have a definitive value of monotheistic versus polytheistic. An argument about that. Okay. And indeed. And the argument that I have given in the past is that the one thing I've known about pagans in the past is we believe in a divine creative force, but we don't personify that force. Cuz you can't put finite limits on something infinite. You're reducing it to our ego.

So, but we do use archetypal representations of various cultures from gods and goddesses to represent an idea or thought or concept that we bring into so we can act accordingly and bring it into fruition. Much like you're planting a, seed in your garden and growing the seed and then harvesting it. Now, would you tend to agree with my statement on that?

OBERON

Well, well, very, very much. I always liked my favorite Pagan author, Terry Pratchett, who refers to anthropomorphic personifications of all these things that are forces, you know? But yes, I think that's crucial. We don't really feel that something is cosmic as the source or the, you know, infinite and all is an actual person per se, but it's very useful to personify these kinds of things in our actual relationships and communications. We can make images and draw pictures and create statues and write songs and poetry. But we know that these are only our, you know, our own representations of the stuff. We don't really think that's, that's,

An Archetype. And that's fine, that's fine. We should have those. We're we're, we are creators and artists. But you, the first part of that that you were asking in your question, what was that? Now again, you, when you began that this would

ED

Now I did make mention before of your statuary and everything else, because you do beautiful statuary work. I've, I've always been in love with your statues.

OBERON

Thank you. Thank you. And, but there was a question that you had just started to ask me, entered into this last little few minutes, and I've lost track of what the question was there. It was a good one.

ED

It was, do you agree with the principle that we believe in a higher creative force but not personify it, that the problem with modern society is ego gets in the way of spirituality and ego gets in the way of religion?

Yes, ego creates religion because of the fact that we, instead of connecting with that divine force, we try to reduce that divine force to our man's understanding and man's egotistical understanding of that divinity.

OBERON

Well, that's very good. And I, I think that all you really gotta do to appreciate that is just go out in the night, in the middle of the night and lay on your back and look up at the night sky and realize just how terribly important we are in the cosmos. You know, which is not a whole lot really on that scale, but we are terribly important in our own lives and the work that we do and, and how we live and how we treat each other, and the values that we share. And I think this is our work. And our work is a matter of scale, you know, a good part of his personal thing. How do we treat each other just right there face-to-face, you know, that kind of stuff.

Make these choices, you know, we make choices all the time. I always say how people treat me is up to them and how I treat people is up to me. Right. And I treat people according to my own values, not according to, you know, how some,

ED

All religions have one, one solid tenant that's in all religions, and it's, an it harm ye none do what you will, which is the same as the Golden Rule, which is doing unto others as you have doing unto you. Yep. Which is the same as the Buddhist

Wheel of law, which is the same as the nine oaths of the druid everything. It's all the same rule. It's, it's that 11 commandment. It

OBERON

I coach it as I couch it. Simply do as you would be done by, do as you would be done by. And, and that's, that's pretty basic. That's your basic ethic. That's all you really need. You know, when you got that down, you know, somebody once at one of our conferences that I attended came over to our table and they said, so what are your rules in the Church of All Worlds? And we kinda looked at each other and we really hadn't given much thought to that. He said, well be excellent to each other. I mean, we'd just seen Bill and Ted's excellent adventure, and we thought that was a good one. He said, that's it. And we kinda looked at each other and said, yeah, I think that's about it. He said, well, those people across the room there, they got a whole list of 87 rules. And all we can say was, wow, that's a lot of rules. Little hard to keep track of that many rules. But, but,

Yeah. That's all we need. One rule.

OH, I remember what it was, it was the monotheism versus polytheism was the question you raised. Right. And I do wanna say one thing about that. Isaac Owow coined a great expression. He talked about monotheism, the idea of the one true. Right. And only way. And I really think that idea has been the great poison that has been inflicted upon the world and religion for thousands of years. Because if you, and it's, it's, you know, monotheism, you know monarchy monopoly, monoculture monogamy, monotony, all that mono, everything is extremely destructive because if you believe you've got the one true right, and only way, that means everybody else is wrong. Right. And if they're wrong, then they're bad. And if they're bad, well then they should be punished. And there this leads into holy war.

ED

Horrible stuff. That's, that's what's been constant. So we need to go back to the Poly idea and the, and the idea that everybody has a bit part or bit role within nature and society, and we all play our part in a moral constant and standardized format and everything will be cool. We have to get rid of that ego and get rid of that mono thinking.

OBERON

Exactly. Get rid of the mono thinking, introduce the poly thinking and that makes room for everybody. And so what Paganism brings to the table is an inclusive paradigm as opposed to the exclusive paradigm of the monotheistic religions and traditions. And again, I think this is extremely important in our modern world. We can no longer sustain every single group thinking that they're the only one That's right. And everybody else is wrong. That's just not acceptable today. Never was really.

ED

Okay. We have two minutes. Two minutes remaining. So I wanna take final comments from everybody starting with you. Thank you for being, you know, for coming to join us in this interview. We much appreciate it. I look forward to publishing it with you. So,

OBERON

Very good. Well, my pleasure, both of you. Thank you Edward, and thank you Earl for having me on the show and Very welcome. I'll be back anytime you want. Okay.

EARL

Excellent. Yep, definitely. Yeah, appreciate everything that you do for all of us and basically we look forward to continuing this discussion. Cause I have a feeling there's a lot more we can cover.

OBERON

Excellent. Well, the next issue of Green Egg will be out in another few days. Next week comes out on the solstices and the equinoxes of each season. So look for the summer issue to be out next week.

EARL

Excellent.

ED

And today's wish will be coming out October 31st. November 1st. That's our first issue of Today's Witch. We will of course share the feature with you over on the internet in our issue. And we hope to have you, you know, further working with you, with us together. Wonderful.

OBERON

Wonderful. All right. Well then Merry MEET. Thank

ED

You, everybody. Thank you everybody for being here. Thank you again, Oberon and, and Earl

EARL

No problem. And I just wanna say pleasant journeys to everyone. Thank you for tuning in

Bards Corner

We Are

By

Jill Ann Cooper

Witches of Old and which is of new
In honor of us in honor of you
Woman and man and child alike
Harness Your Love as energies light

Each of us holding this flame that's inside
With understanding to which we abide
Harm those two none yet protection of kin
Devoted our Magic in which we dwell in

A circle of hands we go round and round
singing our praises and feet stomping sounds
Festive we are and festively be
As we share our protection our sweet energy

And each falls upon us learn lessons of free
To love all around you we'll give you this key

Jill Ann Cooper
Raven Sun Moon Dove
L.O.V.

Brigid Goddess

By Emily Thornton

Brigid, goddess of fire and poetry,
Of healing and smithcraft,
Of inspiration and prophecy,
We sing your praises.

You are the triple goddess,
Maiden, mother, and crone,
The embodiment of all that is feminine.
You are the light that guides us through the darkness,
The hope that sustains us in our darkest hour.

You are the fire that burns within our hearts,
The passion that drives us to create,
The love that binds us together.
You are the inspiration that fuels our dreams,
The vision that guides us to our destiny.

We thank you for your blessings,
Brigid, goddess of fire and poetry,
Of healing and smithcraft,
Of inspiration and prophecy.

We honor you on this day,
Your feast day,
And every day.

Blessed be.

Believe in the In Between
By Emma Gardner

Believe in the echo of the in between
Its truth goes through my soul
Mystery and strangeness hid the confusion.
Within that shudder I drown unseen
Imagination is nevermore at a loss alone.
Some some lightning and mourn this shadow
And dream why here must night from you make darkness
Live within that silent whisper.

I dream within the sky unknown
To a truth…like a howling at the gray moon
the heart must whisper and fill the midnight
Young darkness in the in between
I can live like a storm
Within that mystery and thunder.

Between wake and sleep
The in between beckons
Come silent surrender and coil
Within the magic and mystery.
We live amongst the lightning and confusion.

Hecate
By Lillianna Bluwolf

I remember being eighteen, as free as the wind blows, and at my first gathering, learning the chant.
Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Inanna. The words were sincere, powerful, intoxicating and healing to my soul. Little did I know then that Hecate had chosen me to be her follower. Looking back I focus and use wisdom and discretion. I have chosen to be in solitude in my practice.

I hear her and listen and do what she says in totality. Many fuss over whether the name is Hecate or Hekate: she is not picky on either spelling of the name. The second spelling sounds like something from Shakespearean literature.

Who is Hecate? Hecate is a deity whose origins came from Egypt or Asia Minor. It is possible that the derivation Hekate came from the Egyptian goddess Heqet, who was considered a frog-like mother fertility goddess. She ruled over Egypt. The Egyptian name for magic is 'Heka.' The god of magic and medicine is Heka. The origins and association of the names are quite similar. Hecate was also well known in Asia minor, which is now Turkey.

Why is Hecate important? Is she the horrifying image portrayed around Samhan? Because she rules the underworld with Hades, she is associated with some fairly dark things and rules the night. Dark is not always bad nor should have a negative connotation. For without darkness there is little appreciation for light. It's a balance of yin and yang. Having both is essential in my walk. Hecate teaches boundaries, transitions and the crossroads, magic, new moon, necromancy and ghosts. Hecate is known and recognized in Greek mythos. But before then she was worshiped in Asia minor. Hecate was adopted into the Greek pantheon. According to Brittanica, in the Hesiod, Hecate is a daughter of Perses and Asteria. Hecate has the power of Earth, Heaven and the Sea and underworld. Zeus took a special liking to her and gave her these places to help rule. I have always felt she is the queen of witchcraft.

In the "Witches Rune" by Doreen Valiente I believe the queen of all witches is indeed associated with Hecate. If you work with her she is solid and will bring many blessings to your life. Her name is used in spell work and is very important. Hecate witnessed Persephone kidnapped into the underworld. She used her bright torch to aid in the search for her. Pillars were built in her honor at the crossroads. Also, there were markings on doorways; perhaps this was done as a form of protection from evil. She was first worshiped as a singular deity holding a torch wearing a long robe.

Sacred symbols for Hecate are two torches, dogs, snakes, keys, daggers. Her wheel is known as the strophalos. This symbol is everywhere and quite beautiful and powerful. When I visit her shrine I bring her whisky, a lit Marlboro red and keys that meant something to me and maybe a horseshoe, sometimes a little dog figure. It is very personal for me and for others it may vary. She will lead you on what to bring as an offering. Ask and listen closely.

This year my grandmother died at ninety-nine. Hecate was with me and her. I was not alone. I grieved before and after she passed. Part of my grieving included Sacred Art. I painted graves I remembered from New Orleans. It brought me peace and comfort. Hecate held me close in a warm embrace and gave me much peace and encouragement during the painful time. When I went to the funeral Hecate reminded me that it was just a body. Grandma's spirit had elevated to a higher plane. It's been quite the year for me on a personal level. The circle of life happens. It does not care about our preferences. I assure you everything happens when and how it is supposed to happen. Events move into the future and change.

Even the later variations of Hecate show her as a trinity goddess. This form stands back to back perhaps so she could see all directions at the crossroads with her pack of dogs that keep her company.
Hecate is not the face of deity for everyone. She chose me. If she chooses you it will be as clear as a crystal and you will go on a journey in working with her. It will change you for the better and make you a stronger practitioner and push you toward your highest level.

https://www.britannica.com/top ic/Hecate

https://www.celebratepaganholi days.com/fall/hecates-night-november-16

https://genius.com/Inkubus-suk kubus-wytches-chant-98-lyrics

Doreen Valiente Witches rune

BIO: Lillianna is an eclectic solitary witch, artist and mom who lives in the Ozarks, who loves to inspire others with her art and promote happiness and joy with her work. She comes from a long line of healers and shamans and she has spent much of her time around many amazing artists and storytellers, who inspire her work.

PUZZLE 1

Q	A	Z	W	S	X	E	E	N	I	A	T	L	E	B	D	C	R	F	V	T
A	Y	N	U	M	E	R	O	L	O	G	Y	A	H	N	U	J	M	I	A	K
R	K	C	I	G	A	M	O	L	P	L	P	M	M	K	O	N	J	C	S	B
C	H	U	V	G	Y	Q	C	F	T	X	D	M	R	Z	S	E	A	A	T	P
H	W	Q	H	M	N	B	U	V	C	X	Z	A	L	J	K	N	H	G	R	I
T	Q	W	E	A	R	T	Y	A	U	I	O	S	P	A	C	S	D	F	O	S
Y	M	B	L	C	N	Z	S	D	R	G	J	L	O	E	U	T	E	Q	L	C
P	W	R	Y	E	I	D	W	P	S	I	F	H	R	K	Z	C	B	M	O	E
E	O	P	L	O	O	K	F	I	I	M	U	J	U	N	H	M	Y	A	G	S
B	S	G	T	V	F	S	R	A	D	C	D	S	E	X	S	A	W	I	Y	A
Z	T	A	Q	T	H	I	C	S	S	D	I	S	A	P	U	B	Z	R	Z	G
D	E	O	C	I	L	L	E	O	A	T	E	Q	U	I	N	O	X	B	O	I
U	O	T	W	I	U	I	C	C	R	A	I	R	V	O	C	N	A	B	U	T
L	M	A	R	Y	G	I	T	I	S	P	D	N	S	E	S	E	I	G	N	T
E	A	D	T	O	H	N	O	H	T	O	I	N	G	H	L	Y	R	P	R	A
O	N	V	I	D	N	E	E	N	A	T	E	O	R	T	I	A	I	I	N	R
M	C	E	N	T	A	B	U	T	A	L	S	O	L	T	O	N	E	D	F	I
V	Y	U	L	E	S	A	M	H	A	I	N	U	I	C	A	E	T	E	T	U
I	H	E	N	E	A	O	P	H	Y	M	T	E	B	A	B	O	O	U	T	S
R	S	O	M	E	D	O	F	T	H	B	E	T	R	E	R	P	M	I	N	O
G	L	O	G	Y	H	U	S	E	D	O	I	N	A	T	H	H	E	P	R	A
O	C	T	I	C	E	O	F	T	H	L	S	E	C	R	A	Y	F	A	T	A
N	D	N	R	O	C	I	R	P	A	C	T	T	O	P	R	T	A	R	O	T
R	O	V	C	O	M	M	U	N	I	O	N	I	A	D	E	E	A	I	M	I
N	I	S	P	E	L	L	I	D	I	C	E	T	I	R	O	N	A	E	R	Y
O	F	T	W	I	R	C	C	A	N	T	E	A	R	M	A	I	N	S	O	L
O	G	Y	U	A	G	E	M	I	N	I	I	T	R	C	A	W	A	T	E	R
N	B	E	T	A	U	S	T	I	R	I	P	S	E	T	D	A	S	A	W	A
Y	T	L	O	E	L	C	S	O	L	S	T	I	C	E	H	O	U	R	A	G
E	A	S	T	U	S	U	R	U	A	T	D	D	E	G	R	E	E	E	N	T

WORD SEARCH

Clues:

B _____ is one of the major sabbats which occurs on May 1st. It's also known as May Day.

L _____ is a wiccan festival celebrated on August 1st. It's the other name for Lughnasadh.

A _____ common image or original models of experience found in the subconscious or collective unconscious which relate to humanity's basic emotions and states throughout the various phases of living.

N_____ the use of numbers for divinatory purposes.

A _____ the use of stars and planets for divinatory purposes.

M_____ the physical manifestation and manipulation of energy in accordance to ones will.

A_____ the 11th sign of the Zodiac.

C_____ the 4th sign of the Zodiac.

P_____ the 12th sign of the Zodiac.

L_____ the 5th sign of the Zodiac.

H_____ a pagan wedding ceremony.

A_____ the element corresponding to the East, the color light Blue, mind, intellect and imagination.

M_____ the sabbat which occurs on or around September 21st, the Autumn Equinox.

E_____ the time when night and day are exactly the same length.

S_____ the 9th sign of the Zodiac.

S_____ the 8th sign of the Zodiac.

O_____ the use of Bones as a tool for divination.

D_____ in a clockwise direction.

W_____ in a counterclockwise direction.

Y_____ the sabbat which occurs on or around December 21st.

S_____ the sabbat which is celebrated on Midnight on November 1st.

C_____ the 10th sign of the Zodiac.

C_____ the sharing of the offering plate during a ritual.

T_____ the type or tool used when practicing cartomancy.

S_____ a combination of words, tools, and energy used to net desired results.

G_____ the 3rd sign of the Zodiac

W_____ the element corresponding in some traditions to the West, light green, represents emotions and intuition.

S_____ the fifth element which represents all the aspects of the other four elements.

S_____ the point in time when the sun is at its greatest distance from the celestial equator.

T_____ the 2nd sign of the Zodiac.

D_____ the rank or particular right of passage one has reached in traditional wicca.

V_____ the 6th sign of the Zodiac.

L_____ A Wiccan festival celebrated on August 1st it's other name is Lammas

I_____ literally meaning In Milk, this is a Wiccan Celebration witch falls on February 1st.

L_____ the 7th sign of the Zodiac.

N_____ another name for a seeker in the craft.

A_____ the 1st sign of the zodiac.

A_____ the place where ritual supplies and tools are located and used.

E_____ the element corresponding in some traditions to the North, brown, represents foundations, stability, the human body, all solid material things, and prosperity.

O_____ the Wiccan holiday which occurs at the spring Equinox, around March 21st.

L_____ an alternate name for the Summer Solstice June 21st.

D_____ a general term for the practice of determining the past, present and future using various methods.

Author's Corner

Where Magic Begins by Faith Prince

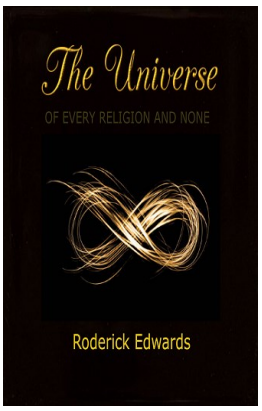
Half human, half witch, and hated by both sides, Zoeli Crowe doesn't trust anyone. Not even her backstabbing twin sister Saria.

As Zoeli uncovers secrets, deceptions and lies about her life, she discovers a handsome witch, Damian, has been following her. He claims that he only means to protect her, but can she trust him?

In a world where nothing is what it seems and danger lurks around every corner, Zoeli is running out of time. A supernatural force more powerful than she ever imagined is coming after the Crowe sisters.

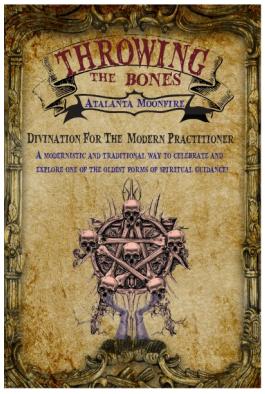
If Zoeli can't make amends with Saria, she will face the battle of a lifetime—alone.

The Universe: Of Every Religion and None By Roderick Edwards



Explores not only how and why humans develop religions but why they may disdain all unverifiable ancient belief systems. The Universe examines apparent coincidence and what some have called synchronicity. The Universe is a scientific look at the mystical. Get it as a paperback, e-book, or audiobook:

Throwing Bones by Atalanta Moonfire



This book is designed to combine the traditional practice of throwing the bones and how it adapts to this ever-changing world. It teaches the art of throwing bones (also known as casting the bones) divination as well as furnishes a tool for a fast, easy reference. You will learn the account of bone casting, the importance of and how to create an ancestral alter, preparation of fresh bones, and much more! Using the tools and guidance of this book, you will be able to complete a full bone reading with ease. Fifty pages are dedicated to piece meanings! Eleven different types of throws are covered! Let's get rid of the stigma that bone reading is hard to do and intimidating! We are here to change that! It is a collection of information I have gathered through verbal instruction and research combined with my own experiences and techniques. My goal for this book is to provide a guide that adapts to this ever-changing world and that quickly teaches the art of throwing bones.

Psychic Skills For Magic and Witchcraft

By Cat Gina Cole

Psychic Skills for Magic and Witchcraft takes the reader on the complete journey from beginner to advanced practitioner. In the later chapters, I use real-life experiences to demonstrate how psychic occurrences can appear in daily life. *And* I couple those experiences with additional advanced tools and skills the seeker can use to deal with their own experiences in their own way.

Through reading, I challenge myself to understand different perspectives and lived experiences.

When the publishers of **Today's Witch** asked me to do book review for their debut issue I was flattered and thrilled!
I'm a bibliophile, an avid reader who loves good stories, and talking about books. It gives me great pleasure read them into the wee hours of the night. The smell of the printed page is my opium.
I buy and read more books in a month than most people read in a year, and I retain the written word like wood holding a stain. I also have gripes about books, the quality and methods used to sell books nowadays and how unsuspecting the market for books is.

I've witnessed changes in the industry over the past few decades, from the days when you waited for a book to arrive at the public library to borrow, to the current instant downloads. I've also seen the price of books go from $1.25 for a paperback, to the hundreds paid for luxury books as library decor.
Times have really changed, but book prices have not gone down they keep increasing year after year. It's based on many factors most of which revolve around marketing and advertising. So, it's becoming increasingly difficult to get an honest review before you buy. Why? Because publishers want to sell books! Early resources like the NY Times Best Seller list, Oprah Book Club, Amazon Reviews, are like fake news now, they just want to sell you. And that cool author on Facebook who befriended you will say anything to sell you a copy of his latest book. And now that writers can self-publish, there is no unbiased source to refer to. There are even monetary incentives given to review books online.

Everyone profits when they can get you to spend your hard-earned money.
Many times, I have bought a book based on a 'review' and found it boring, poorly written, poorly researched, a low rent copy, or it just failed to stay on the topic.
And genre makes no difference, even the old occult standbys were in their day the equivalent of snake oil.
Often a publisher will offer books based on a niche they want to fill and will ask their stable of writers to produce works on topics they know little about, it's a racket. But don't get discouraged because there are also those wonderful, brilliant writers who will produce a new book every 5 years or so. But the price for these works is substantial, quantities are often limited, or they are out of print, you need to know is it worth it?

So, I am excited to write for your enjoyment honest, brief, and clear reviews. I have no skin in the game, no one is influencing my opinion and I am not paid by publishers or agents. So I am not obligated to favor any book over another.
There is an old saying that everyone has a price, well I am priceless.
Without further adieux announcing

Seshat's: Sink or Swim book review

Pagan Portals Scrying: Divination using Crystals, Mirrors, water and fire

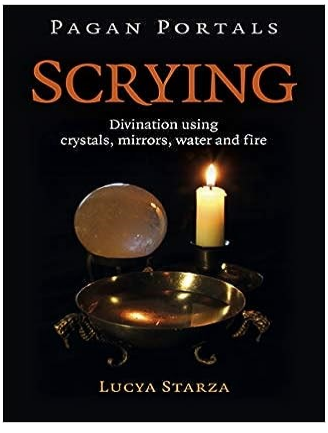
Author: Lucya Starza
Publisher: Moon Books Winchester UK
ISBN: 13:9781781789047158
Publication Date: February 25, 2022
Price: $12.95 104 Pages

Divination is a specialty of my own magical practice, I scry, crystal and water gaze, and use magic mirrors. There isn't a tool I haven't worked with, and in my business as a master craftsperson of Wands, Mirrors, and talismans at ROTA Magic Wands this is my favorite practice, and I'm always on the lookout for a book that discusses the subject.
Spirit communications is an important aspect of our spiritual practice and magical lifestyle. It is also a hot topic for publishers right now. They know that everyone wants that spirit guide, Holy Guardian Angel conversation or just an oracle to help guide. After all this is how every great Witch, Magician, or Sorcerer begins, with a great spirit guide. So, I was excited to pick up ***Pagan Portals: Scrying by Lucya Starza.***
The cover is attractive and the recommendations on the back and inside cover are raving about it, so I picked it up. It's a fun read, and helpful for newbies, but it is not a serious discussion on the subject so for me it came up short. I noted the author's 'self-admitted' inexperience, and it shows in her writing. She has a lighthearted approach to the subject which is entertaining, but possibly dangerous as this is a serious psychological subject. Most readers are looking for specific instruction and here she drops the ball. Many do not realize the importance of things like preparing by casting a magic circle, consecrating and dedicating a tool, and there was no specific information on how to choose a crystal ball, which one has advantages over the others or how to craft a magic mirror, or a historic expose' on the subject of Pagan Seers.

The Author gives us many memorable moments from her own experiences, including how to scry a dog's butt (gross) and plenty of book references to look up later. Sorry but I do not buy books to be referred to other books. That is a bibliography.
I expected a book to cover pertinent questions on the topic, this book is a perusal on the topic at best, with a few ideas for a new "explorer", but a huge disappointment for more seasoned practitioners.
It seems like this was just too ambitious a subject for the Author. Attempting to cover scrying, crystal gazing, mirrors, water, fire, and tea leaves all in one book is a huge undertaking if you wish to do it well.
And it would produce a book larger than the 104 pages that this book offers.

Ms. Starza just doesn't know enough about the subject and this book feels like a money grab. For an experienced Pagan, Witch or Magician the lack of seriousness in this book is annoying.
References to the Lord of the Rings and Snow White for a beginner is relatable, but for those of us whose life practice and or method of worship is Seership those references make us cringe. This book gives you the jest of the subject and ideas about how to go about starting your journey on the path to Seership, just keep in mind that while the book boasts a lot it, comes up short on delivery.
My vote is a disappointing "**SINK"**, just not worth the time or money.
There are many great books written on this subject, I say pass on this one.

Seshat Aubi, Is a Ceremonial Magician, Priestess of the Order of Melchizedek, Magi and Adeptus of the Fraternitas Rosea Cruces, Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Lady Knight Apprentice of the Rose Cross, and former member of Builders of the Adytum and other esoteric fraternal orders for over 30years. Seshat has published work in the Pendle Craft Magazine, Circle of the Sisterhood, and content for other websites.
Seshat Aubi is the Inventor and Founder of the R.O.T.A. Magic Wand LLC, an electromagnetic induction wand for Theurgy, Healing, and Magick.



Soul vs. Spirit
by Devi Wolf

What is the difference between spirit and soul? In many religions, the concepts of soul and spirit are significant and interchangeable, but in Paganism and witchcraft, the concepts of "soul" and "spirit" can have completely different interpretations depending on the individual tradition or belief system. How can these concepts manifest in a pagan spiritual practice?

In many religions, the soul is considered to be the inner essence of our beings. It is our internal self, reflecting our personality, emotions and experiences. It's often regarded as the foundation for identity and character. In witchcraft, the soul is eternal, having existed before birth and after the death of one's physical body. The soul, in most pagan theology, is often associated with the idea of reincarnation, in which the soul is reborn in a new body after death. Most witches believe that the soul is immortal, continues to exist after physical death, and that one's past lives can influence their current existence. In some witchcraft traditions, the soul is considered the source of personal power and energy and that energy is what they use to work spells. Others do it a different way and ask spirit for energy.

Spirit, on the other hand, is sometimes considered to be the part of the self that connects to the divine and universal energy. It is the force that transcends mundane reality, connecting with higher planes of existence. Most pagans believe that spirit is also considered an animating force or energy that permeates all living things and the entire universe. In other words, our spirits are what make it possible to connect to other spirits, such as deities, ancestors. As witches, we all have different gifts and as such we all work with spirit differently. For example some can see spirits, some can hear them and some can just sense them. Spirits can be deities, nature spirits, ancestors, your beloved dead, or other entities that witches might connect with through ritual, offerings, prayer, or other means. In some witchcraft traditions, spirits play a central role in magical practice. For instance, I am a medium who can hear and communicate with spirit. I work with my ancestors and a dear friend who has crossed the veil as my guides. I also work with my ancestors in my divination practice of throwing the bones. When doing spells, I often ask my ancestors, deities and guides for energy and assistance as well.

While these definitions may define soul and spirit in most pagan belief systems, it is important to note that Paganism and witchcraft encompass a large and diverse array of beliefs and interpretations depending on the particular tradition or belief system used.
Witchcraft is a broad and diverse community with many different traditions and beliefs as well. Therefore, individual witches may have their own unique interpretations of the concepts of "soul" and "spirit," and their beliefs may encompass a range of spiritual, religious and philosophical perspectives.

I am at one with the universal energy, harmonizing body, mind, and spirit.

Folklore

By Patsy Lafferty

To write about folklore, I first must ask the question, “What is folklore? Is it fable, superstition or can it be taken from true events or experiences of men? How old is folklore and has it any essential truths in it?

I found the story of a Sumerian King. His name is written throughout history, from the time he reigned, and is recorded as the years in the 26th century BCE. The evidence of his reign has been ever present from the records dated 2000 B.C. and again in 700 B.C. and rediscover in records of 200A.D. Where I have read on the time of 1849, as an archeologist Austin Henry Layard unfolded a library tucked deep beneath the earth 4000 years old.

So, what is folklore? It is a transcript of tales written. But also, it is stories to tell. It unveils the way of cultural civilization as it came into evolving, and such were one's experiences written or told by their elders. With the tradition of handing, it down to our descendants in the knowledge of learning.

Of course, in present days we educate in a way that is basic in text and science and our educational boundaries are endless and formal in study. However, I still raise my brow in our first tool of knowledge, our breeding from our cultures and the stories told from folklore.

I am so excited to open with the oldest story and culture recorded in its time. The history that surrounds this culture and its descriptive content and nature are the most eye opening of them in a search for evidence to validate biblical narratives. His findings far surpassed his intent. Its location was discovered during a dig in the ancient city of Nineveh located in Northern Iraq.

So, I am privileged to open some history. Describing the writings and sharing the story of our oldest recorded cultures. The findings by Layard are recorded of its history on the Mesopotamian people.

Within the city of Uruk was a very harsh king who was a demigod. Gilgamesh, he persecuted the kingdom and with his ruler ship he would crash wedding parties and partake in the wedding night with the bride. Interrupting its tradition of her groom's rightful place of honor beside her. This behavior continued and was brought to the attention by Gilgamesh father to his mother, the goddess Ninza, king Gilgamesh and how he saddened him by his behavior, the demigod's father is believed to have been a high priest of magick and his mother a goddess.

Both having concerns in the behavior of their son decided on a way to end his behavior. The goddess created out of fresh clay and spit, an ally to teach her son a lesson. His name became Enkidu. And this is how Enkidu would forever change King Gilgamesh of his foul treatment of the peoples in the kingdom of Uruk. Enkidu lived outside of the kingdom until one day the priestess goddess Ishtar seduced Enkidu, and this caused the wildlife to reject him. This forced Enkidu to find a solution that could retain his relationship within the wilds. So, Enkidu set out to meet King Gilgamesh and ask for his help with the matter.

Upon entering the kingdom, he heard of the stories and decided instead to stop Gilgamesh from further harshness towards the people of Uruk. As the King was about to enter the bride’s bedroom Enkidu stepped in and with arguments a loud fighting match did stir. Both having almost equal in strength it was almost impossible to guess the outcome. By a hair’s length Gilgamesh won but Enkidu gave himself to ask forgiveness. This honor of the victory surprised Gilgamesh and he accepted his request for forgiveness. In this moment stirred an unbreakable bond between Gilgamesh and Enkidu. So as the friendship strengthened, they both ventured further to challenge themselves in other favors. And a burning desire within Enkidu prompts him to speak about it with Gilgamesh.

It happens that deep in the wilds lay the forbidden forests of Cedar. The forest was enchanted by a protector that was fiercer and stronger than any. With the creature abound they both set to track down Humbaba, this creature with 1000 faces. They caught him off guard and wrestled the creature down until Humbaba begged them for mercy. As Gilgamesh slammed the final blow Humbaba cursed them.

When re-entering the kingdom, the goddess Ishtar caught sight of Gilgamesh pursuing him as a romantic interest. Gilgamesh refused her. So, for that reason, she unleashed the bull of heaven upon Uruk.

The story goes further to explain the tales with visionary description and with harrowing feats of endurance and compassion that were all a mix of deep emotions and triumphs. Description of gemstone trees and scorpion people. As Gilgamesh traveled until he reached the end of the world.

So as the story continues Gilgamesh slays the bull of heaven and in doing so angers the gods. Enkidu becomes judged and so he is killed. Gilgamesh becomes saddened in grief and concerns for he envisions the fate of death. Enkidu enters the underworld of Mesopotamian where souls become dust and suck rocks for drink. Gilgamesh sets out to obtain immortality and of course the need to save his friend from that fate.

In traveling he reaches the end of the world, and it is there he discovers a bar. Inside the bar was a goddess attending the bar named Siduri, who tried to discourage Gilgamesh from going further but Gilgamesh refused. So, she told him to travel to the waters of death and get the ferry to travel across it. There he met the immortal man Utnapishtim, who said I cannot give you immortality but maybe if you do not go to sleep for seven days the gods may grant it. Yet Gilgamesh, determined not to sleep, did exactly the opposite. Feeling defeated Gilgamesh started to leave, and the old man spoke of a flower of youth, at the bottom of the waters of death.

So, Gilgamesh set out to obtain it. Tying stones to his feet he jumped into the ocean. He cuts the flower loose from its vines, he quickly cuts the ropes from his feet, jumps into the boat and with the flower he reaches the shore. On his travels back home, a snake eats it and ends all chances Gilgamesh had to immorality. Still reaching home Gilgamesh decides to make peace with his loss and instead vows to reign in the kingdom with kindness.

As closing reminders to catch a bar in 26 BCE right on the road to the end of the world somewhere past seven mountains beyond Uruk. I got to really prepare, right! I am also amazed that in the years of Uruk and all that entails still had the forethought and a mindset to preserve their truths and evidence for mankind's perseverance.

I am a neopagan maiden mother. I live on the bayou side of lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana. I am beginning a career in writing. I am 65 years old, and I love natural living and folklore. I was raised in the hem.

Thank you for being a part of my journey

Merry meet, merry part

Blessed be

Growing up in a magical household by Michael Meade

I grew up in a very magical house. My parents were both trained in many magical ways, but I never really realized it until I started to study what being magical really was. Many of the practices which were common in our lives were rooted in ancient practices. For instance, my mom kept a broom on our front porch next to the door. It was always set with the handle up and the broom part down. I remember her telling me that it was like a welcome mat. It meant that people were invited to visit. It was something that she learned from her mother (who lived with us) who learned it from her mother, etc.

Years later, in my studies I found that it was a practice in ancient villages before structures had doors to indicate the status in the house by placing the broom. If the broom wasn't there, cleaning was going on and you should not visit. If the broom was placed handle up, it meant that cleaning was done, and you were welcome. If it should be that the handle was down, it meant that something (usually some private entertainment) was going on and you should come back later. She knew all that, but I'm not sure she knew where it came from.

Anyway, they never said that they were magical, they never talked of powers or gifts or the craft. They never called themselves witches or anything special, it was all just normal for them. I learned from them, but they never said "today we are going to teach you how to use your intuition" or anything like that. It was just the same way you might learn about celebrating a holiday. It's just a part of your life.

I learned to use intuition from my father. Interestingly, it was done using cards. The family frequently sat down in the evening for a game of hearts. It's a card game where someone leads with a card and the others play on it with the same suit, much like the early game of Tarot. When we were playing, my dad always had his card out ready to play before the lead card was played. He never suggested that I do it, but I decided to try to do the same thing.

When the lead player was still deciding what card to play, he took his card out, and I took out one myself. I caught him smiling at me when I tried, but he never said a word. In the beginning, I frequently had to put my card back in my hand and choose a different one, but he didn't. Again, I would get the smile, but that was the only encouragement to keep trying that he ever gave me. After a while I learned to give in to my intuition and not try to think it through, and I got better and soon was successful almost all the time! I could tell he was proud of me. I learned acceptance.

Dad also taught me the wonder of meditation. He always seemed to have a close association with trees and plants. We often could be found in a forest or meadow or farm field, just sitting. I was bored, of course (youth!) but he would just tell me to breathe deeply and listen to the plants. I didn't get it right away, but he was patient. Eventually I learned to *hear silence* and enjoy it. I learned that there was a language of the wind in the trees, and gained an appreciation for how they were a part of us. I learned to use that to consider my own thoughts and plans or to make decisions. I still do that, turning inside myself when considering some choice I need to make. It drives my wife crazy!

It was my mom who taught me to be empathic. It was her strength, and it was common for her to take actions to help someone based on the feelings she got from them. She didn't say so, she just did it. Without knowing that she was training me, I followed her lead in certain situations, and just picked up on what we were doing.

She never said to anyone "I'm sensing…" or "I am feeling…" but instead just quietly took the appropriate action. Eventually, I started doing the same. At first, I was uncertain, and I would ask "are you feeling…?" when approaching someone. I tended to doubt myself, and wanted some verification that I was really reading the situation correctly. By the time I was out of high school I had gained much more confidence, and following her lead, I just acted rather than checking first. Looking back on it, I realized that my mother praised me when I did it, even when she hadn't been there to see it. She just knew.

I never questioned these events. Why should I? It was just a part of our life. We never talked about it as if it was something special. We never called ourselves witches, or shamans or anything like that. We were just us. I still don't feel like I need any kind of title to do what I do. While some people like to say that I am performing magical deeds, it's not magical for me at all. It's just me.

I am extremely grateful that I grew up in such a household. I know many people who feel certain gifts starting up inside them but get shut down by hardened family or friends. People doubt their gifts because they were taught that they weren't real. Some even got punished for considering it.

Most of my family trees are made up of farmers. Remembering the stories of my grandmother, I can see how ancient traditions became folk traditions that carried forward. I am proud of that history, and proud that I grew up in such a magical family.

Mike and his wife Elaine own a Metaphysical Store in Mount Holly, NJ where they have gemstones, herbs and altar tools plus much more. They also do card readings and various modalities of healing.

Blind Madness or Divine Purpose

By: Nicole M. Grisham | Nyx Waabanong Aanang Ikwe | CEO of Nyx of the Light Llc

I am a Healer and Shamanic psychic/medium. Over the last few years, I have come to realize that there is a correlation between mental illness and bad eyesight and the abilities we have.

This profound realization came to me when I did my first Psychic/Medium/Magick development class. Once everyone was seated and ready for class, it occurred to me that almost everyone had glasses. There were a couple whom did not and I asked them if they had vision problems and indeed they were wearing contacts. Next I made the deduction through talking with everyone, that all of us had struggled with mental illness. There were approximately 13 people and every person there struggled with both of these things. In my time of asking around, I have yet to come across a person with strong spiritual abilities that doesn't struggle with one or both of them.

So the question is why, right? Why are we inflicted with these problems? Through intuitivly divined messages, it became clear to me why we struggle with these things. The Oracles, especially of Delphi, through the ages have often times been mostly or completely blind. One of the major signs you are being called to Shamanism is that you suffer from mental illness.

A Goddess divined message came to me and as I focused and this is what was said.

"You are blinded to better see the spiritual realm. You are blinded to see past what is in front of you, what things appear to be, and delve deeper within. You are mentally ill because you are meant to help and to lead. You have been through it. You are this way to help and guide others. Where would you be if you hadn't learned the lessons that left you standing here in strength and courage today? Who else could be forged and tempered in this way to understand the world around you? Would you believe in the spiritual realm if your life had been normal all along? Indeed, not. You are this way on purpose for your divine purpose. It is give and it is take. You struggle within the physical realm because you are gifted and needed just as you are in the spiritual realm."

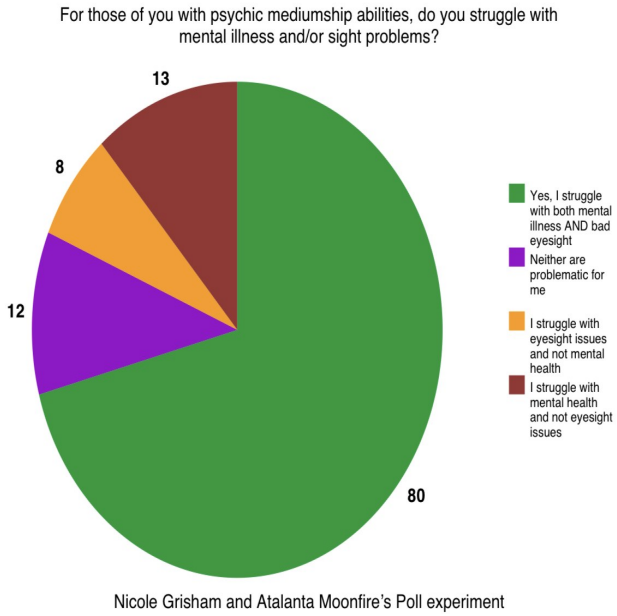
The next question is how can we turn these things into tools to help other people? That answer was forming within me all my life, an lesson awaiting. I've come to use it in my journey and this is what I have chosen to do with it. I live my life showing people the way out of the darkness and lighting the way and teaching people to utilize their abilities. Use that bad eyesight to better focus on the spiritual realm. Use that dissociation to focus in on messages from the other world. Use that mental illness to help guide people through their difficult times. Turn what you once thought to be a downfall into a blessing!

The idea that you are perfectly imperfect just as you are on purpose for good reason, is groundbreaking for your sense of purpose and self worth. These things are not a mistake but, part of your gift. I hope that this can show you that you aren't alone.

To better assist in proving my correlation, I decided to conduct a study, a poll of percentages, to see how much this correlates. I predicted my hypothesis to be true and factual. I conducted my own poll on my business page that I also shared on my personal page asking if people with spiritual abilities struggle with mental health, eye problems, both or neither. Atalanta Moonfire, whom worked with me on this experiment, also posted similarly. We have combined both of our results into one poll for this experiment. The results of our experiment will be documented below. You can see here that my hypothesis proved resoundingly correct. I wish you to blessed be and I hope you enjoyed this article.

Yours in Healing,

Nicole Grisham; CEO/Owner of Nyx of the Light LLC



Nicole Grisham and Atalanta Moonfire's Poll experiment

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