MEZLIM

Practical Magick for Today!

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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE MAGICKAL AND THE MUNDANE

MEZLIM

Practical Magick for Today!

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A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Well. Here it is. The new look for Mezlim! What do you think?

While we wanted to maintain the high caliber of our content, we are trying to make our "form" more accessible. You might notice the added width (.5 inches extra from side to side) and the "lower" price ($5.95), but all in all, the magazine is much the same.

"Just what does the word Mezlim mean, anyway?"

I've been asked that question a lot, and I'm sure there are many others who just wonder in silence. It comes from the Aramaic version of the Hebrew word *Mazel* (as in *Mazel tof!*). It means, literally, the influence of the divine, or the sparks emanating from Kether, the Crown of the Tree of Life.

So, in our way, we are attempting to bring a few "sparks of the divine" into the world.

Blessings in the New Year!

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N'Chi and **MEZLIM** subscribe to the premise that we are entering a new aeon - a new age - which is bringing and will continue to bring many changes in the way we see ourselves and the world around us. We are dedicated to presenting information, views, images and ideas concerned with our transition into this new world which we are creating. Our editorial policy is androgynous, egalitarian and eclectic, supporting all growth oriented, magickal movements; celebrating the spirituality of the Living Earth!

The views expressed in the articles, reviews, and other contributions published in **MEZLIM** are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editors and publisher. **MEZLIM** does not endorse or guarantee any service or product offered in any advertisement or article. The publisher and editors make every effort to ensure the accuracy of all information published, but cannot be held liable for errors, changes, or omissions.

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Full page - $370, half page - $210, quarter page - $100, eighth page - $60. Ask about special discounts for occult suppliers. All advertising for the next issue (Beltane, 1994) is due by March 1, 1994.

Writer's guidelines: All contributions should be letter quality type (high quality pin printing is also acceptable) and submitted on 8½ x 11 paper. Submissions should be on pertinent topics with a length of from 500 to 4500 words. Authors should include full contact information and SASE.

Editor's Note: Magickal spellings, QBL equations and all other specifics of the manuscripts in **MEZLIM** have been maintained exactly as presented in the original text submitted for publication so as to ensure the accuracy of the transmission as detailed herein.

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MEZLIM

CONTENTS

IMBOLC 1994
Volume V:1

0
Editor's Forum
Kenneth Deigh

1
Magick in Everyday Life
Donald Michael Kraig

4
"Hast thou ever cast a Spell?"
Sam Webster

6
Bridging the What?
Tath Zal

9
Becoming Magick
Jaq D. Hawkins

12
Worlds of Earth Worlds of Spirit
Louis Martinie

14
The Root and the Flower
Paul Joseph Rovelli

15
Living with Mundanes
Wilde Cristian

18
The Bleeding Mountain
Mishlen

19
Merge
KIA

20
The Magick and the Mundane
Massimo Mantovani

22
Living in the Twin Lands
Rev. Tamara Siuda-Legan

24
The Goddess and Growth
Sherry O'Leary

26
Magick, Mysticism, and Bacon's American Dream
Mark Stavish, M.A.

28
P.S. to "Satanic Panic"
Donald Michael Kraig

29
The Solitary Pagan in the Mundane World
Jennifer Toone

31
CyberMagick
Julian Vayne

33
Tools of Tibetan Tantra
Taradas Rinpoche

35
Neophyte's Niche
Donna Stanford-Blake

39
A Tale for the Darkest Night
Steven W. Posch

42
Forests of the Dead Part 1
MadDog

48
"Otz Chaim"
Richard L. Kelly

49
Letters

51
Reviews

53
Voice of the Sheya
Kenneth Deigh

EDITOR'S FORUM

BRIDGING THE GAP

One of the first bits of real wisdom I ever learned was to pay attention - to everything! I'm still working on it, but the process has taught me a good deal. One of the things it has revealed to me is that there is no such thing as a separation between the Magickal world and the mundane. It has taught me that these are just two different names for the same thing. Yet the development of a certain degree of appreciation of this apparent duality seems to be a necessary part of our daily lives. Man and woman, for example, are two different names for human beings. The terms magickal and mundane imply a similar gap.

However, if there is a gap in the continuum of existence, the gap is - as the Zen koan goes - all in your head.

The bottom line is that existence itself is a miracle – and anything that arises from the ground of existence is thus founded upon the miraculous as well. It is inescapable, and yet we manage to escape, on a regular basis. We escape from awareness into denial, repression, ignorance and decay - and eventually into death; only to be renewed again until the day when we can finally gaze into the eyes of God/dess without flinching.

The presence of the divine is not something we can shut away in Temples, churches and sanctuaries. It is not something which belongs only to the beauty of nature. It is everywhere. It permeates everything with the miracle of Being.

How rarely we take the time to really SEE the world around us. Even the most simple objects, the most apparently "mundane" individuals, are, in truth, divine.

This means that YOU are divine. Being God/dess is not just a good idea that we've come up with in this "new age". It is what we are all about.

This is what Magick teaches us: That we are headed towards something wonderful; some great unknown adventure, which we can only call LIFE!

With this concept fresh in your mind, stop for a moment and SEE the world around you. Grasp the sanctity of every molecule, every quantum particle, every person and every star. Close the "gap" for a moment and see what happens!

Be God/dess!

Kenneth Deigh
Managing Editor

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MAGICK IN EVERYDAY LIFE

by Donald Michael Kraig

Some writers may consider the topic of this issue of *Mezlim*, "Bridging the Gap Between Magick and the Mundane," to be about how to help mundanes become more aware of the magical world view (and, perhaps, how to make those with a magical world view more aware of the thinking patterns of the mundanes!). While this is indeed a necessary topic to look at, I find that bridging the gap *within ourselves* is far more interesting. I have written about the subject as it relates to other topics, but in this article I have tried to focus on just this point.

WHAT IS MAGICK?

Several years ago I was a guest on a radio talk show in Minnesota. The lady who ran the show (she happened to be the ex-wife of the governor of that state) asked me to do some magic. She said that she wouldn't believe in magic until I whipped up some spell and produced some instantaneous physical result in the sound booth.

I went through the usual explanations: Her understanding of magick was based on fictional books and movies, not on the reality; real magick was the art and science of causing change blah-blah-blah; the result of real magick occurs through natural means blah-blah-blah; etc., etc., etc. When I finished what I thought was a brief but brilliant explanation, her response, to my surprise, was, "Well, that's all well and good, but I won't believe in magic until you do something like make the door open by itself or make the ashtray fly into the air." Her mind was so made up as to what magic is that I couldn't begin to make her understand the nature of real magick.

This is not a situation limited to the world of mundanes. Many people believe that the only time magick exists in their lives is when they are doing rituals. *The performance of ritual, however, is not magick!* Rather, it is merely the physical representation of a magical mind-set.

Unless a person believes or hopes that magick works, there is no reason for that person to perform a ritual. That is why I have written many times that "Magick is not something you do. Magick is something you are." I realize, of course, that there are many people who focus on ritual and the results of the rituals as being "magic." These people usually fall from the path of becoming a magus long before they develop the knowledge, talents and desires to be a magician. For them it was just a fad.

Being a magician requires the adoption of a variety of beliefs which vary from magical system to magical system. However, one thing they have in common is the understanding that there is more to this world than what we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, taste with our tongues or touch with our skin. To most people reading this, the notion of such a non-physical, magical world is obvious. Many people who live strictly mundane lives do not believe this. Even Freud's description of the unconscious was met with disbelief in many quarters.

Therefore, one thing which sets apart the magician—or person on the path to becoming a magician—from a person who lives strictly on the level of the mundane is the acknowledgement and study of the non-physical universe. The training to become a magician (rather than a person who just does rituals) must incorporate this acknowledgement and study into his or her life.

MAGICAL GROUPS AND SYSTEMS

Each system of magick has its own method of accomplishing this goal. Some use a mental method of intense study and forms of meditation. Others require physically leaving the mundane world in what may be called "getting back to nature" or "going on a magical retreat."

While I cannot speak for all ceremonial magick traditions, many of them involve physical action (ritual), study and meditation. Combined, these techniques train a person to become magick, to be a magician living in a mundane world.

One of the best-known systems of such preparation is that of the Golden Dawn. As soon as a person is initiated, he or she is given three tasks: 1) The daily performance of the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP); 2) The study of the "Knowledge Lectures"; and 3) A meditation (or contemplation) of a particular concept. For the beginning neophyte, that concept is "the point," i.e., the mathematical concept of location without width, height or depth, usually indicated on paper by a dot. Two points demarcate a line.

During the Golden Dawn training, the daily ritual practice stays the same while the information studied and the concepts meditated upon change. It is only when the trained member is initiated into the inner order, the *R.R. et A.C.*, that he or she learns the truth: The true goal of all this work is to become "more than human!" In other words, the Golden Dawn merely *prepares* a person to leave the world of the mundane and become a magician.

The true goal of all this work is to become "more than human!"

Most readers will be aware that there are several groups claiming to be "the" Golden Dawn. I know of one group which can rightfully claim that title. The others run the gamut. Some are dedicated people who, while having no physical links to the original order (whatever that may or may not be worth), are dedicated students of the system. Some are personality cults wherein the leader changes (or approves of changes to) rituals and information in order to "correct, improve or update" it. While some of the changes may be good, most such changes tend to be worthless. And finally, there are even some who cynically use the fame of the name of the Golden Dawn to work the black magic of separating money from fools and gaining power over them, no matter how many lives they disrupt or ruin. It is because of this wide variety in the quality of groups that, as a general rule, I do not make recommendations as to which group people should attach themselves to.

On the other hand, each legitimate magical group has an *egregore*—a group mind or group spirit. Whether or not you become part of a physical group, you can link up with that *egregore* or "tap into the magical current" of the group. You can devise your own system of training and development.

MAGICAL TRAINING

If you are a member of a magical group, that group should give you a system of training which they oversee. If you are a solitary, there are many books which describe magical systems. Here is a guideline for the beginner:

1) PERFORM RITUALS EVERY DAY. Aleister Crowley advised that a student should "forget not your adorations." (By this he meant the solar adorations of *Liber Resh vel Helios* published in numerous places.) It is my experience that the repetition of the same ritual or set of rituals works better than performing new or ad-lib rituals all the time. The repetition helps set your mind in tune with the cosmos and the non-physical world. It is also my experience that an ideal time to perform these rituals as a basis for magical training is upon arising and before going to sleep.

Numerous appropriate rituals are available. If you need a place to start, I suggest a person begin by performing the solar adorations at the appropriate times and the LBRP when you arise and before you go to sleep.

Stick with this pattern for a period of at least six months. Give it a chance. If you are working with a different system, give the rituals of that system a chance. Be diligent. When you perform the rituals, make sure that they are not perfunctory. "Inflame yourself with prayer."

2) STUDY EVERY DAY. When a person is beginning on the path, especially if he or she is not training with a group, this can be confusing. There is a plethora of

books and "teachers" on the market, many of whom disagree with one another. My suggestion is to pick a system and study just the teachings of that system for at least six months. Assuming that the system is valid, you will gain an understanding of the occult sciences (from the perspective of that system) which can then be used to understand other systems.

If you do not have such a system to follow, I advise that you create a "magical theory spreadsheet." You can do this on computer, in a book or on paper hanging from the wall.

Along the top will go the names of magical subjects. Down the left margin will go systems/authors. To use it, when you come upon a subject, say reincarnation, use it for a heading at the top. Then, each time you come up with a reference on the subject, write the source (author or system) along the left and briefly describe the theory as stated on the spreadsheet where the subject and source intersect. As new topics come up, list them at the top and fill out your spreadsheet. This could be an ongoing project for years to come.

After several months of work, you will find that certain authors or systems present explanations of subjects that "ring true." It is these authors/systems which you will want to investigate in greater detail. More importantly, this study and work will start your mind functioning in a magical vein.

There are many other ways to bring your mind to being magical all the time. Try to figure out the percentage of magical elements (Air, Earth, Fire and Water) in any object. If you are not familiar with the idea of the elements, there are many books which describe them. Alternatively, you might wish to figure out which Tarot card could represent a person; which Sephira on the Tree of Life is indicated by the color of people's clothes, the sky, the flowers on a tree, etc. All of these things help you to develop a magical mind-set.

3) MEDITATE DAILY. There are many things which are called "meditation," but most are merely relaxation or contemplation. While these are good in themselves, they are not really meditation. Find a good system of meditation and use it.

BECOMING MAGICK

With practices such as those described above, your life will change. Things will go your way. Your needs will be fulfilled almost before you realize that they are needs.

There may not be a sign, and I cannot put a time limit on when it will occur, but with practice, your life as a magician will meld with your mundane life. You no longer do magick, you are magick.

Recently, I had to deal finally with some karmic ties which go back for over a decade in this life and, I am sure, for many lifetimes. What seemed to go well at the beginning quickly fell to ashes. I also realized that, as part of my karmic lessons in this lifetime, I had to see events through to the bitter end.

Daily, I performed my rituals, I meditated and I studied. I made time to work on a novel that was filled with magicians and magical thought. The person with whom I had the ties grew in anger as I accomplished my goals and kept a positive outlook. I would frequently be amazed as the person ended up in self-contradiction, and my look of amusement frustrated the person further. The person threatened to "throw me out on the street, something a lot of [unnamed] people [people whom I had never even met] would like to see."

I chose when I would leave. Together we selected the time and date. I did exactly that. (Change in conformity with will.) The result of my magick was that I found a place to live exactly where I wanted to, as well as obtaining the job I wanted at the location I wanted.

In short, I learned my karmic lesson and went on with my magick to achieve my goals at this time. I have blended my magical world and my mundane world. This is not something limited to high-grade adepti who have been studying for 70 years. Rather, it is a way of life which can be achieved by an average person, such as myself, who has made magick a way of life. Crowley believed that magick should be for everyone. I completely agree.

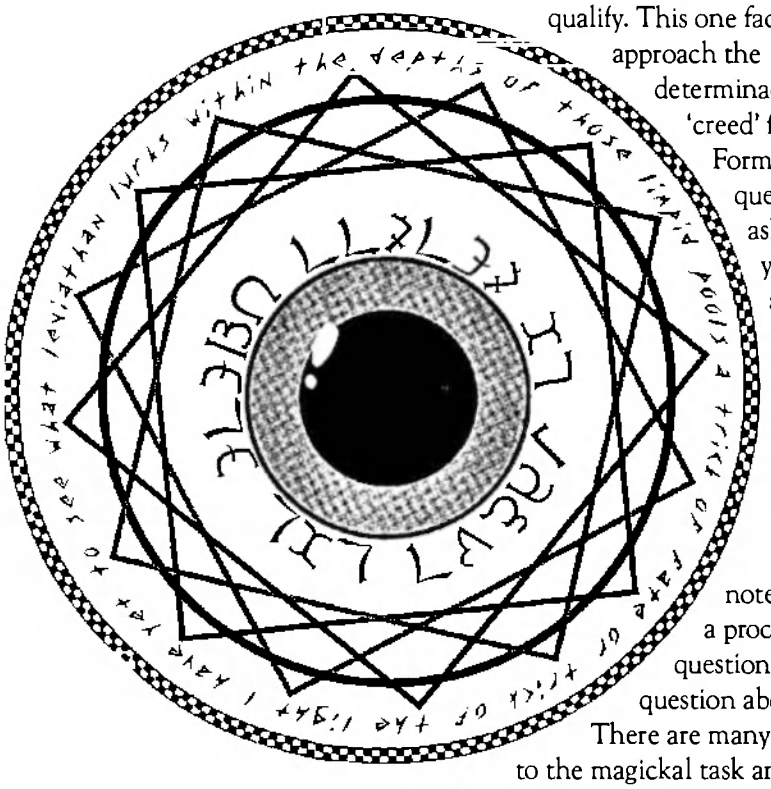
See page 28 for a postscript to Don Michael Kraig's article "Satanic Panic in America", which appeared in a two part series in the last two issues of Mezlim.

"Hast thou ever cast a Spell?"

Trying the border between the magickal and the mundane

by Sam Webster

The very question of magickal vs. mundane that is the focus of this issue boggled me. Since I make no separation between the two, I felt I would have nothing to say. Yet it struck me, on pondering the matter, that there is a boundary between those who I would call magickal or Pagan and those who in my mind would not qualify. This one factor may approach the determinacy of a 'creed' for our folk. Formulated as a question it asks: "Have you ever cast a Spell?"



Graphic by Otter Thompson

Please note that this is a process question and not a question about belief. There are many approaches to the magickal task and many theories about how magick works. None of them are directly relevant here. What this question asks is if the person has performed a magickal action, here referred to in the generic sense by the term 'spell'. To define this, I mean that a magickal action is an act in which one has expended effort towards the accomplishment of some change by means not acknowledged by science. In other words, one seeks to effect change by symbolic means or through energy expended at a distance (i.e., without direct contact), both of which efficacy science denies.

This act can be an elaborate, full scale magickal ceremony with all the bells and smells, enough props and tools to choke a horse and a cast of thousands or as simple as wearing one's lucky shirt on the day of a school test or job interview. In either case one is seeking to effect change through indirect or irrational means, from the point of view of inductive science. (For the moment I am leaving aside any of the more sophisticated theories of science and magick that reconcile the successful child with its scorned parent.) What is important here is that for the moment of the 'spell casting' one has embodied in action the magickal world view, the view that we can do magick.

This for me is the bottom line about Pagans and Magick users. If you have ever worked magick, ever cast a spell, then you are in the least a magick user (as there are Christian Magick users) and quite possibly a Pagan, if you are outside the pale of Christianity. If you have never performed this act then you cannot claim to be other than mundane.

A mundane for me is someone who does not know that they are effecting the word through their innate magick. They do not realize just how much of their world is created by their thoughts and attitudes, never mind the subtle effects of their wills. Most mundanes do not even take full responsibility for the consequences of their more worldly actions. (To this end Thelemites practice sovereignty.)

Some argue (the Tibetans for instance) that the practice of magick is to demonstrate to us that the world is not as rigid as we may think, that we have a hand in its creation. That it has an apparitional

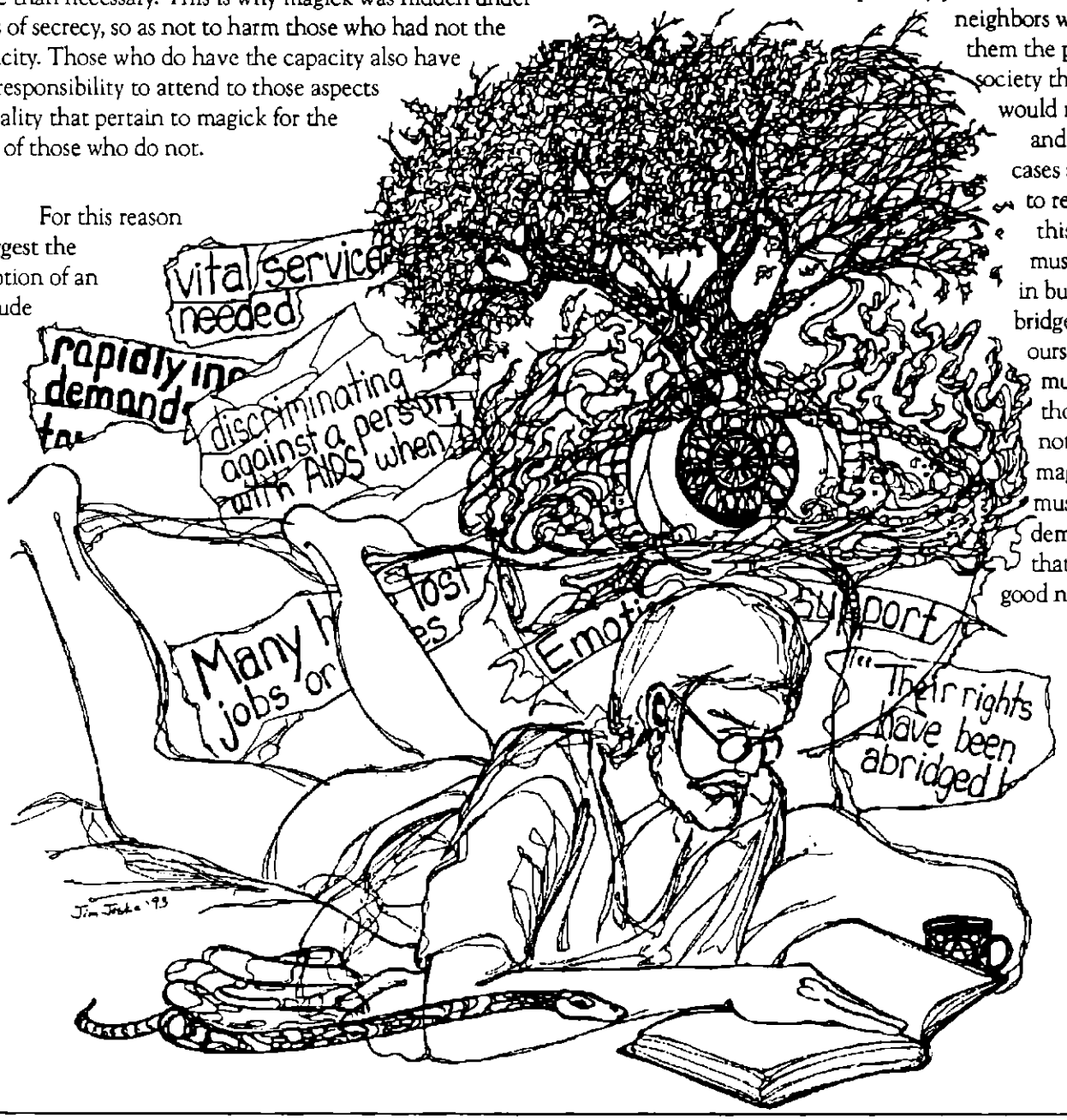
character which appears solid and enduring until one engages in magick and discovers that so much of it is constructed by ourselves. Perhaps this is frightening to mundanes. It may be terrifying to some folk that the world is not as solid and as permanent as they are taught. For this we need to have compassion.

It is a matter of capacity and inclination to examine the world closely. Some are not up to the task, at their present level of strength. They generally have the opportunity to acquire the capacity necessary, but it is not always their time to do so. For this reason we must be gentle with them.

We must not frighten them with our magick, any more than necessary. This is why magick was hidden under veils of secrecy, so as not to harm those who had not the capacity. Those who do have the capacity also have the responsibility to attend to those aspects of reality that pertain to magick for the sake of those who do not.

For this reason I suggest the adoption of an attitude towards the mundane presented by Magnus McBride: The neighbor. The neighbor is a person who is in our sphere of affect (they affect us, we affect them) who does not live in our 'house', that is, share our world view. We can only assume that their way of living in the world is adequate for their needs, and they should be left to pursue their purposes. Similarly, I feel we should be treated in a similar manner.

There remains but one unresolved issue here. If we were Hindu, Jew or Gypsy, a foreigner living among another people with different customs, values and religion, we would be ignorable by the larger culture as merely 'other'. Our 'otherness' or alienness would make our way have little to no bearing on the people who we live among. However, we are in fact an integral part of the western culture, if only its shadow side. When we are publicly present to our Christian neighbors we show to them the parts of our society that they would rather ignore and in some cases actively seek to repress. For this reason we must take care in building bridges between ourselves and mundanes, those who do not practice magick. We must demonstrate that we are good neighbors.

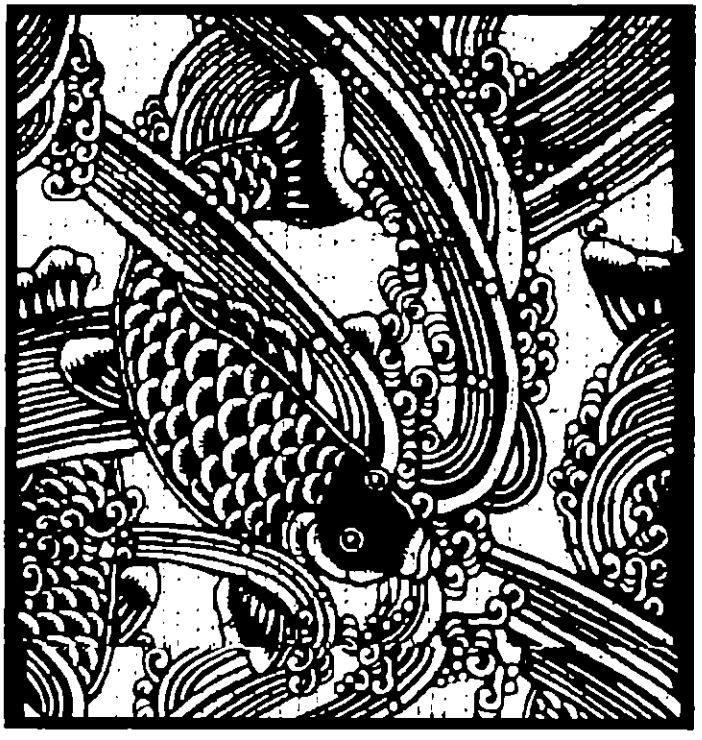


BRIDGING THE WHAT?

by Tath Zal

I'd like to discuss this idea of "Bridging the Gap: Bringing Together the Magickal and the Mundane". I've heard a lot of discussions about this concept over the last few years—generally while in attendance at various pagan activities—but I believe the word "gap" is misleading. My dictionary defines it as "a break or opening; an empty space; a wide divergence or difference". As a purely theoretical concept, this works well with the idea that follows—"bringing together" that which is separated by this break or wide difference. The problem is that I do not believe that they are separated—except in our minds and our perceptions.

Graphic from Japanese paper wall hanging.



Allow me to digress briefly. I was raised in a fundamentalist household wherein I was taught, amongst other things, that "God's handiwork was everywhere." Going to church, praying or engaging in other specifically sacred activities—these were merely extensions of living a continuously sacred life. The differences between the work place and the church, for the born-again Christian that I had been taught to be, were measured in a matter of degrees on the "sacred temperature control", rather than as a gap between widely different realities. A gap did exist between the sacred and the profane, that is to say, between good and evil, but none of "God's handiwork" was evil and, therefore, not separate.

After many years, I've found my way into the pagan/magickal community. Much of my early programming has been replaced with what I believe to be a healthier, more rational view of the world, and that which lies beyond/outside it. My experience of this community, however, does not include the practice of labeling the world as "Good" or "Evil", "of God" or "of Satan". In general, pagans seem to be a more convivial bunch, more accepting of the world and all that is within it, rather than grimly bent upon labeling and judging all those with whom they come in contact. So, if we, as pagans and other magickally aware folk, truly are not into dichotomizing the world, where did this gap come from?

I can't claim to know the answer, but I do have what I believe to be is a good guess—or at least a proposition that is designed to make you think about it a little further. We live in a Judeo-Christian based culture. Most of us were raised with its teachings, at least to some degree. One of the basic precepts of our culture is that the world is split into two sectors—Good and Evil. We don't like to think about evil—too strong a concept—so most people talk about it in terms of Good and Bad.

We attach these labels to everything: Behavior in children—"Good girl"—instead of "Thank you, honey, that made Mommy very happy"; performance at work—"I got a bad review"—instead of "I've made some mistakes this year"; and, even weather—"That was a bad storm"—instead of "All that rain really made driving home hazardous." None of these things are really "Good" or

"Bad", yet we unconsciously judge them through our use of language, language shaped by our cultural programming. When, as pagans, we divide the world into two spheres—that which we label "magickal" and that which we label "mundane", I believe that we are acting out of programmed behavior; that we have not yet thrown off the thinking patterns programmed into us by our cultural experience.

There is a basis for my belief, of course, and that is my own personal experience. While I found the pagan community much later in life than many others, what I found was in many ways similar to the life lessons that I had already learned. During my first year in the pagan community (only about 4 years ago), many "seasoned" individuals spoke to me about my "obvious" magickal talents. While flattering, it was also disconcerting—what were they talking about? I was a neophyte of the lowest scale, and an old one, at that.

As I continued my studies with magick and expanded my experience of the pagan community, I discovered that many of the "greater mysteries" were things that I already knew and used in my life. For example, "thinking/perception creates reality". Spend all your energy worrying about losing your job, and your job performance will suffer—which, in turn, will ensure that the next round of lay-offs includes you. Move about your world in fear of victimization, and you will be victimized. Believe that people are inherently honest, and you will be told the truth more often.

...the basic conclusion which I have reached is that "Magick Works!" Anywhere, anytime—magick works.

Another "mystery" that I had already discovered was the idea that "I happen to the world, the world doesn't happen to me"; that I control my reality, and my world revolves around my choices. I live my life proactively, not reactively, and therefore my process is my own. This outlook has made me much happier, much more empowered in my daily living, and has resulted in a fairly high degree of personal success. All this before I ever "discovered" magick!

A third "mystery" was the importance of "process", the constant change of growth, of becoming more of who I am, and of realizing more of my own potential. I have always wanted to learn more, experience more, contribute more. I have never been satisfied to sit back, to stop at any given point in my process and ossify. No wonder those "seasoned" individuals thought I was so magickal! I was already doing many of the same things as part of my regular life that they were doing as part of their magickal practice.

But, that's actually my point. I was doing these things as part of my regular, that is to say "mundane" life. I knew nothing about "magick" or the "magickal" community. By pagan standards I was hopelessly mundane—a career in Corporate America, my own house, mutual funds, a tax consulting practice, a marginal Church goer (my fundamentalist beliefs had fallen on more temperate times) who was completely unaware of alternate spiritual realities; and yet, I was also magickal, actively practicing many of the magickal mysteries in my day to day life.

It's now four years after I discovered the pagan/magickal community, and my studies have expanded my knowledge and range of magickal practices. I continue to use my magickal work in my "mundane" existence. Most of the concepts are very applicable to Corporate America; and, I have continued to be very successful in that realm. I'm not talking about being "out" magickally. I'm talking about the fact that there is no gap in my world between magickal and mundane space. The entire world is magickal, and magickal teachings are applicable everywhere. You may have to change the terminology a bit, or modify or temporarily delete certain specifics of some practices, but the basic conclusion which I have reached is that "Magick Works!" Anywhere, anytime—magick works.

The world is magickal; I am magickal. I believe that these are basic truisms without reference to time, or to when I first awoke to this fact. You don't have to work at surreptitiously trying to sneak your magick into your workplace. It's already there. Your sacred places, your magickal ceremonies belong to a separate location, but not a separate internal experience of reality. As I noted earlier, the difference between work and "church" is only a matter of degrees on your "sacred thermostat", not of true gaps in your world.

So I challenge you to bridge the internal gap; bridge the gap in your own perceptions so that what is already there becomes evident. The sum of these two parts are definitely greater than the whole. So it is within yourself as well—to re-unify your dichotomized world view brings about the ability to be magick and to work magick whenever and wherever you have the will to do so. Great opportunities await! Have fun!

graphic by Anne Marie Garrison

BECOMING MAGIC

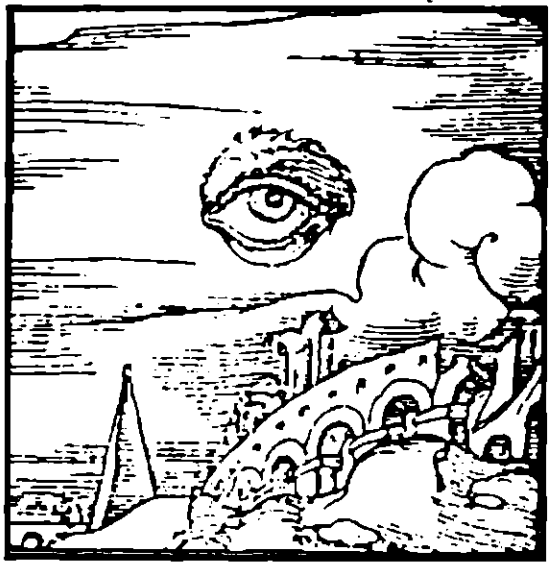
by Jaq D. Hawkins

One of my all time favorite quotes was made by Donald Michael Kraig: "Magick is not something you do. Magick is something you are." This simple phrase sums up a multitude of individual experiences, all of which come together to contribute to the person that each of us becomes. Whatever we call ourselves: 'witch', 'magician', etc., we share a common interest in magic as a part of our lives, and in making magic a part of our lives, we make ourselves a part of magic.

We are in control, we are shaping our lives, and we are able to perceive the magic in our world.

Yet there is more to each of us than our magic. There are many facets to each of our lives, and some of them take us into the mundane world. One thing that most of us accept with little questioning, is that we must all make a living one way or another. Not everyone can own an occult shop, write, publish a magazine or run seminars and organize festivals. A lot of magical people make their way in the world with mundane jobs. It can sometimes be difficult to reconcile our magical selves to the everyday routines and requirements for maintaining the lives that we create for ourselves. So, we look for a way to work magic into those daily routines.

The Eye of God 16th Century.



We start with the best of intentions, doing daily magical exercises of some kind to help us make magic a part of our regular lives. We carry on for a while, then begin to falter. Job pressures are taking over our conscious thoughts, or other people living in the house, parents, children, spouses or even roommates, make it difficult to concentrate, or even ridicule our beliefs. Soon the twenty minute meditation or daily tarot reading which seemed like so little to commit oneself to has been neglected repeatedly, and we are caught up in the mundane world again. The magic is all but forgotten until time for the next ritual or when we come across the book on magic which we had meant to finish reading.

What we may not realize, is that with each bit of reading, each ritual, each well intentioned daily exercise which we keep or not, we are becoming magic. Becoming magic isn't something which happens during an initiation or a particular flash of insight, although these things certainly contribute to the collective experiences which cause us to become magic.

From an early age, we make decisions about our interests which, over time, become the basis for the make-up of our personalities. By the time we are old enough to choose a career, or even what classes we will choose in higher education if we choose that road, most of us reading this magazine will have chosen a path which includes some form of magic. There are many paths to magic, but once it has become a part of one's life, it is likely to remain so to one extent or another.

We could speculate extensively on 'why' we choose to make magic a part of our lives, but for now let's speculate on 'how'. How did each of us reach a decision in our lives that we would make some form of magic a part of it, and in what way has it actually made a difference to us, or affected our daily lives? More pointedly, how does magic BECOME a part of our daily lives?

How does this happen? I have learned from speaking to people from a variety of magical paths, that most of us come to magic for one of four basic reasons: 1) A lust for power, which with knowledge will most often lead to a more spiritual outlook; 2) A recognition of odd things happening in our lives which we must find a way to explain or control; 3) A family history of magical interest which is passed down to us; or 4) A basic curiosity after hearing of some form of occultism, which leads to further study.

The eyes of dead ancestors. 16th Century.

Next we learn. Perhaps through experience, even trial and error. More often through reading or lessons passed from another. So often we find ourselves trying to follow someone else's views of how to learn about magic. Those of us who have spent time in large cities will probably find ourselves going to the library and reading Crowley and Butler, perhaps even simultaneously, or perhaps Waite, Fortune, or Farrar. Then we try to keep up Butler's visualization exercises while trying to work out what Crowley is going on about, and sooner or later we find our interest is following a particular direction, such as Wicca or Ceremonial Magic, which leads to further study in the chosen direction and sometimes into a daily routine which eventually leads to boredom or distraction for the sake of mundane daily survival. We have come full circle. There may be a few steadfast souls who have given themselves a daily magical routine in the early stages and carried it on through a large portion of their lives, but I haven't met them.

However, all this time, something has been happening to us. The bits and pieces of information we collect from our study and experience begin to take effect. Our perceptions of the world around us begin to change in subtle ways. The urban rush hour traffic begins to fall into a perceivable pattern; the rural habits of neighbors we have had for years and even decades suddenly begin to make sense, and the connection with the changing seasons to local superstitions begins to fall into place. Odd coincidences begin to happen, not just occasionally but quite often. We don't yet understand why, but we see that it is happening. We are in control, we are shaping our lives, and we are able to perceive the magic in our world.

Still, we don't quite know what we are doing to make all of this happen. Things are getting weird! So, we study some more to try and understand what is going on. We meet others of 'our kind' if we haven't done so already, and in many cases, join a group or network to share experiences with others who may understand what we are talking about.

Gradually, we become familiar with the things our chosen companions seem to know all about. We recognize authors and concepts. This is great while we are meeting with our magical companions, but in the morning one still has to go to work. Back to a mundane world...or is it?

Reality is, in essence, perception. Therefore, if we perceive our world to be a mundane one, where a handful of magical people choose to dwell, we live in a mundane world and continue to have trouble reconciling the magic in our lives to the daily grind of survival. However, with a slight shift in attitude, we can choose to see the world as a magical place, where we the magical inhabitants understand the ways of natural forces and it is the mundanes who are a bit out of place.

If we think of magic as natural rather than supernatural, we have a beginning toward this shift. As we pursue our chosen magical paths, we can choose to see our place in the universe as more important than our job description. Magic begins to permeate our thinking processes until we become 'apart from' the mundane world, even as we inhabit it. In training oneself to perceive the magical in everyday situations, one soon learns to act according to the magical perspective. Then, we ARE magic!

"Great" you say, "but how does that affect my life at the office/the quarry/flipping burgers?" It depends on attitude and perspective. Do you get stressed out over a job and wrap it around you twenty-four hours a day, or do you go through the motions because it is your source of survival and then leave it behind at quitting time? Some jobs really do require one's full attention at the time, but we still have the option of leaving it behind at the end of the day.

In my own work experience, I have often found ways to incorporate magical thoughts into my work routine. For example, many years ago I had a repetitive manual job which left my mind free to wander (not a good idea in hazardous situations) and spent the time contemplating the meaning of one tarot card each day as a way to learn them. Office jobs which require mental attention do not lend themselves to this sort of thing, but the attitude one brings in to the office can very definitely affect one's on the job perspective.

We are apart from the mundane world. We are free spirits. We ARE magic!

Do you do a good job out of personal pride in doing all things well, or because it could mean a raise and therefore more money to buy mechanical toys? Do you leave work fuming over something someone said to you that day, or do you shed your work persona two steps out the door and take in the magical world outside?

Being magic doesn't have to mean dropping everything three times a day to pour libations to the Sun or any other outward ritual observance. Being magical is an attitude that becomes very much a part of what we are and how we think. When this shift in perspective is mastered, the mundane world, while still real in its own way, becomes far less stressful and distracting to that which is really important...the magic.

It is a matter of thinking magically, rather than thinking like our robotron co-workers. We have the choice to look at situations from the perspective of their relative importance to the universe, rather than getting caught up in little inter-office power struggles.

Being humans, we are likely to get caught up in mundane situations sometimes. Being magic, we have the choice to recognize it when we do, and to see the situation from a magical perspective. We are apart from the mundane world. We are free spirits. We ARE magic!

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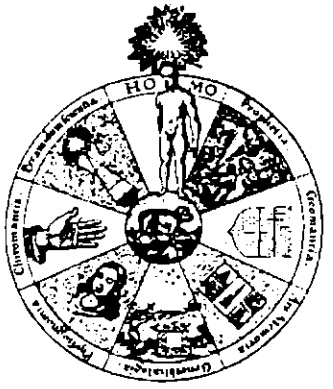

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Worlds of Earth Worlds of Spirit

A Conversation

by Louis Martinie

Wooden carving.
Papau, New Guinea.

Miriam, the Mombo of the Rampart Street Voodoo Temple in New Orleans, knows many things and, more importantly, she lives in the spirit of her knowledge. The topic for this issue of Mezlim came up in a conversation we were having and the following is a condensation of her thoughts.

"Magick is work with the spirits, with the spiritual. These spirits have never left our lives. The goodness of spirit flows through our lives in its fullness. Just look at the title of the magazine (Mezlim), the grace of the Creator Spirit flows through all things. It is up to us to see this, to appreciate this. If spirit and matter are separate, if our lives are lived apart from spirit, it is we who have created the separation.

"How to bring them back together? If we realize that we in our thinking have separated them, then we can make the choice, the decision, to bring them back together. Our daily lives are exactly where spirit shows itself most completely. We just have to listen, to see more clearly.

"Modern attitudes... answers, answers, answers. The modern attitude is based on answers, quick answers, easy answers, even difficult answers. But always answers. Our divine heritage contains much mystery. Spirit contains much mystery. Look at "languag" (the language of the loa or spirits). It is not meant to be understood as one understands a regular language. Mystery and answers don't always get along too good. There are some things there are no answers to.

"More trust and less self pride. That's how you get the connection with Creator Spirit. Trust...the events in your life follow a plan."

If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, then the proof of a person's words must be found in their life. As we spoke, Miriam was laying on a couch. Her foot had been badly broken in a fall and three metal spikes protruded from the thick cast. I had visited her often in the hospital and her words were always positive. Her attitude was focused on the part her fall played in the great "plan" of the loa or spirits. She was an inspiration to me, and, I might add that one traditional way to connect with the divine is to spend time with those all too rare individuals who have made and strongly maintain such a spiritual connection.

The following constitutes my reflections on the subject of the magickal and the mundane.

"The duality of sacred as opposed to mundane...does not indicate a hierarchical relationship. To deal in the mundane (mundus) is to invite the influx of the sacred. In turn, in all that is sacred, there is a yearning for the touch of the mundane. The path of the sacred and the mundane circles in upon itself, forming a Gordian knot that mocks the naming or separation of the two strands." (The New Orleans Voodoo Tarot; p. 9.)

When I wrote those words, I little realized that the simple pouring of water as libation would become, to me, the clearest

ritual manifestation of the intertwining of the sacred spirituality of magick with the world of matter. Spirit lives in the blood, and water is truly the blood of the earth. It flows in streams or veins much as blood flows within the body. The pouring of a libation is a magickal act making reverent use of the sacred blood of the earth. It is an affirmation and a reminder that the sacred and the mundane ever touch, ever penetrate, one into the other as in an act of intercourse.

In the pouring of libation, all four elements are brought into play. Water is lifted into the air. There, by the fire of the magician's will, it is imbued with a magickal charge. That charge may send the water to the throats of the ancestors or pave a "water road" for the loa to travel upon. After receiving the magickal charge, the water is then returned to the earth.

The crossroads, a common symbol for the intersection of the magickal and the mundane, may be visualized while pouring a libation. The water is poured from a height; that action creates the top portion of the crossroads vertical line. The water is swallowed by the earth and the movement of the water into the body of the earth creates the bottom portion of the vertical line. Upon hitting the ground the water splashes to the sides, to the right and to the left, and in so doing creates the horizontal line.

Ritual actions such as the offering of libations help to make more plain the link between the magickal and the mundane. They are works of magick performed with and upon the earth. In the practice of magick, one thing or state is changed into a different thing or state. Magick is dependent upon change and there can be no change without duality. The divine and the mundane must be separate, they must first face one another as across a chasm for magick to bridge the gap between the two. Both love and wisdom are necessary for the building of such a bridge. The worlds of spirit and the worlds of earth must be equally valued if the pylons of such a bridge are to withstand the measured gnawing of Kronos.

In praise of Malkuth...The World...The Mundane:

"Malkuth, your riches call to the Invisibles and draw them as birds to the seed, as bees to the flower, as moths to the flame. Great giver, great taker, great teacher, you delight the senses.

"The world in its unveiling lays bare the soul and its motives. All is caught and thickened here.

"In Malkuth is found the joy and sorrow of completion. The World of Day, the World of Night, and the shifting World of Twilight offer experiences that sound the lowest and highest notes of spirit." (The New Orleans Voodoo Tarot; pp. 179, 180.)

The Root and the Flower

by Paul Joseph Rovelli

Magick is the world where dreams attempt to place themselves into a functional model. Yes, they are alive and kicking—that subtle something inside us all that must surface. Such a yearning hits the internal ears of our heart, mind, and body. It gnaws at us day and night, in daydreams and vivid-dreams.

So many seeds are planted into our interpretation of perception. I was born a Roman Catholic and told to "be a good boy". The TV told me that I wanted this and that. I was young enough that all I knew was that "I want, I want, I want". As my body matured, my wants became more sophisticated. As my mind matured, those wants became more subtle. As my emotions matured, my desires became more intense.

Then, one day, the idea of Magickal power sweeps across the purview of possibility. I had studied eastern mysticism and the methods of aboriginal peoples; but, I was a westerner in my perception of life, and of European descent at that. Ancient Greek culture had a profound impact on me. I sought a system of attainment that was closer to what I felt as a contemporary urban American citizen.

But I'm still young and I want the things in my mundane life that a young man wants in his mundane life. Magick represents so much more than some sophisticated western Yoga. There are lotions and potions, spells and invocations that offer a promise to fill my mundane desires. Can I find a new girlfriend? Can I discover wealth? Can I make my world a material success?

Yes, I burned candles, invoked Venus, danced in a temple of stars on the sensual seas of my own delights. All that is carnal and provocative in me found an open faucet to come racing out. And still, success eluded me. Nothing seemed to work, with the possible exception of that Yoga that quietly worked its way into my life. And I learned what a mess my mind, heart, and soul were truly in.

The setback in my development became a painful awareness that I've had to confront. The days, weeks, months, and even a few years raced by and I squeaked through to a little progress on lifting this complicated veil I found placed over the eyes of my awareness. The darkness covered my soul and I became angry that so much had been written and so much money was made on all these false quick fixes to the symptoms of my own inner alienation.

And I meet others all the time who seek the same folly that I once had placed so much hope in. They ask me to read their Tarot cards and are so desperately worried about the inane. In some cases, I tell them to do what I myself found potent. I told them to seek a competent therapist. I mean, let's face it, the pure soul won't reveal itself until the dross has been separated. "Is a God to live in a dog?" AL II.19.

"So what!"; should it be your will to have women on both arms and jewels strewn all over your raiment. If you had it right now, you'd still be miserable and seeking even more. You wouldn't use it to find the ecstasy that the Goddess promises. You'd only find a new and even more miserable depth. To act and live as a King, you must first have the power and virtue of a King. And then you can pursue the opulent vices that life affords.

This, I have told myself and then proceeded to work on the truly magickal. My inner landscape is a world of illusory dream images that I no longer hear (should they decide to try to establish themselves as real). Instead, I now search them for clues. Hopefully, the hidden pins that hold up the veil will reveal themselves and that which is beyond can be apprehended.

So the seeds have taken root. I want, I want, I want illumination. I want, I want, I want to sleep in the loving arms of the Goddess. I want, I want, I want to find that mystical flower that seems to dwell just beyond the veil, dangling as a carrot before the eyes of my heart. And I pray to the gods, and I pray to the goddesses that they would show me how to inflame myself with prayer.

I'm on my way downstairs to the temple. Hidden deep within the hearth of my home. There, I dwell and practice my yoga and search the night skies for a sign of hope from my heart of hearts. Sometimes, I laugh at myself when I see the futility of it all. Other times, things in my view appear in the most profound way, and I am somber and serious. With both, I have found the olive branch of peace for my efforts. And I persist unceasingly—that's the only way to true success.

LIVING WITH MUNDANES

The Complete Quick Reference Guide

by Wilde Cristian

I first became interested in magick and witchcraft a little over a year ago when I realized that I had little to no control over my life. I had several ideas of how magick might help me correct this problem. They were all wrong. Most of them involved exerting control over physical events and persons which only incidentally effected my state of mind. Through seeing different teachers, talking to actual magickians and reading literally everything I could get my hands on on the subject, I learned the errors in my concept of magick. I learned that this art, this science, really was something which could help me get my life straight. The key was not to change the world, but to change my view of it.

My ignorance was not surprising nor is it uncommon. We live within a culture which has no point of reference for what we practice and believe in. Magick is unlike any religion or science which currently exists in Western culture. Hence when tested under the standards of either, it must fail miserably. It is sort of like driving your new car home and testing it out by riding onto your son or daughter's skateboard ramp in the backyard. Well, it failed that test, but have we determined that the car is inferior to the skateboard or that the car is unsuited to that specific task?

So our concern is living harmoniously in a culture which has a conflicting value system to our own (at least on the surface). One means which is often practiced is a total separation of the magickal and mundane personas. Several magickians I know as well as myself practice this method. There's no reason why I should tell my co-workers or casual friends about my religious beliefs, or try to lord my views over them. It's kind of good for grounding as well. Even if you did (after months of trying) invoke Shiva last night, you still have to type that memo for Bob in the morning. That is to say, rather than become obsessed with power or non-physical realms, the opportunity to live and work in the mundane world offers a chance for the magickian to maintain balance in hlr psyche. To do your job effectively and efficiently and still have the energy to come home, cook dinner, pay your bills, balance your checkbook and keep up with your studies and practice is a test for any magickian's Will and the key to the Yogic concept of Pure Work[1].

graphic by Otter Thompson

If only it could be that easy. All over the country, Wicca, Magick, even simple Hatha Yoga classes are being attacked and restricted out of the same sort of ignorance which ironically first attracted me to the Craft.

To say this is a problem between magickians and mundanes is to oversimplify a rather complex and convoluted structure. To illustrate this, I will divide the 'opposition' (for lack of a better term) into three distinct groups:

The Rationalist—These are the backers of hard science. They cast magick, shamanism and the like as a pseudo science and feel its continued practice is a detriment to progress. In truth, there is nothing irrational about magick in the sense of formal logic, and the only thing that modern science is capable of proving about magick is its own inadequacy to judge the discipline. Science is based on the observation of phenomena with the physical senses. Magick deals, more often than not, with non-physical energies. Therefore, science, by definition, is incapable of proving or disproving the efficacy of magick.

...anyone who proposes new ideas (no matter how old they actually are) is going to be surrounded by enemies whether sHe looks for them or not.

It is interesting to note here that until quite recently science worked under the assumption that there was no smaller particle of matter than the atom. We now know of the existence of subatomic particles such as quarks. The conclusion that such particles did not exist was based solely on the inability of human beings to detect them. As any reputable scientist will tell you, science is based on hypothesis, not fact. The rationalist therefore, by this definition, is someone confused about the doctrine they claim to uphold.

The Religionist—Long ago the church co-opted its spiritual doctrine for political power. Rather than lose that power to the advance of science, they covered the more esoteric aspects of the faith in dogma and empty ritual. It is easy to see however that they do not present a united front with the rationalist. The claim here is not that magick is unfounded, but that it is evil. Most often references are made to some passage in the Bible that says sorcerers, jugglers, etc. are cast out by Yahweh. Unless we're going to go around to circuses and start locking up clowns, we can accept the fact that we really don't know what a lot of passages in the Bible really mean. Whether it's God's word or not is irrelevant. We can't even figure out what the authors of the Constitution meant 200 years ago much less what God meant 2000 years ago. It's like being the victims of the world's longest running game of telephone.

The religionist lies at the opposite end of the spectrum from the rationalist. At one end, magick is false (but not evil) whereas, at the other end, magick is evil (but not false). What these two views do have in common, besides their determination to interfere with other's freedom, is the insistence of judging the entire world by their belief system, and a large number of discrepancies between what they believe and the doctrine they claim that belief is based upon.

One of my favorite Bible passages (yes, I have one!) is Matthew 5:10 "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". The religionist is someone who has confused righteousness with self-righteousness. This is not surprising since the currently accepted version of the Christian Bible was translated by King James I, a man who was obsessed by the belief that he was the target of assassination by English 'witches'.

The Public—Immigration has inundated American culture with an inordinate amount of folk magic. I have met people from several ethnic backgrounds who will all swear by their grandma's cold remedy which 'just works' for no explicable reason. They may even perform some rudimentary form of 'protection ritual' out of superstition or wear some sort of talisman. Yet many of these same people will balk at the mention of witchcraft or magick and fall in line with either the rationalist or religionist. Still others will be interested out of desire for personal gain (as I first was), spiritual study or sheer curiosity. Another group could care less as long as your practice does not interfere with their life. So by and large, the average citizen, who is not part of a particular anti-Wiccan/magick group, but automatically rejects magick, does so out of pre-programmed responses based on ignorance, fear and an ego-driven need for power. Ideas bred out of the misconception that religion is based on totalitarian thinking.

Though I cast these groups as the opposition, I do not feel we should hold science, religion or society as enemies.

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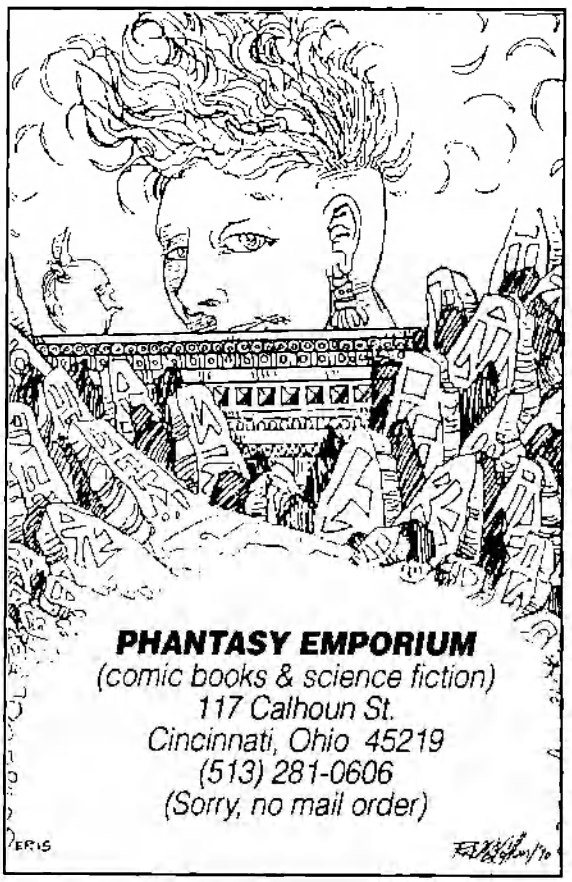

For one thing, anyone who proposes new ideas (no matter how old they actually are) is going to be surrounded by enemies whether sHe looks for them or not. Galileo, Jesus and Ben Franklin proposed scientific, religious and social change respectively and faced more than their fair share of opposition.

Another strike against the 'them and us mentality' is that it is not Christianity or science which is opposing us, but a few confused people using those cultural icons as cover. To attack those icons will only alienate more people and make the task of gaining freedom to practice our beliefs that much harder.

Finally, to identify enemies and fight them is not conducive to our goals. We will never convince those who are prejudiced against our practices to accept them, but we can get our rights to live without persecution upheld and enforced.

First, we must establish national support networks which can connect magickians and pagans in more rural areas to the larger community. These groups could then apply political and media pressure in a given locality and keep rural magickians from being isolated and overwhelmed.

Secondly, we need to reclaim our own history and storytelling. Whether it be through writing, music, art, dance, journalism. The practice of magick has helped many people find their latent creative talents. What better way to give back to the universe than to create something that might allow others to later practice freely and openly their beliefs.

We also should consider the scientific and religious doctrines which are used against us. For one thing, there is a wealth of valuable and interesting information contained therein. For another, the open study, discussion and dissemination of information is the only way to deal with the sort of flat earth opposition which we face.

Hate, fear and ignorance have pushed their way to the foreground several times throughout history. The American slave trade, Nazi Germany, and the Burning Times in Europe and America are a few of the most deplorable. At other times, these dark aspects lay thinly veiled under social morals. Magick has showed me that there is another way. It is a way in which we face these dark parts within ourselves and deal with them before they can be projected upon others and cause harm. It is a way which is not based on the assertion that one is right or the need to always get one's way, but on truth, tolerance and joy. Perhaps most of all, it is a way where we learn to help ourselves and those around us lead happy productive lives. It is in this spirit that I ask we open our hearts, minds and throats to sing forth the long buried truth.

[1] *The Bhagavad Gita*. Juan Mascaro Trans. Penguin Books, London 1962. p. 62.

The Bleeding Mountain

by Mishlen

"As above, so below" is a Magickan's axiom. The smallest atom reflects the dance of our solar system. We come from out of the Void, and we return there once our short stay upon this planet is ended. Within the time of Eternity, who could be surprised when something from another dimension and/or timescape accidentally crosses over to our world and then returns again to its own. It happens all the time—we have been taught to either not see it, or to give some prosaic explanation to 'hang our hat on'. We use the mind as a tool to prevent the sensory overload that would occur when too many universes collide. It is, again, a matter of believing all explanations simultaneously, and knowing there are still more—somewhere, and finally, that they are all lies.

This is a story about a trip I took out West with a pair of magickans, to see and feel for myself the magick of the mountains, lakes and streams, the desert under the moonlight, and the red glow of stone under a blinding blue-white sky.

We had made a non-stop haul to Colorado Springs. It had snowed and iced. Cars lay dead on either side of the highway (and sometimes ON the highway). There was six inches of ice, and the road looked like a war zone. We inched along at 30 mph. When we reached the town, we collapsed and slept the entire first day.

The next day, we went to the Garden of the Gods. This is a tourist point of interest—but being an off season, we were spared their company, and left alone to do our rituals as we saw fit.

The Garden of the Gods is a group of outcroppings of red sandstone, several hundred feet high. It is filled with paths, and for the adventurer, plenty of sheer cliffs to scale. I chose something in-between the two. Feeling pulled towards a particular outcropping, I climbed until I was too tired to move, sat down, and took a rest. The surrounding mountains, I could see, were not red like this sacred place. They were the colors you usually see—browns and greys. It was easy to see why the Amer-indian peoples of the past had chosen this as a site for some of their most sacred rituals.

There were offerings left about by pilgrims to this spot. Tobacco, drinks (very important to this dry land), as well as tourist trash—broken bottles, beer cans. It made me sad. I rested, then arose to begin the climb again. As I did so, I looked down to where I had been sitting. There, carved into the red sandstone, was a perfect image of my personal sigil.

A digression: This sigil had appeared to me as a child, hovering over me each night. I would fall asleep watching it, and wondering what it was. I never spoke about it, as I knew well enough, even then, that no one would believe me.

Back to the story: I had brought with me some "emergency" tobacco, for unexpected offerings. I filled the image with it, stood, and looked back upon it. Somehow, it felt unfinished. What else could I give?

I saw a broken glass bottle near me, picked it up, and sliced my arm. I let the blood fill the sigil. That felt right to me. Complete, somehow. I sat and watched it, and wondered, again, what it could mean, just as I had as a child. Peace filled me.

My reverie was disturbed by one of my fellow Magickans, who had been watching me patiently throughout the working. He pointed up to the outcropping, along one of its sheer sides. About 30 feet up there was a hole.

Out of the hole, blood was streaming.

I had given my blood, and now the mountain was giving me its own.

I was silent in sacred awe of this place. Here, the walls of "reality" had thinned, disappeared. I silently thanked the guardians of the place and left, my heart filled.

When the mirror is whole
The reflection too, is whole.
When the mirror is broken
Its reflections are many.
Who is to say which one is real?

MERGE

by KIA

My community is very open, somewhat large, and is composed of folks from various traditions. We get together to turn the Wheel of the Year, and we often have a ritual to celebrate it. Our festivals are a perfect place for nubees (and I use the term endearingly) to come and check out the scene. So I hear them, when they come to their first circle, and they say, "I was brought up Christian/atheist/(your previous tradition here), but it didn't fulfill me. I'm really looking for something — I don't know what." You who already call yourselves Pagans, a quick quiz: What are they looking for? Fulfillment, hmm, yes, we can provide sexual encounters, hmm, we often provide food for the hungry, hmm, we have warm fires and warm companionship....hmmm. Oh! The meaning of life! No? Hmmm.

They feel that their spiritual tradition didn't have substance, nothing to bite into. Nothing to explore, all on the surface, superficial. No, they're not sure what they're looking for. They have had food and shelter and companionship in the traditions that they left behind. The one thing we can give them that no other tradition has is our symbolism.

Yet it seems that for the majority of us, our symbolism is limited to "what happens inside circle". What happens outside is unrelated. Even though we work so hard to be "magickal", we still ignore the significance of the "mundane" and continue to rail against it. Somehow, we all acquired the viewpoint that what is unseen or undefined (by the reigning mindset) is unreal. Paganism provides a method of shedding this viewpoint — yet most traditions will stop short of bridging the gap. They'll teach the words but not the grammar, which leaves the seeker with a treasure of pretty ideas, helpless and uninspired, unaware of the lands beyond. I really don't think it's intentional; I have found that most pagan traditions have no concept of the connection and the language of their own symbols — so much like the traditions of the Dying God today.

Symbolism is the language beyond speaking, the tongue of the subconscious, the bridge between the known and the unknown, the Magick and the "mundane". Even Chaos magickians use symbolism — sometimes. So what happens inside your circle? What does all that junk on the altar and all that arm-waving mean? Hey, your nubees are asking this, they want to know. What are those candles for? Practical: to light the temple so I can see when I'm waving my athame around so I won't stab you in the eye. Symbolical: Light: enlightenment, hope, future, the state of godhood that we're working towards, "higher self", the fire of being. Connection: Every time I light these candles, I charge the thought-form called "My Enlightenment". The thought-form manifests one "end" in the circle and one "end" outside, in the "mundane" world. The "bridge" of symbolism is the candles. A bit more complex concept: What is that wand for? Practical: It has a long pointy shape, it is a directing tool. Symbolical: It symbolizes my power to create, my Will — that's why I draw funny shapes with it. Connection: Every time I pick up my Wand, my Will is manifest, in whatever funny shape I draw it in. The shapes are symbols themselves, representatives of a thought-form that I want to manifest. Two thought-forms are activated here. They have one "end" in the circle and one "end" in the "mundane".

This simple method of manifestation leads to the next step of truly speaking the language, which is what I was complaining about earlier. Does your tradition teach you to keep your eyes open for what you manifest? Most don't. Sure, there's the saying, "Be careful what you ask for, you just might get it." Do you take it seriously? If you step inside a sacred circle and perform Action #1, you better be careful about what you ask for, and you better keep your eyes open when you're out. Does your tradition teach the more subtle aspects of manifestation? There is a symbolical side to "mundanity" also, where any event can have symbolical significance in your personal dictionary. For instance, moving to a new city can be intensely personally significant. People can take on archetypal roles. Is there a certain wall in your life you keep banging your head against? What is the Universe trying to tell you? Such a simple thing...take a step back, draw a deep breath, accept without judgment, the symbols will speak to you. From here, you can do away with the arbitrary division called "the Circle", and recognize that every word you speak is an invocation, every curse a curse, and every blessing, just that. Every affirmation of "I can't...", every statement of "I love...", every declaration of, "...it's killing me!" is Truth. Every hug brings your world together, every slap hurts it and drives it away.

Whether they be ancient or newly formed, a tradition with living symbols is a tradition with meaning and substance, and holds the possibility of fulfillment for the seeker. You who consider yourselves Teachers hold the responsibility of keeping the symbols alive for those who come after, and that means delving into them and working their unfolding. The ability to "speak" symbolism is merely a different way of looking at things: another step up on the awareness ladder. Our traditions can become just as unfulfilling as the dying ones, unless we know what our symbols mean and continue to speak that particular tongue.

THE MAGICK AND THE MUNDANE

A Thelemic Point of View

by Massimo Mantovani

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Bringing together the Magick and the Mundane? Mmmmmhhh! Interesting topic! Alas, I'm afraid that a lot of what I'm going to say will sound familiar to your ears. This is because you live in a country where "sound good sense", even in Esoteric matters, should be widely spread.

I'm Italian, and things are quite different here [in Italy]. I'm a Thelemite, but here this is NOT the rule, and most part of Italian esotericists lack that scientific approach which is one of the most valuable gifts the Master Therion has given us. A gift, I mean, valuable even for those who don't accept *The Book of the Law*.

In Italy, our topic would raise a lot of bragging about spirit, matter, soul, flesh, good and evil, heaven and hell, salvation and damnation, and so on, with NO hint about any practical reason why we should want to bring the Magick and the Mundane together.

Crowley has touched a VERY painful nerve when he wrote *The Dangers of Mysticism*, and that writing really pictures the situation I face here. Crowley has been a fresh breath for me, therefore I won't apologize for being Thelema-biased in my discussion of this topic. I've been hearing those braggers too long and now, as Peter Carroll puts it, "when I hear the word 'spirituality', I tend to reach for a loaded wand".

OK, let's start. Of course we should bring the Magick and the Mundane together. But WHY? And HOW?

In books you will find a lot of answers to the second question: "act as every second of your life were sacred", "perceive everything as holy", "see every act as an act of Magick", and so on. Lovely.

But, wait a minute. What does this mean? What is "Magick"? And what is "holy"? The same books give you a lot of information about their authors' idea of Magick and holy but, alas, if you have to be a reification of the independence of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child, you can rely only on yourself and on YOUR ideas.

Is Magick part of my Life or IS MY LIFE PART OF MY MAGICK?

This brings us back to the first question: why should we ever want to bring the Magick and the Mundane together? Can you give an answer which is logical and, at the same time, leaves individual freedom untouched?

Because it's useful? Say you so? Can you prove it?

I'll try, and I'll start asking myself: "Is Magick part of my Life or IS MY LIFE PART OF MY MAGICK?"

Do you believe in reincarnation? I

do, and as the Magickal Philosophy postulates a series of come-backs before a soul can be free from the Wheel of Reincarnation, we must eventually admit that the soul's task, through its/his/hers various reincarnations, is the purification of the Karma which forces it to come back in a living body.

How do you call this process of purification?

Some call it "penitence"; some call it "devotion"; some call it "initiation".

I call it MAGICK.

So, then, as the different re-incarnations we experience are nothing but part of this process of purification, NOW, HERE we have to admit that our lives are nothing but part of our Magick.

The process of reaching self-liberation IS holy ... every act we do in our universe is sacred, as we act to reach this goal of self-liberation.

It is as simple as that the different incarnations we experience, and the different experiences we go through, are nothing but instruments which should allow us to reach THAT freedom which represents the Great Work on an individual level.

If we start from this very simple fact, we cut off a lot of wordish nonsense, and are free to travel faster to a deep understanding of HOW to realize the union of the Magick and the Mundane in our everyday life.

I suggest making of this understanding of life as a part of Magick the subject of your meditations for some time. So sit in your Asana and go on.

I am sure you will find for yourself a lot of answers to the second question.

Even the simple tenet "consider every act as a magickal act" puts on a very deeper meaning if you only examine it with the consciousness of the fact that you are just fighting a battle (this reincarnation) which is part of a bigger struggle (your path/process to self-liberation).

I dare say that every act, Magickal, Mystical and/or Mundane, is adorned with priceless jewels if we undertake it knowing it is part of our struggle for freedom.

The process of reaching self-liberation IS holy then, we all agree, and therefore, as our universe is as we perceive it, individual consciousness being a function of one's own brain, every act we do in our universe is sacred, as we act to reach this goal of self-liberation.

Bear this in mind, and meditate on it in the L.V.X. of the Wise.

I am sure you will find every further answer you need IN YOURSELF.

I'm not so pretentious to think I could give other Stars further indications.

Work out you own method, and be free.

Love is the law, love under will.

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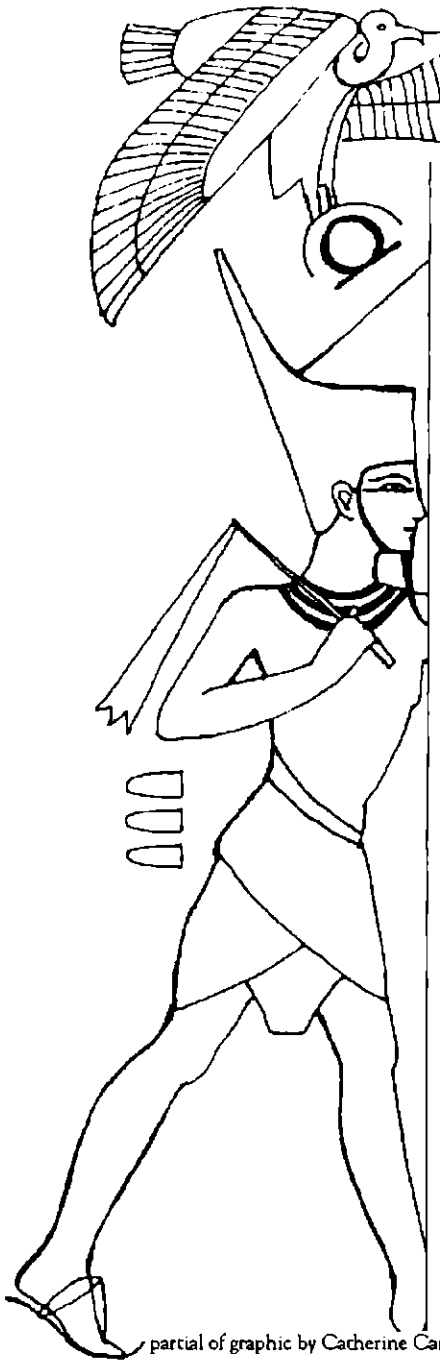
Living in the Twin Lands

by Rev. Tamara Siuda-Legan



partial of graphic by Catherine Cartwright Jones

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

—Matthew 28:20

"Thou who thinkest to seek me, know thy seeking and yearning shall avail thee not unless thou knowest the mystery, that if that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee...I have been with thee from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire."

—from the Gardnerian *Charge of the Goddess*

"Has not every Deity promised, 'I am with you always?' Why do we deny that such a statement is the truth? Or choose to forget it was ever said? Or decide arbitrarily that it is meant for some, but not all? In the Twin Lands, the divine and the secular are One. Deity is present in everything, just as promised. Have They not said so? And said so? And said so?"

—Rev. Baroness Cara-Marguerite-Drusilla, L.P.H.

"Uniting The Twin Lands" Plenary Presentation

1993 Parliament of World's Religions

Many of us on "alternate paths" wander through two lives: the life of our spiritual or magickal pursuits and the life we put on, like we put on clothes, starting early Monday morning, and then slough off Friday evening. There is often a distinct grinding of mental gears between our working-day worlds and the worlds of our churches/temples/covens/spiritual centers, an unnatural division between who we are for "the world" and who we "really" are when we confront our Deities.

In fact, the Western mindset seems to operate wholly on this dualistic level: Mundane vs. Spiritual, and unless you are an ordained and fully recognized member of an acceptable clergy group, never the twain shall meet. And even then, you'd better not be "religious" outside of church, because the world just isn't a spiritual place anymore—"real people don't have time for that kind of stuff."

I was introduced to a new line of thinking on our personal separations of church and state by my mentor in the Ancient Egyptian tradition, Cara-Marguerite-Drusilla, L.P.H., Priestess Hierophant of the Lyceum of Venus of Healing in Ayer, Massachusetts. While working toward ordination, I noted in her lessons and letters a reference to the "Twin Lands." At first I interpreted this from a purely historical standpoint. 'She must be talking about Upper and Lower Egypt,' I thought, remembering that one of every Pharaoh's five names was the "Twin Lands name," representing his or her rulership of both provinces. But it didn't make sense in the context of what she was saying, so I read on.

Ancient Egyptians were exceptionally practical people, even though (to the bemusement of archaeologists) they lived in a theocracy—a state where political power is held by religious factions. In Egypt, the Pharaoh was Heru (Horus) on earth—holding divine rulership by right and by blood—because the gods were said to take on

the form of every Pharaoh's father when (s)he was conceived.

However odd this may seem in our secular times, it was not jarring at all to an Egyptian—neither was Ancient Egypt a nation of "space cadets." The difference between their philosophy and ours was simple: for the Egyptian, there was no separation of one's secular and spiritual life, *because there was no separation between the "land" of the Deities and the "land" of the physical earth.* The Deities did not live far away or in some alternate dimension, hidden and inaccessible to mortals. The Twin Lands of spirit and elements, like their physical counterparts of Upper and Lower Egypt, existed simultaneously and interacted *at all points*—there was no part of one that did not extend into the other. Deity lived in and around all beings and was all beings.

The Deities live with us and in us and for us, and we for them. It is a beautifully reciprocal relationship.

Living in the Twin Lands for the Egyptian was not only a natural way to live, it was the *only* way to live. To spend one's consciousness entirely "inside" one or the other was to doom oneself either to a life without hope or promise, or a life filled with endless, ungrounded rapture. Most fulfilling would be a balance between the two: a practical approach to an endless well of joy and strength.

Yet, even though more than a millennium of linear time stands between us and the Ancient Egyptians, the Twin Lands principle has not lost any of its potency. When we shift our thinking, to "live" in the Twin Lands, existence takes on new meaning and purpose. Because Deity is constantly with us (and in us), *every* act is a sacred act, from the most elaborate ritual to brushing our teeth. Every telephone conversation, every meal—even that jerk who cut us off in rush-hour traffic—*all* are within the purview of the Divine. We can step into this timeless embrace with Deity with a mere thought.

The person who lives in the Twin Lands does so deliberately, happily, serenely—really *lives*. There are no excuses, no procrastination, no blame to be shoved onto "original sin" or some evil Deity, or blind forces like "bad luck." Every act, thought and facet of our existence reflects on and meshes with the sacred; and every element of the sacred is free to enter into relationship with us, in any way, time or place we wish. The Deities live with us and in us and for us, and we for them. It is a beautifully reciprocal relationship.

Think on this philosophy the next time you feel alone. The Egyptians weren't the only ones to believe this way—in fact, almost every religion since theirs has evidence from their Deities of a similar promise—that we are never alone, that They are always with us. Would They lie? Or suddenly change Their minds with the changing of the dominant culture?

"There is no part of me that is not of the gods," states the foremost of Egyptian texts, the *Book of Coming Forth By Day*. Isn't it time we acknowledged both our inner sacredness and the outer sacredness of all things? If you are unsure, take a moment to think: If everyone around you, everyone in the world, viewed every action as a sacred action, how would our lives be different? How would your life be different? The Deities are waiting patiently for us to "come home"—except there is nowhere we have to "go" to get there. All we must do is open our hearts to find Them, right here, right now.

May you live in full knowledge of the Twin Lands always. Live in truth, and may your *ka* be blessed. *Ankh en Ma'at. Na-ka.*

References are synthesized from: "Uniting The Twin Lands" speech by Rev. Baroness Cara-Marguerite-Drusilla, L.P.H., Priestess Hierophant, Lyceum of Venus of Healing; and the "Chapters of Coming Forth By Day," translated by E. A. Wallis Budge and included in *The Gods of the Egyptians*.

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The Goddess and Growth

by Sherry O'Leary

As August's blue moon slipped behind distant trees and a fine silver mist crept to the edge of their circle, a small group of women—tired, eyes glazed and spirits quiet—sat around an open fire listening to stories.

This was the final ritual of a full night spent between the worlds. A night of singing and dancing in the light of the balefire, a night of rebirth in a small pool sheltered by willows, and a night of reclaiming their power and connection.

"You are Goddess," one after another said softly as she traced the crescent moon upon the forehead of a spiritual sister in blessing.

It was a night created by them—nurse, teacher, social workers, student, business woman and writer—a marathon night of ritual to rediscover and awaken their witch souls.

And, at that time, in the quiet just before dawn, they listened to ancient stories woven with symbols of the feminine divine. Symbols, filtered through a prism of time and myth that excluded and diminished them, that survived to be recalled again and again.

These were old stories retold for a new age, stories that reached deep within each and stirred a memory of connection—to the earth, the moon, to the creatures of this and the other world.

Stories that brought them—and me—home.

That gathering was not the beginning of my journey along the path of the wise, but it marked a shift in my creative vision. The way in which I understood and recorded my world, as a writer, was forever changed.

The mist that licked at the quarter candles was a fairy mist floating out over an open field alive with spirits. Within the flames of each candle dwelt a guardian—watching.

My world was now finally clarified by a pagan set of symbols and my creative use of metaphor to define it would be filtered through that system.

My pagan consciousness evolved during the course of several years and was not without struggle, as the following poem, written in 1978, illustrates:

The womon
in the moon joins her
under hot, twisted blankets
together they shape
the dreams
visions from a faded moon
on days when the sun shines too bright
she worries
that her dreams
are now prophetic
and she has become
too much of the womon
in the moon

I was afraid. The Goddess was in my unconscious, buried deep beneath the layers of a Judeo-Christian ethos and the admonitions of my Baptist grandmother.

The "heathen" way was not our way, she cautioned.

One visit to my San Francisco home

was enough for her. California was a hotbed of "heathens" salivating for a chance at my straying Christian soul.

However, suspect pagan seeds were sown in my genetic make-up long before I heeded a call to the West Coast.

The story my grandmother never told me was one I gathered by bits and pieces at family reunions after her death and long after I wrote my first poem of the Goddess. That story is of her grandmother, Matilda Jane, the "Granny Woman" of a small community in the Appalachian hills.

As it turns out, my great, great grandmother was well acquainted with the old ways. She gathered herbs and healed the sick and brought most of the babies of the village into this world, one relative said. She tried to pass on her knowledge to her children and grandchildren, but Brethren missionaries had come to Lost Creek by then with a new church and a Christian-training school and none of the young cared to learn her simple ways.

...my yearning for the old ways—and the subsequent emergence of the Goddess in my dreams and now within my life—comes to me naturally because of her and her connection with the earth

Although I'll never know if she was anything but staunchly Christian, I like to think that she passed something down to me through genetic memory. That my yearning for the old ways—and the subsequent emergence of the Goddess in my dreams and now within my life—comes to me naturally because of her and her connection with the earth.

The evolution of my pagan world view has been a process spanning several years and continues.

The metaphors of my earlier poem sprang from an unconscious set of symbols and were without the coloring of knowledge I have today. I had plugged in, I think, to a collective universe and was unsettled by it because those symbols did not reaffirm the symbolism I had been taught.

Today, light and dark take on a far different interpretation. With this turn of the wheel at Samhain, I found that going into the dark—into a quiet time to regroup and build strength for the spring—had lost the specter of depression it has so often held for me in the past. I welcomed the dark times because a deeper understanding of its meaning to the cycle of my life had finally taken root.

Pagan symbol and ritual now color all the corners of my life.

During this year's Samhain ritual, I even invited in my grandmother's spirit. For me, the invitation was to honor and touch her once more, although I had some doubts that her Baptist soul would enjoy a witches' sabbat. But then again, she has a different frame of reference now.

As my spirit changes, so does the work.

If I were to write my Goddess poem today, I would drop the alternative spelling of woman. This too, is part and parcel of my evolving pagan ethic.

The symbols that fill the walls of my home echo my spirit's growth.

Against the east wall of my bedroom stands a five-foot forked stick beneath a large photograph of two wolves running through the stones and water at the edge of, perhaps, an inland sea. The stick rests there because, for me, it represents the Horned God, and he is now part of my witch universe. His position beneath the two wolves is a reminder that polarities—as light and dark or male and female—help weave the fabric of life.

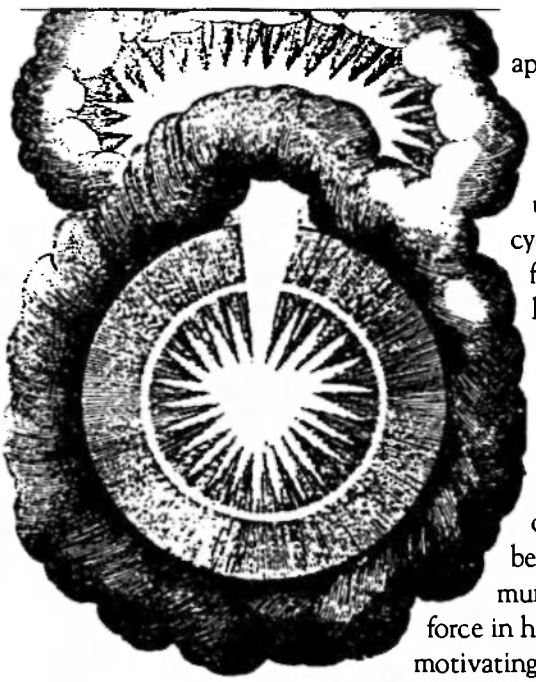
That acknowledgment took some time—old symbolic systems die hard. Stripping Satan's taint from the Goddess' consort was a conscious struggle of faith. But, the old system did fade and afterwards came understanding and a renewed connection to the other half of humankind.

Blessed Be!

Magic, Mysticism, and Bacon's American Dream

by Mark Stavish, M.A.

Since I can remember, I have always been moved by the idea of a time when "Heaven and Earth" would be united, the Age of Aquarius, the Time of the Lily, or whatever it is you want to call it. While it was not a frequent topic of conversation, it was one that definitely formed a core component of my early spiritual development.



Yet, this apparent appreciation for the "End of History" either created, or was created out of, an intense desire to understand the past, its cycles (or our present and future), and their lessons for humanity. As I dove into my historical studies (with an esoteric bias), I soon discovered that the spiritual influx, afflatus, for the active establishment of conscious harmony between the spiritual and mundane planes was a driving force in human history. A force motivating people to go from abstract speculation and dreaming into concrete action to achieve their desired goals. Helena Petrova Blavatsky is often quoted as saying that in the last quarter of each century, there is a sudden outpouring of spiritual power and renewal. If we look at the last four centuries of European and American history, we can see that she was right.

In Europe, this image of the "Celestial Marriage" or total harmony between the microcosm and the macrocosm, took some of its highest imagery and form in the Elizabethan Renaissance period. Not only were the lives of poets, dreamers, philosophers, and scientists affected, but so were those of politicians, explorers, and even the common citizen with mystical leanings; and this would continue for over three-hundred years. The embryo that was fertilized during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, is taking birth in what we now call the "Age of Aquarius".

Nowhere is the desire for harmony between "Heaven and Earth" more powerfully seen than in the Hermetic period of the Renaissance, and the related Utopian movements that sprang from the very first pages of the mysterious *Fama Fraternitis* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*.

These two documents, first published in the early 17th century, were the principle moving force behind the Rosicrucian movement, and the mystical ideal of a "Philosophic Empire" or "Fourth Estate". Within their pages, these documents, along with *The Universal Reformation*, set forth the plans for the establishment of a worldwide Utopia based upon the esoteric ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. This was not to be some ethereal dream, but instead, a vital, living, material reality.

Among the most convincing of the Rosicrucian-Hermetic idealists was Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam (1561-1626), the most powerful man in England in his day. His principle utopian work, *New Atlantis* (1627), influenced not only other utopian writers such as Tommaso Campenella (*Civitas Solis, City of the Sun*, 1623), but also the average mystic as well. *New Atlantis, A Work Unfinished* (its full title) was the most

sophisticated of all of the utopian writings, and was the moving force behind several communities in late 17th and early 18th century America.

An earlier version of the work was published in 1600, which, by its "authors" (one of Bacon's assistants is credited with helping in the production) admission, was incomplete, yet it described future machines that only the mystic or magical mind could comprehend or foresee: such as submarines and telegraph systems. Bacon also mentioned anthropological and historical facts that were, as of yet, unknown in his day, and would be for several centuries more. What is most important however, is the naming of "...that which you call America..." as the land of the New Atlantis. It was here, in this land, that the "College of the Six Days Work" of the pansophic university was to be established, and the Hermetic ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were to be realized as an earthly, material reality.

Influenced by these utopian ideals and the raging wars in his homeland, Johannes Kelpius, a German Pietist, set sail from northern German in 1694 with a little under 50 followers, all of exceptional talents. Their ship, the *Sarah Maria*, landed on the 26th of June. They established a cloistered community on the banks of the Wissahickon, in what is now modern Philadelphia.

Kelpius, an inspirational and exceptionally spiritual man, studied magic, astrology, alchemy, and other arcane subjects. It is strongly believed that Kelpius was initiated into the Rosicrucian-Hermetic mysteries by Baron von Rosenroth, author of the *Kabbalah Denudata*, and other kabbalistic works. He wrote one of, if not the first, prayer books in North America entitled, *A Method of Prayer*. His followers established gardens, observatories (for casting horoscopes) and other necessary material structures for themselves. While they were apocalyptic in their thinking, they were also pragmatic in their acting. Their spiritual and occult activities were of great interest to others in the area, as well as followers back in Germany, and to the core of individuals that we call "The Founding Fathers" of America.

It is strongly suggested that about 50 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Freemasons, and that two or possibly three were Rosicrucians. The most well known of these that possibly held both affiliations was Benjamin Franklin. His interest in things rosicrucian was started during a meeting between himself and Conrad Beissel, leader of the Ephrata Community. He was also known to have been deeply involved in French Masonic activities when ambassador to France, and was present for Voltaire's initiation in the Lodge of the Nine Sisters on April 7, 1778, serving two two-year terms as Master of the Lodge. It is even said that Franklin was aware of the use of "Magical Squares" and possibly learned it during this period when Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and Magic were an almost indistinguishable element of French politics and court society.

What makes Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, and the other hermetic students among the Founding Fathers unique, is that they were attempting to establish a nation based upon the utopian ideals preserved and perpetuated through their hermetic (principally masonic) affiliations and studies. While Kelpius, Beissel, and others sought to escape from the world, prepare for its "judgment" or just attempt to perfect their small part of it, those in Philadelphia and elsewhere were trying to spread the dream of a New Atlantis to the world.

Their lives, along with many others, point to some obvious facts that are both humbling and inspirational: imperfect individuals can strive for perfect ideals, and the struggle to unite the metaphysical and mundane successfully is possible only when individuals desire it to be a reality.

While the imperfections of these and other historical "heroes" are well known, we cannot ignore their contributions to human evolution. All people of all ages are imperfect and can only be judged in the context of their period. Yet, within the realms of our imperfections, we have available to us, if we choose to use it, a powerful reserve of spiritual power that can change the way people think, live, and interact with each other. We can, as the song at Yorktown when the British surrendered said, turn the world upside down. To do so though, requires sacrifice, dedication to an ideal, and the inner realization that we are doing it for not just ourselves, but for others as well.

Yet, sacrifice for the group is not enough. Each of us must take responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, and conduct. We cannot climb a spiritual path and continue to blame others for our errors and misfortunes. We must start where we are and go from there, forward, to the Golden Dawn of our Heart's Desire. Judgment is a dangerous sword and we must apply it with rigor to ourselves and with leniency towards others. In our silence, we must be patient, understanding, and as Thomas Jefferson said, "...[I] offer no excuses" for ourselves or for others.

If we are to move into the Age of Aquarius, into the "Golden Age Restored" that our nation's founders

envisioned, then we must learn to come together and work as a group as they did. It is amazing how little cooperation is found in "spiritual" groups, lodges, covens, or temples when the goals are loftier, more ethereal, and far less significant than what took place in Philadelphia over two-hundred years ago. There, their necks were on the line, failure meant death, and they would either "hang together, or all hang separately...". If we are to achieve anything of value in this world, to bring to Malkuth those higher spiritual powers we talk so much about, then we must achieve a higher level of cooperation in our lodges, covens, and temples. If we are to be taken seriously, then we must take our ideals and practices to our homes, offices, and governments.

The lessons of history are the lessons of humanity. They repeat themselves if we allow them to, or need them to; we can choose whether or not to learn from them. It is in this world that we achieve our spiritual mastery and in no other. The lives of great people, with their great strengths and great weaknesses, can show us some of the mistakes to be avoided, or even suggest better ways to handle the difficulties in our own lives.

The principle of "As above, so below" is at work constantly; it is up to each of us individually and as a group to use it and learn from it. Only then will "The New Order of the Ages" be established and the New Atlantis discovered.

A POSTSCRIPT TO MY PREVIOUS ARTICLE ON THE "SATANIC PANIC"

by Donald Michael Kraig

As those of you who read my article in the last two issues of *Mezlim* observed, there are numerous books and sources I used to come to the conclusions stated in the article. Several people have stated that the Satanic Panic is coming to an end. Yet, a new book, *Raising Hell* by Michael Newton and published by Avon, is filled with the errors and falsehoods indicative of sloppy scholarship, although it is described on the cover as "true crime." Avon, a mass marketer of popular books, would not have published it if there was not a perceived audience for the book.

This led me back to some of the questions I have had about the panic including, "How has it spread?" and "Why do people, in spite of the total lack of evidence, believe in an international Satanic conspiracy?" A friend (thank you, Dennis) led me to a book which I had been unaware of, the extensively researched and documented *Satanic Panic* (published by Open Court). The author, Jeffrey S. Victor, is a professor of sociology at a branch of SUNY. Many of his conclusions, such as the comparison of this panic to that of the "red scare" of the '50s, match my own. He goes further, however, and compares it to panics over Christians, Jews, Witches, Freemasons and others who, over the years, have been accused of the exact same crimes that alleged Satanists are currently accused of, with the same type of panic-driven results. He also traces the history of the fear of Satanism over the past two millennia and shows how the modern panic is racist in nature. (According to the panic-mongers, Satanists only want to sacrifice blondē, blue-eyed virgins; people of color, who are less "spiritual" or "pure," need not apply).

Victor shows how the false information is spread outside of the mass media. He also shows the cause: Whenever there is a massive societal or economic change, people look for an external source, hidden within the society, to blame it upon. Society no longer looks like Donna Reed and Father Knows Best (if it ever did). There must be a cause for this change. Rather than put the responsibility on ourselves, we put it on others. Since there is no longer a communist threat (if there ever really was one), we have to blame the problems on Satanists or (here in California) "Illegal Aliens." (How can a person be "Illegal?" A person can do illegal things, but the word "illegal" modifies actions, not people.)

More importantly, Victor predicts that the panic will go on for at least another decade. However, he gives specific methods for dealing with such panics when they occur in your area and points out why other methods don't work.

I would urge everyone to buy or borrow and read this book.

The Solitary Pagan in the Mundane World

by Jennifer Toone

Once one has chosen the "magical life" of following a pagan tradition, the difference between the magical and the mundane in life virtually vanishes. It never completely vanishes, because there are some mundane things required of everyday life that magic simple does not touch—balancing one's checkbook, for instance. However, the majority of important things that one does in one's life are touched by or imbued with magic. It is all around us!

I can only speak from the solitary perspective regarding the relationships between the magical and mundane aspects of life. I have met and interacted with many people who are members of covens or practicing groups and have worked with others upon infrequent occasion, however I consider myself a solitary pagan. In my experience, the incorporation of magic with one's mundane life is quite easy, but it does take some practice.

I have found that there are many authors who advocate magical practice on a daily basis. Not only is it difficult for most of us in the busy world of today to find time once a day to practice, but also I think that it is a rather impractical suggestion. There are times in one's life when one will have plenty of time to devote to daily ritual, prayer, or the like, but this is an ideal—not a realistic goal. Instead of practicing every day, I find it pleasing to constantly have reminders around me of my ties to the God and Goddess. Now, one can argue that the ties to the Deities surround us because they created everything around us. I find it pleasant to have personal ties around me—be it a piece of ritual jewelry worn for a specific time of year, a plant and a fishbowl on my desk at work, or whatever. I think it is important to have these reminders on which to draw when one does not have the time for daily practice.

For formal practice, I find it easy to find time to practice once or twice a month (for the full and dark moons) and on each of the Sabbats. I, myself, am not Wiccan per se, but I do celebrate the Sabbats as the Wiccans hold them. Many Solitaries also meet together on a bi-weekly or monthly basis to discuss ritual, feelings, or just differing aspects of practice. It is a wonderful learning experience, and sharing one's beliefs with another helps one grow closer to the Deities and to the world around us. It is also important for Solitaries to network because it is the means whereby a Solitary learns what is going on in the pagan community in their area and in the world around them. Most networking goes on in local craft shops, and these shops are frequently wonderful places to go to discuss beliefs and practices with people of many different traditions. Craft shops serve a very important function for Solitaries who live in areas of the country where speaking out about their beliefs could hamper them greatly in their community.

Magic always touches many different aspects of one's life, if one is open to seeing it that way. From the simple regimen of a healthy diet to keep one's body strong and more in tune with the environment, to a full house cleaning/ward raising ritual of protection placed over one's house, magic touches many, many aspects of life. The simple facts of birth and death in one's life are, by definition, touched by magic. When one takes time to ask for protection on a journey that one is going to take on a vacation—one is invoking the presence of magic into this activity. Whether you define magic as actual ritual, or spell casting, or the presence of the intangible "power" that one

manipulates or prays to, or the strength of the inner self manifesting in your life, or the Deities and their intervention in your life, magic is all around us. I believe that magic is all of these things and more.

One of the places that people find the most difficult to incorporate magic into their lives is in the workplace. This could be due to many factors—not being able to tell your boss/co-workers about your religion, not being allowed to have symbols of your faith at your desk, fear of intolerance on the part of others, or similar events. In the book *The Urban Pagan* by Patricia Telesco, ways to incorporate the Pagan beliefs into the workplace are discussed. She advocates a subtly Pagan way of decorating the workplace—"live plants, baskets of potpourri, cards from friends, dry flower arrangements colored to suit the season, photographs, posters, nature calendars...can give your work area that little extra spark to help the day go better." (1) The entirety of her work deals with the interaction of the magical and the mundane in our lives today and is the best written work on this subject that I have run into (it is the only full book that I have encountered on the subject).

Finally, the interaction of the magical in our lives can be reduced down to the basic fact that we think. Thought is an intrinsically magical activity. Without it, spell casting would never work, ritual would be pointless, and intent would be inert. The power of positive thought is something that affects our personal lives, our professional lives, and our spiritual lives. As my boss at work is so fond of saying, "Get a check up from the neck up and get rid of the stinkin' thinkin'!" As silly as the phrasing may be, the sentiment is valid. The power inherent in daily thought can make all the difference between a magical and mundane life. Positive thought about one's actions and one's self are integral to a spiritual life that is productive to yourself and your environment.

In an ideal world, I would love to be able to live by just working with people and with myself on a constant path of self-knowledge and growth in a peaceful environment. This feeling, which I think of as "yearning for the 'Henge", is a common one among Pagans who feel like outsiders when it comes to sharing their "true selves" with others. This peaceful world is a goal to be worked towards through the observation and encouragement of the magical with the mundane in our lives and our surroundings.

(1) Telesco, Patricia. *The Urban Pagan*. Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN: 1993. p. 97.

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CyberMagick

by Julian Vayne

Magick is a process - no one is quite certain what the process is or how it works. Most of us practising magickians have quite diverse ways of interpreting the process and of making comments and suggestions upon how it may be modified or enhanced. Even so, any magickal theorisation happens "in the dark" since, much like certain philosophical speculations, there is no way of measuring the relative merit of any one idea against any other except in relation to other relative ideas! Of course, this doesn't mean that magickians aren't interested in the theory of magick and don't like to have the occasional stab at describing those processes.

Any description of magick uses symbolic language. Primarily, this is the language of symbolic analogy. Women holding open the jaws of lions are not, by every-day logic, associated with the number eleven, the festival of Lammas and the emotion of lust - yet within the tarot system these connections exist (in Atu XI - Strength). This complex of symbolic connections forms part of a whole theoretical model (in this case the Tarot) which attempts to describe the whole of the universe and the forces of which it is composed.

As people change, so their models change, and the symbolic garb used to fabricate those models. In ages past, men believed that by eating spiders one might be rendered invisible, today we believe that evening primrose oil is good for the skin and that strips of metal hung from car bumpers will ward off travel sickness. Equally, where we once saw skyborn angels and dragons, now we see flying saucers and earthlight effects. All the symbolism is, of course, relative. The only criteria of its worth is how relevant it is, how approachable and useful the symbolism of the model is to the mystic, the Pagan, the occultist, the visionary.

The magickal models of the late 20th century are characterised by two factors. The first is a desire to find a "scientific" symbolism. In other words, to deliberately use the language of the scientific establishment (which is usually perceived as being predominantly reductionist, materialist and torpid) and, using new interpretations of the latest scientific and technological developments, marshal these symbols into the outline of a contemporary magickal model.

The other tendency results from the plethora of material which is available and easily accessible concerning the symbolic language of dead cultures. The symbolic language of the Celts, the Saxons and primarily any "tribal" society is latched onto with great verve.

For the more "esoteric" sections of the Pagan community, the major modelling language over the last few years has been drawn from quantum mechanics, chaos mathematics and computer technology. The advantages of these symbolic languages is that they represent a deliberately modern, perhaps "post-modern" series of symbols. Out goes the concept of the astral light, the veil of Paroketh and the notion of a multi-levelled universe - in comes the space-time wormholes, implicate order and the many universes theory.

Alongside developments in physics, advances in computer technology also provide solutions to the quest for appropriate symbolic language. We might talk about the human mind in terms of RAM, cache and hard disk memory rather than using psychological terms (conscious, ego, unconscious) or more arcane terms (Malkuth, Tiphereth, Kether). Certainly many writers have employed computer jargon

in their work. Phil Hine writes of viral thoughtforms and "programming" entities. He is not alone with being a modern-day magickian using the ultra-modern terminology of computing in his work.

Even so, it must be born in mind that symbolic units used to illustrate magickal models need to be useful. Magick has its fashions - today we are all chaos sorcerers, yesterday we were all shaman, tomorrow we'll all be - who knows? Much of the modern use of quantum mechanics, particle physics and computer terminology is not used so much to illuminate as to obscure. To take one example. If we talk about "programming" a thoughtform (itself a modern term, "demon" or "fetch" might also be used) does the term really offer any more insight then if we speak of "telling", "commanding" or even "constraining with the words of power"? Terminology must be intelligible and modern, but jargonising magick does no-one any good. The whole point of revising one's use of esoteric language is to make the ideas used by ancient magickians intelligible in a modern context. Obscurantism is not the same as occultism.

The Gaia hypothesis may be the scientific expression of the Great Mother Goddess, but it is not the scientists who see it in this way.

One of the advantages of using new terms is that they can provide us with new interpretations of age-old magickal theories. For example, Eliphas Levi spoke of the Astral Light, himself summing up a whole body of doctrine from the Hermeticists and before. He suggested that there was, somehow, an ether through which magickal effects could be made. This is the invisible media through which apparently unconnected bodies might be linked. Newton had made suggestions of the same type when discussing action at a distance*. Pete Carroll also suggests a media, an "ether", through which unconnected things are really connected in his chaos metaphysics. Material from chaos maths and quantum physics can be marshalled to show that, somehow, all things are linked together (the classic example of this being the synchronised faster-than-light link found to exist between sub-atomic particles).

Equally, modern biological science has similar ideas which can be raided by the magickian to provide raw symbolic material to renew ancient metaphysics. Lovelock says the earth is one vast living being, with all parts working together in part of a self-sustaining web; in fact, Lovelock says nothing like this except that we might choose to interpret his findings and writing in that way. The Gaia hypothesis may be the scientific expression of the Great Mother Goddess, but it is not the scientists who see it in this way.

Though the language changes, the essence of the magickal model is only gradually developed. Many of the models in use today are quite ancient ones. The chakras, the Qabalah, the Tarot are all old ways of understanding the universe. Ideas like the "many levels/worlds", that "change=stability", that "like attracts like", that "all things are relative" - these are all old ideas. That doesn't mean that they are not valuable nor that they should be rigidly adhered to as though they were "Gospel". What happens in practice is that different cultural changes mean that different aspects of each model become more or less emphasised.

For an example of this, consider the Qabalah.

At the end of the last century, when the Qabalah was being used by groups such as the Golden Dawn and Theosophical movements, it had its own particular flavour. The notion of the "ladder of lights" as a map of spiritual progression from the base earth of Malkuth to the rarefied enlightenment of Kether was paramount. There were definite "good" and "bad" areas in the schematic tree and a view that the more "spiritual" the sphere, the "better".

Today, though the Qabalah is not central to much Pagan thought, it is still widely used. However, Qabalah of the '90s is a much more egalitarian affair. Spheres are seen as being "different"; not "better" or "worse". Different areas of the schematic tree are imagined as having different things to teach; some of these lessons might be harsh or hard, but not "evil".

In both cases, the model is the same, but the fine-tuning is different.

The same variations of emphasis happen in magickal philosophy. The Wicca say "And it harm none, do what you will". The Chaoists claim "nothing is true, everything is permitted", but (as Pete Carroll points out in *Liber Null*) this does not give the individual the right to deprive others of their right to "everything".

Understanding the models which past magickians have used to make sense of magick is very important. It would not be wise to turn one's back on the centuries of Ancient, Classical, Gnostic, Hermetic and other magickulture. Just because it is "old stuff" doesn't mean that there is nothing that can be gained by studying it by magickians of the late 20th century. Equally, new models, or more often re-interpretations of archaic theories, need to be developed. The language of modern magick must not become stuck in the ye, thee, thou romanticism - we are not mediaeval demonologists. The computer, genetic engineering, plastics, kidney transplants - these are part of the modern world, part of modern magick and must be related to the models of the universe we use.

Equally, "technophillia" for its own sake is not a good thing. Human lives do not revolve around the way leptons decay, nor is there anything inherently better about describing the effect of Enochian magick in terms of the "butterfly effect" than if we see it in terms of the intelligent action of Angels. Being a cyberpunk and getting the hots for virtual reality is great fun, but there is a fine line between using the technology and exploring it, and being a sad computer groupie.

Neither do we need obsessional "nativeness". We don't need to dress up the Qabalah in a pseudo-Celtic veneer and call it a "pan-traditional symbol". Use of the myths and ideas of other lands and times calls for sensitivity. The Wyrd of the Anglo-Saxons was not the same as the way we as Britons in the '90s understand that concept. We have both the advantage and disadvantage of being "outside of it", we were not born into Celtic Clans; if we create them, we must do so as a re-visioning of that culture and philosophy in context of the modern world. All else is dressing-up and play-acting.

Inspiration and glamour are not far apart. When we explore and develop models to understand how magick functions in terms of the whole universe, inspiration should be our mentor. Glamorous illusion is best left on the stage, not in the temple.

*It is a popular misconception that Newton was a "scientist" and that he came up with the idea of gravity. In fact, if anything, he was a magickian in the mould of the Hermetic adepts and was especially concerned with action at a distance and the notion of the divine universe where certain "sympathies" existed between apparently unconnected objects. It's about time we magickians started claiming Newton as one of our own and not letting him be used as the figure-head for dogmatic materialists.

Tools of Tibetan Tantra

by Taradas Rinpoche

What are the Magickal tools for Tibetan Magick?

Originally I was going to flamboyantly call this article: "Twirling the Lightning Bolt, Slicing the Karma, and Hearing the Voice of the Creatrix." However, for simplicity sake, "Tools of Tibetan Tantra" will suffice. I've been asked by various communities to write more about Tibetan Tantric Tools and the Rituals thereof every time I give a workshop on Tibetan Magick...so here we go!

One of the Tibetan Magickal systems known as Bon (sanskrit for: Left), or otherwise known as Bon Marg (sanskrit for "Left Hand Path") is a system that I'd taken refuge in while spending a great deal of time in Dharmsala India.

Tibet, for the most part, practices various forms of Buddhism since the enlightenment of Padmasambhava Rinpoche (a former Tibetan Warlord who was more vicious than "Vlad the Impaler").

Bon was and is a shamanic practice of self-realization that believes that we come from perfect and pure love...we are supported by the life-spark which is perfect and pure love...and we return to that state of perfect and pure love after leaving this life.

The Bon practice eight high holy days and eight general holy days of celebrating various aspects of nature through the wheel of the year.

Bon also has a supreme tutelary deity called "Dolma," commonly known as "Tara" (which means "Star"). The Tibetan Buddhist incorporated her into their beliefs and said

she came from a tear of compassion of the Buddha of Boundless Light—Avalokitesvara. The Bon feel she has always existed, and state that all beings come from her. They also believe that the God form is the Holy Spirit (which is a reverse of the Christian concept, but much older).

Each of the 84 Tantric Tools represent an activity of the Creatrix/Saviouress throughout the Wheel of the Year. The three tools I'd like to talk about are: The Taravak—Tara's Voice Bell, The Phurba—Karma Knife, and The Dorje—Lightening Bolt.

The purpose of these tools are to: Awaken the pastlife memory of Tara, of the participants of the Wong (ritual), cut away the attachments of all lifetimes, and re-initialize the Chakras (Power Wheels), respectively.

It's said that when the metal Tibetan Dorje wears down from use, and breaks in half, that the participant will be in a complete state of absorption.

In the Bon, we believe that we've spent each lifetime meeting and re-meeting the Creatrix/Saviouress. The Bell, which has a Lightning Bolt as a handle, gently jolts our memory of these encounters with Tara. It is normally rung five times at the beginning, middle and end of each Wong to continually remind us of our continual involvement with our Creatrix, and five, representing the number of the universe.

It is also "churned" by rubbing a stick on the rim of The Bell during chanting so that Her voice is included in the chorus.

The Bell can be any bell you wish to use as part of your magickal toolbox which will be treated with the same respect as any other of your tools.

The Karma Knife is used much in the way most pagans use their Athame (i.e., to cut asunder, to sew together and to change the state of an object or occurrence). However, the Karma Knife is just that, it is used to cut away past, present and future life Karma (cause and effect) from a person. The Karma is then offered as a Yagya (burnt eatable offering to Tara in the form of butter lamp oil) so that she will symbolically eat our Karma. The HP (High Priest) holds a butter lamp in the left hand to receive the Karma, and with the right hand, the HP cuts at the air with the Karma Knife around the participant. After the HP feels that the affected area is clear and has fed the butter lamp all it can hold, the HP offers the lamp back to Tara.

The Lightning Bolt is used in place of the Mala (108 prayer beads) and is rolled between the thumb of the right hand and the middle and ring finger. Starting from the base of the thumb, one would roll the Dorje out to the tips of the middle and ring finger. Then, they would flip it back to the base of the thumb, starting the process over and over again. While the Dorje is being turned, the participant would chant their mantra. The combination of the chanting and the rolling of the Dorje causes the participant to move into a natural state of absorption with Tara.

The purpose of the Lightning Bolt is to jolt the person awake to the reality of Tara as the source of themselves which is love, and to send that love out in all directions. The mantra (sanskrit for "think and remember"), is used to reawaken us to our connection with the source of ourselves.

The Dorje can be a clay figure of infinity if you can't locate a Tibetan Dorje. It's said that when the metal Tibetan Dorje wears down from use, and breaks in half, that the participant will be in a complete state of absorption.

The most common mantra for Bon practice is *"Aum Ta-re, Tu-ta-ta-re, Tu-re, Swa-ha, Aum."* This mantra is to acknowledge your relationship with Tara in all her attributes. The effect of chanting this mantra is that she will take you across the sea of samsara (pain) and she will teach you in person within your dream life.

She will manifest in one of her 108 forms and various colors. She normally manifests as a young woman appearing to be about 16. However, depending on her mood, she can be a mother or a crone. She also manifests as a large talking flower.

If anyone has any further questions about Bon or Tara, feel free to contact me at: Taradas, 11800 Broadmoor Ln., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 - (301) 856-5032.

Neophyte's Niche

Which Path?

by Donna Stanford-Blake

After exploring, tasting and sampling many different spiritual avenues, the time comes for all seekers to settle down and become. The question is "become what?" The cosmos is brimming with different road maps showing the way to enlightenment. Some are rooted in ancient teachings, others are a modern blending of old and new. The burning question is which path will give you the information, teachers and opportunities for growth that are in rhythm with your unique style of being? And, after walking your chosen path, how can you be sure you have the "right" one?

These are questions that touch on the main reason many people become Pagan. This is a safe community in which to learn and grow - often in ways not found in our Judeo-Christian society. But even in the Pagan community, there is a mind boggling diversity of paths from which to choose. Instead of giving an overview of what is available (an almost impossible task!), I decided to ask seasoned practitioners how they chose the path they are on now.

I asked three different people of different genders and persuasions to tell me how they arrived where they are now. Specifically - "How did you choose your Magickal path?"

Paul Joseph Rovelli was the first to respond: "The Magickal Memory is one of the first tasks that an aspirant to the Great Work must complete. For me, it spans a lifetime of effort from the earliest years I can remember. Even as a child I somehow saw the mystical in everything. This was due in large part to the influence of my maternal grandfather.

"My family was devout Roman-Catholic. I remember as a child playing with my father with the mass book from church. I would be the priest and he would be the congregation. I also remember telling my grandfather that when he died I would be so happy to know he was in heaven. He gave me my first rosary and prayer book. Even though I abhor Christianity today, I still believe he is one of the holiest men I have ever met.

"Thinking for myself became a strong issue for me in my teenage years. I was 'possessed' with the idea that my understanding of the structure of the universe was conditioned into me by my parents and grandparents. Even my religion was handed to me. Why should it be the 'correct' religion just because of my ancestry? And so my search began...

"The first place I looked was in the school library. I read books on the 'Occult'. I had no idea what the word meant, but it sounded marvelous! This led me to the Bhagavad-Gita (the edition with the purports published by the Hare-Krishnas). I was frustrated with this book because it said the same lousy things the Catholic priest used to counsel me with every Sunday after mass.

"I mean, how can you tell a pubescent boy with his first girl friend to ignore the yearning in his loins? And the priest told me Catholicism was so practical! The Hare-Krishnas were even more strict. I could not enjoy anything that brought sensory pleasure in this world because it all belonged to Krishna. Even though I appreciated the detailed cosmic description of the universe, eastern mysticism was not for me.

"During my college years, I studied with a professor who was also a mystic. I met others who turned me on to the Tarot and the Western Mystery School. Now this caught my attention. I eventually studied the Holy Tarot in earnest. I even taught my own classes and wrote a book on the subject. My love for this book of Thoth grows to this day.

"Naturally, the Tarot led to the study of Magick. I discovered the voluminous writings of the Golden Dawn with their many denizens. My first guided ritual was the Israel Regardie tapes. The Lesser Banishing Pentagram was a sublime rite for me. However, I became impressed with the writings of Aleister Crowley. From him I was introduced to a much larger system of Magick and yoga. This eventually led me to several of his mystical orders.

"I have not regretted one step I have taken and I have learned much. Today, I am content with my path, though I'm constantly pushing myself along - traveling breathlessly and wondering at the marvel of it all."

there was something different about my work compared to the other students. I just wasn't sure what it was. When I started to spend time with the magickal community, things started working. As I began to integrate the system I felt closest to, I noticed that my life began changing. Not only did my day to day events become clearer, my will stronger, but I had the missing link to my performance. I learned - much to the dismay of my professors - to physically and mentally integrate characters with my 'self' as opposed to layering a character on me.

"One thing, however, my chosen path is at times the most stressful, painful, etc., etc., etc. ..., thing that I have ever gone through. In the end, after the initiations happen, I feel twice the strength, unmeasurable amounts of clarity and even an odd internal peace. My mentors gently shake their heads and smile, as they watch me kick and scream all the way through. But they are also there to see me go through the journey, the end of which is always unexpected."

As life is a rhythmic cycle, so is working a path. The cycle repeats - with individual variations - but the path is not straight.

We are spiritual beings so it is not surprising that some begin searching for their path as soon as memory begins. The key is in the "ing" at the end of the verb. This is an active not a passive endeavour. It is also a process. One step does not make a path. Explore, test, taste, savour - spit out what is not agreeable and move on. If you are not content with where you are, find something else. Or maybe - eeek! - look inside.

Finding the path you want to take is, of course, just the beginning. Walking and working your path is the stuff life is made of. And it is "work".

The next person I asked was Beth, "My path? ...Hmm, what a question! Until recently I've seemed to avoid this particular question. Dodging and changing the subject at every opportunity. What if my answer did not meet the standards? What standards? My own, I realized. So now I finally find myself answering this question I previously dreaded.

"Magick is fairly new to me - as far as a practice. Magickal instances and experiences are not. I am a performer by trade. There is a definite magick to theatre - in its aspects. I knew when I began formal training in theatre,

No, path working is not easy. Change is not easy. With each level of spiritual growth, each person encounters their own barriers - fears. And each person overcomes them in their own way, too. With the help of a trusted friend or teacher, stillness, journal writing, or other methods that may be unique to a given path. Is the pain necessary? Well, the extent of the suffering an individual is willing to endure is up to the individual. But growth equals change which equals some degree of fear and discomfort. One excellent lesson I have learned is that pain is not a negative experience. It is natural and necessary to life - it is O.K. It is how you move through it to the next level that is important. So if you are not noticing any occasional bouts of discomfort - chances are you are not on a path.

Of course, you should also receive rewards from your path. Indications that you are headed in the desired direction. Heightened awareness, increased self-esteem, a sense of inner peace (at least some of the time!) are a few examples of the positive side of growth. As life is a rhythmic cycle, so is working a path. Tough hills to climb but a beautiful view once you get to the top. Then an exhilarating run down to the bottom of the next hill. The cycle repeats - with individual variations - but the path is not straight. The hill that was just climbed may be climbed again. It may seem

like two steps forward one step back, but actually it is a spiral (what else?!) slowly rising upward.

The last person I queried was Kenneth Deigh - our esteemed editor and founder of the Sheya system of magick.

"The first answer that comes to mind is: Through the process of elimination. Over a period of years, from the time I first became interested (fascinated!) in the subject of magick until my practice developed some degree of coherence, I explored and experimented. I plowed through all the published material I could lay my hands - both fact and fiction (though the difference between the two was often vague).

"Two things occurred to me out of my solitary struggle. 1) Most of what I was reading was nonsense, tripe, and obscurification; 2) There was 'something' underlying all the hogwash that was real. This second point kept me looking for something that made sense.

"Eventually my explorations brought me into contact with other searchers, and with a couple of working groups. For the most part, these early connections were equally disappointing and unrewarding - but there were a few glimmers of clarity. At least, I knew I wasn't completely alone.

"These early introductions led to connections with larger 'orders'. A couple of which I joined, in hope that someone would be able to reveal the mysterious 'reality' of Magick to me. Instead, after further disillusion, the 'Mystery' revealed *itself* to me.

"The answers were not in the books, the groups, the orders, or the 'secrets'. They were in my self. And they were the same answers that I believe everyone finds eventually: The true 'Mysteries' are found within. The most we can hope to do when addressing the incomprehensible mysteries of reality is to find or create a workable model to cope with its paradoxical nature.

"My own path has been a process of discovering such a model for myself and, more recently, sharing it with others. It is a path of constant initiation and growth, discovery and creation. I celebrate it everyday - by walking it."

When a person consciously makes the decision to "become", the search begins. It may span many years - or decades. But it continues until some breakthrough occurs and that person finds what he wants to become. Ironic isn't it, that the answer is to become YOU and the path is found within. The external search is a reflection of the internal journey. It seems so obvious, yet it is necessary for each person to discover it in their own way. And that is just the beginning!

I have learned that there is no "right" path or "wrong" path. The names of the groups people chose to affiliate with - Wiccan, O.T.O., Golden Dawn, Sheya, etc. - are just a small part of the path that a true seeker develops. Groups, orders, religions are all valid ways to learn and gather information, but they do not define who a person is. One does not become Sheya - one uses Sheya to Become.

So as you travel your own unique path through life, remember it does have a name - yours. I would like to thank my three interviewees for sharing bits of wisdom from The Way of Paul, The Way of Beth, and The Way of Kenn. Cansha Om Pacsha!

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A TALE FOR THE DARKEST NIGHT

by Steven W. Posch

STORYTELLER: One night long ago—before things were as they are today—the Sun and the Moon both just disappeared. The time for moonrise came, but no Moon slipped over the horizon. Likewise, at the hour of dawn, the skies stayed as dark as a tomb. There was no Sun to be seen. Without the Moon and the Sun, the whole world was thrown into confusion. All the Goddesses and Gods—the Daughters and Sons of Ashera—met in council to decide what should be done. They stood there arguing, everyone talking at once, waving their arms in the air. Suddenly, the door opened. In stepped the messenger of Mavet, Death.

MESSENGER: My dear Goddesses and Gods, my boss Death has sent me to tell you that he's grown lonely down in the Underworld. After all, none of you ever come to visit him and you never invite him to sessions of the Divine Council. So he has captured the Sun and the Moon and plans to hold them hostage in the House of Death. Until such a time, that is, as you send him the Maiden Anat, Darling of the People and Tomboy of the Gods, to keep him company and be his bride.

STORYTELLER: The Divine Council was thrown into an uproar.

FIRST DEITY: We've got to get the Moon and the Sun back somehow!

SECOND DEITY: Yes, but we can't possibly get along without Anat!

THIRD DEITY: No, inconceivable!

STORYTELLER: They argued on and on. Majority opinion was beginning to favor some sort of military intervention—

FIRST DEITY: I say we should just nuke the fucker!

STORYTELLER: —when Anat herself spoke up.

ANAT: Listen, you might as well hold your armies. Death could swallow up all the armies in the world and not be sated. No, you can't beat Death; but sometimes he can be tricked. I'll go down into the House of Death, if that's what he wants. But I don't intend to stay there.

SECOND DEITY: Trickery or no, you can't go down to Death without some sort of weapon. Here, take my Thunder-Axe with you.

STORYTELLER: All the other Deities offered her their favorite weapons as well.

ANAT: Thanks, but no thanks. There's really only one thing I'd like to take with me. Lady Ashera-of-the-Sea—Mother—would you consider lending me the Tree of Life?

STORYTELLER: More hubbub in the Divine Council.

THIRD DEITY: What if she doesn't come back? Then we'll have lost the Tree of Life as well as the Sun and the Moon!

STORYTELLER: But Anat was insistent.

ANAT: Lend me the Tree of Life, or I won't do any of this. Then you can all just sit here in the dark!

STORYTELLER: —which, of course, is where that saying comes from. But it was Ashera herself, Mother of all the Gods, who put an end to the argument.

ASHERA: Of course you can take the Tree of Life with you, Anat; just be careful with it. Luck go with you, daughter. Oh, and here, take a torch along to light your way—it's a cold, dark journey down to the Underworld. Also, you should wear a sweater.

STORYTELLER: So the Maiden Anat, Darling of the People, Tomboy of the Gods, strapped the Tree of Life onto her back and set her feet on the Dark and Downwards Road. Now the road to the Underworld is a long road, and a short road. Everyone walks it, whether they realize it or not, and sooner or later each of us will get to the end of that road.

That's just how things are.

So in a time, a long time and a short time, Anat came to the Twin Mountains. She lifted one mountain on the back of her right hand and the other mountain on the back of her left hand; and so she descended into the Land of Sheol, and was counted among those who go down into the Earth.

Into the House of Death she descended, and Winter fell upon the world. Into the Hall of Forever she descended, and there was darkness by day and by night. Into the presence of Mavet she strode, Anat, the Darling of the People. Before the face of Death she comes to stand, with the Sun and the Moon at his shoulders.

MAVET: So, the Gods have finally seen to reason! Welcome, Anat, Tomboy of the Gods! Welcome to Sheol, your new home! I'm sure you'll find me a more satisfying lover than your brother Baal, Rider of the Clouds.

STORYTELLER: Now, what Anat was thinking was—

ANAT: I can't believe I'm thinking this, but he's actually kind of cute..

STORYTELLER: But what she said was—

ANAT: That remains to be seen, you big schlemiel. That was a pretty rotten trick you pulled on everyone, holding the Lights of the World hostage.

MAVET: (laughing) Leave it to me, Death, to take the world's first hostages! I hereby declare that from now on, people shall take hostages to gain unfair advantage in war.

STORYTELLER: And, unfortunately, that's the way things are to this very day, especially in the Middle East.

ANAT: Listen, Death, I'll cut a deal with you. Everybody knows you're just about the best gambler there is. How's about a friendly little game here and now, just between you and me?

MAVET: What kind of stakes did you have in mind?

ANAT: I win, I get the Sun and the Moon, and we three hightail it out of here. You win, and all Three of us stay here with you for keeps.

MAVET: Seems to me you're in a weak position to bargain, Anat. What if I just decide to keep you all here anyway?

ANAT: That's not an option, Mavet. You seem to be forgetting that nobody takes me against my will. Besides, I've brought a little something to sweeten the deal.

STORYTELLER: And she takes out the Tree of Life.

MAVET: Well, well, well. The Sun, the Moon, the Maiden Anat, and the Tree of Life to boot—now that's what I call a deal! You're on, Anat, and may the best God win!

STORYTELLER: They both sat down and began to gamble. They took the very world itself—the four-cornered world, the spinning world—to use as their dreidl. The Maiden Anat, Tomboy of the Gods, and Mavet, Lord of the Underworld, sat down to gamble, and the world itself was their dreidl. *NES GADOL HAYA SHAM.*

They gambled and gambled, and lo! Anat won one-eighth of the light of the Sun and the Moon. She set the light among the branches of the Tree of Life. All night they gambled, and when day came they joined together in passionate love-making.

The second night they sat down to gamble, and again Anat won one-eighth of the light of the Moon and the Sun. Again she set the light among the branches of the Tree, and again that day, all through the day, their love-making shook the hall.

And so it was the third night...and the third day...and the fourth night...and the fourth day...and so it went on for eight days in all. Each night they sat down to gamble, with the world as their dreidl. Each night Anat won another eighth of the light of the Sun and the Moon, and set it among the branches of the Tree of Life. By night the House of Death rang with their cries of victory and defeat; by day, with their cries of love.

And so finally came the eighth night, when Anat won the last of the light of the Moon and the Sun.

MAVET: I can't believe I'm saying this Anat, but, you know, I don't even mind losing. This has been great. How's about we make it an annual tradition?

ANAT: I'll give it some thought. See you later, Mavet.

STORYTELLER: Anat took the Sun and the Moon into her belly.

ANAT: Come on kids, let's get out of here!

STORYTELLER: So the Darling of the People, Tomboy of the Gods, took the Tree of Life—now become the Tree of

Light—and up out of the Underworld she goes, up from the House of Death, out of the Hall of Forever. Back into the world she came, with light in her hands and the Moon and the Sun in her belly. Throughout the whole land she went, leaving light behind her, and everywhere people lit lamps and gambled with dreidls to celebrate the daring and cunning rescue.

So now every year, at the dark of the Moon closest to the shortest day of the year—Dark of the Sun, Dark of the Moon—we hold a joyous celebration. And we call it *Hag ha-Or*, Feast of Light, because Anat brought the light back from the Underworld; and we call it *Hag ha-Neirot*, Feast of Lamps, because each night we light another lamp in honor of the eight-days' gambling; and nowadays some people even call it *Hanuka*, "dedication", because Anat was such a dedicated gambler.

STORYTELLER: So that's the end of the story, and that's the beginning of the story. And let everyone say—

ALL: So Mote It Be!

(First enacted: 25 Kislev 5753, Beit Ashera Congregation, Minneapolis, Minnesota.)

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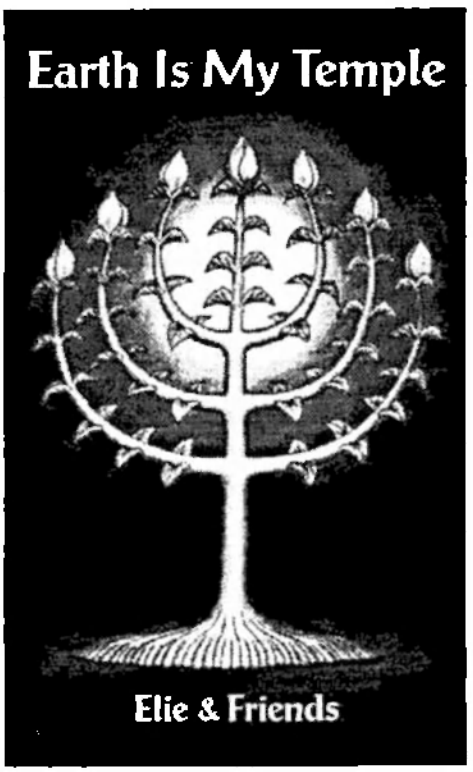

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